

“THE COMING HELPER”

INTRODUCTION: In John 15 and 16, Jesus is preparing His disciples to live without Him in this world...

1. Without His *physical presence* in this world, that is.
 - a. He promised He'd remain with us...
 - i. *I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.* (John 14:18)
 - ii. *Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.* (Matthew 28:19-20)
 - iii. *Keep your life free from love of money, and be content with what you have, for he has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you." So we can confidently say, "The Lord is my helper; I will not fear; what can man do to me?"* (Heb. 13:5-6, 8)
 - b. Jesus is with us by means of the *indwelling Holy Spirit*.
 - c. Five times in this *Upper Room Discourse*, Jesus mentions the Holy Spirit's ministry to us: We have looked at the first three mentions of the Spirit.
 - i. *If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever.* (John 14:15-16)
 - ii. *But the word that is written in their Law must be fulfilled: 'They hated me without a cause.'*

"But when the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness about me. (John 15:25-26)
 - iii. *But when the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness about me.* (John 15:26)
 - d. He will do so another two times (6:7-11 and 12-14)
 - e. And it is this *Fourth and Fifth Mentions* of the Holy Spirit we turn to this morning.

I did not say these things to you from the beginning, because I was with you. But now I am going to him who sent me, and none of you asks me, 'Where are you going?' But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your heart. Nevertheless, I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you. And when he comes, he will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment: concerning sin, because they do not believe in me; concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father, and you will see me no longer; concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged. I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the

things that are to come. He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you. All that the Father has is mine; therefore I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you.
(John 16:4b-15)

2. Jesus mentioned, last Sunday, that the *World* would persecute the Church.
 - a. *kosmos*: humanity organized as cultures and societies opposed to God, Christ and His Kingdom
 - b. *Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride in possessions—is not from the Father but is from the world. And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever.* (1 John 2:15-17)

Then the seventh angel blew his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever. (Revelation 11:15)
 - c. But **not** necessarily all the people in the world: family, friends, neighbors and colleagues.
3. Primarily persecution usually comes from the Church from other, false religions in concert with the State, the Academy and the Media.
 - a. Those four centers of **the status quo** of humanistic culture and man-centered society
 - b. The *world's leaders* are those who persecute the Church: “the rulers of this age” (St. Paul)
 - c. *Yet among the mature we do impart wisdom, although it is not a wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are doomed to pass away. But we impart a secret and hidden wisdom of God, which God decreed before the ages for our glory.* (1 Corinthians 2:6-7)
4. These “powers that be” distort the message of Christ, the motives of ministers and the methods of the Church.
5. **Michael Gershon and Peter Wehner:** *City of Man: Religion and Politics in a New Era* (p. 66).
 - a. *The media have exacerbated this situation. Showcasing individuals more likely to indulge in provocative than in measured speech, they have helped caricature evangelical Christians as a whole and have confirmed the prejudices of large segments of the non-religious population. We say “caricature” because portraying a small handful of cases as representatives of the evangelical world in unfair. Ordinary evangelicals, as Christian Smith concludes from a three-year national study, “live in different worlds and have different experiences, concerns, thoughts, and goals than those [whom] journalists and scholars often take to be their leaders.”*
 - b. **Please Note:** Not *all* the Media, University of Government do this, but enough to exacerbate Christians.
 - c. A minority in the Media, Academy and Government, as some in other religions, think and speak well of Christians...
 - d. ...most of your neighbors feel the same way.

And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. And all who believed were together and had all things in common. And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had

need. And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved. (Acts 2:42-47)

e. **Key statement:** "...having favor with all the people"

6. **I do not want Christ Covenant Church to develop or to display a "fortress mentality" or a "persecution complex."**

a. Something unique to *Baby Boomers*

b. Elderly people don't feel this way, nor do the younger folks.

c. **Gershon and Wehner:** *City of Man* (p. 70)

And we see a similar change among younger Christians who, though no less concerned than their elders with the moral underpinnings of our culture, feel more at home in our society. As they do not feel under siege, or marginalized, a culturally defensive posture holds no attraction for them. Like many other evangelicals, they want to remain engaged in public affairs, but we detect no groundswell for separatism or full-scale withdrawal.

d. *Baby Boomers* feel this way because we were so controversial – and needed to be so – as we pushed Evangelicalism out of the shadows and into political life during the era of *Carter to George W.*

7. Most Americans do not dislike Evangelical Christians. More and more in Government are willing to work with Evangelicals. Academic Institutions will take Evangelicals if we know our stuff. *The Media remains the last frontier of acceptance.*

8. By the way: *The Early Church had to deal with "negative press" from the Media.*

a. Some of you will say, "Not so, Pastor! There were no media in the 1st century AD Roman Empire!"

b. In a sense there were.

c. Christ, Christians and Christianity faced bad representation in drama (stage), in essays and treatise, and in day-to-day graffiti.

d. The earliest depiction of the Cross in Christianity comes from graffiti on the *Palestine Hill* in Rome: "*Alexander worships his god*" (A man on a cross with the head of a jackass/donkey).

e. Romans considered Christians a threat to society because they were guilty of 10 crimes against humanity:

i. *Cannibalism* (body and blood of Christ in communion)

ii. *Disruption of Business* (Acts 19: not purchasing idols)

iii. *Gross Immorality & Incest* (brotherly love)

iv. *Anti-Family Values* (Gospel often divided families)

v. *Poverty* (many were slaves, poor, women, other worldly)

vi. *Atheism* (rejected the gods of Rome)

- vii. *Novelty* (a new, unauthorized sect)
 - viii. *Lack of Patriotism* (avoided pagan events; military service)
 - ix. *Anti-social behavior* (shunned pagan civic festivals)
 - x. *Cause of Natural Disasters* (the gods were angry)
- f. **Eusebius:** *Ecclesiastical Histories: Book 3, ch. 33 (pp. 119-120).*
- i. *So great a persecution was then commended against our faith, in most places, that Plinius Secundus, one of the most distinguished governors, moved by the number of martyrs, communicated with the emperor respecting the multitudes that were put to death for their faith. At the same time he informed him, that as far as he had ascertained, they did nothing wicked or contrary to the laws; except that they rose with the morning sun, and sang a hymn to Christ as to a god. But that adultery, and murder, and criminal excesses like these, were totally abhorred by them; and that in all things they acted according to the laws. To this, Trajan in reply, issued a decree, the purport of which was, that no search should be made after those that were Christians, but when they presented themselves they should be punished.*
 - ii. **Plinius Caecilius Secundus** (Pliny the Younger): Roman Governor of Bithynia (c. 110 or 111)
 - iii. His letter to **Emperor Trajan**, in part:

Moreover, they affirmed that this was the sum of their guilt or error; that they had been accustomed to come together on a fixed day before daylight and to sing responsively a song unto Christ as God; and to bind themselves with an oath, not with a view to the commission of some crime, but, on the contrary, that they would not commit theft, nor robbery, nor adultery, that they would not break faith, nor refuse to restore a deposit when asked for it. When they had done these things, their custom was to separate and to assemble again to partake of a meal, common yet harmless (which is not the characteristic of a nefarious superstition; but this they had ceased to do after my edict, in which according to thy demands I had prohibited fraternities. I therefore considered it the more necessary to examine, even with the use of torture, two female slaves who were called deaconesses (ministrae), in order to ascertain the truth. But I found nothing except a superstition depraved and immoderate; and therefore, postponing further inquiry, I have turned to thee for advice. For the matter seems to me worth consulting about, especially on account of the number of persons involved. For many of every age and of every rank and of both sexes have been already and will be brought to trial. For the contagion of this superstition has permeated not only the cities, but also the villages and even the country districts. Yet it can apparently be arrested and corrected.
9. My point: *It seems that from the beginning of the Christian movement and the Church era, the average person does not view Christianity as evil while governments, intelligentia and Academics often (not always) did.*
10. Jesus has not left us hindered by three problems:
- a. He has not left us chained to the past...
 - b. He has not left us without a powerful witness...

c. He has not left us with only Jesus' Words.

11. *Jesus had given to us the Holy Spirit who has done three things for us:*

- a. Begun the New Age of the Spirit (16:4b-7)
- b. Broadcasts the Gospel to the World (16:8-11)
- c. Blessed Us with the Gospel Religion (16:12-15)

I. THE HOLY SPIRIT BEGINS THE AGE OF THE SPIRIT (John 16:4b-7)

I did not say these things to you from the beginning, because I was with you. But now I am going to him who sent me, and none of you asks me, 'Where are you going?' But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your heart. Nevertheless, I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you. (John 16:4b-7)

1. To reiterate from last week, once Jesus died, rose and returned to the Father, His spiritual "covering" over the disciples and the Church would be removed.
2. *"I did not say these things to you from the beginning, because I was with you"*
 - a. Not that he would go to the Father. He had told them this already.
 - i. *Little children, yet a little while I am with you. You will seek me, and just as I said to the Jews, so now I also say to you, 'Where I am going you cannot come. Simon Peter said to him, "Lord, where are you going?" Jesus answered him, "Where I am going you cannot follow me now, but you will follow afterward." (John 13:33, 36)*
 - ii. *"Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also. And you know the way to where I am going." (John 14:1-4)*
 - b. But rather: Jesus had not told them until now (15:18-16:16) that *persecution* would come after He went back to heaven.
 - c. **D. A. Carson:** *Gospel of John; Pillar NTC; p. 532.*
Jesus has not earlier spelled out the full dangers of persecution because he was still with them, and could largely protect them by absorbing all opposition himself, thus deflecting it from them. Indeed, his arrest proves to be the last time he serves them in this way.
3. This makes the Apostles sad: *They are so sad they don't ask Him, "Lord where are you going," as they did in 13:36 and 14:5.*
 - a. Sad that Jesus was leaving them
 - b. Sad that persecution would soon come
 - c. Sad that it seemed Christ's mission with them was over

4. So Jesus encourages them: *It is good for them for Him to leave!*
 - a. *Nevertheless, I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you. (John 16:7)*
 - b. Easter would follow Good Friday
 - c. Pentecost would follow Easter
 - d. *Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, and said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, and that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things. And behold, I am sending the promise of my Father upon you. But stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high. (Luke 24:45-49)*
 - e. *And while staying with them he ordered them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, he said, "you heard from me; for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now." So when they had come together, they asked him, "Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." (Acts 1:4-8)*
5. **What Jesus is saying here is surprisingly profound:** *Christ is about to introduce the Third and Final stage of Redemptive History...*
 - a. *Stage One: The History of Israel from Genesis 3 to Malachi 4 and God's preparation of the Jews to receive the Messiah of the World. (4,000 plus years)*
 - b. *State Two: The Incarnation of God in Christ and the earthly ministry of Jesus the Savior of mankind (approx 30± years)*
 - c. *Stage Three: The Mission of the Spirit, the Word and the Church in the World until the end of time. (from Pentecost to Parousia: 2,000+ years and counting)*
 - d. Jesus had told them about this just two days earlier in His Olivet Discourse...
Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and put you to death, and you will be hated by all nations for my name's sake. And then many will fall away and betray one another and hate one another. And many false prophets will arise and lead many astray. And because lawlessness will be increased, the love of many will grow cold. But the one who endures to the end will be saved. And this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come. (Matthew 24:9-14)
6. This should **encourage** the Apostles (and us) for **three reasons:**
 - a. **First:** Jesus would not leave them on their own but would send the Spirit with them wherever they may go. The Spirit could go with each of them in a way Jesus could not.
 - b. **Second:** The Spirit's coming would no longer limit Redemption to the time and place of Jesus.
 - i. Incarnation allows for revelation, but...

- ii. Continuing incarnation would harm Gospel mission!
- iii. **Lesslie Newbigin:** *The Light Has Come*; pp. 210-211.

The word was made flesh: without this there is no Gospel. This man Jesus, wholly belonging to a particular time and place and therefore conditioned and limited by all the contingent factors of language and culture which belong to every particular time and place is at the same time the presence of the eternal word of God, the word through whom all things were made, in whom all that lives has life and from whom all light comes. If the presence of the word was not given in all the contingency of a particular time and place it could not be part of human public experience. There would be no revelation. There could be, perhaps, private "revelations". But there would be no revelation of God as part of the public history of mankind. This is what it means that the word became flesh. But if the presence remained tied to and limited by the contingencies of a time and place, it could not become part of general human experience except at second hand. What belongs to one time and place is always slipping from our grasp. Their master does not belong to the past. They have with them the living Spirit who is the Spirit of the Father and who is also the Spirit of Jesus, the Spirit whose presence is the foretaste of the coming glory. Therefore they do not look back but upward and forward. Until this has happened, until Jesus has "finished his work" and gone back to the Father, the revelation has not been fully given, the judgment of the world has not been fully given, the judgment of the world has not been finally pronounced, and therefore the new relationship of God to man which the revelation establishes cannot begin.

- iv. Because Jesus has gone and the Spirit has come *Jesus can now go anywhere and everywhere revealing God to each and every person in the world.*
- v. They do **not** have to come to Jerusalem to meet Jesus in order to know God.
- vi. The Spirit will come to them to show them God in Jesus Christ...eternal life!

And this is eternal life, that they know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. (John 17:3)

- c. **Third:** The coming of the Spirit guarantees for us that we are in the final phase of redemption...

- i. The "last days" or the "end times"
- ii. *Now these things happened to them as an example, but they were written down for our instruction, on whom the end of the ages has come. (1 Corinthians 10:11)*
- iii. The Dawn of the New Age of the Gospel has come!

7. **J. C. Ryle:** *Expository Thoughts on John*; pp. 149-150.

If Christ had not died, risen again, and ascended up into heaven, it is plain that the Holy Ghost could not have come down with special power on the day of Pentecost, and bestowed His manifold gifts on the Church. If Christ had remained bodily with the disciples, He could not have been in more places than one at the same time. If Christ had remained upon earth, and not gone up into heaven, He could not have become a High Priest for the people in the same full and perfect manner that He became after His ascension. He went away to sit down at the right hand of God, and to appear for us, in our

human nature glorified, as our Advocate with the Father. Finally, if Christ had always remained bodily with His disciples, there would have been far less room for the exercise of their faith and hope and trust, than there was when He went away. After all there remains the broad fact that after the Lord Jesus went away, and the Comforter came down on the day of Pentecost, the religion of the disciples became a new thing altogether.

8. And during this **Age of the Spirit**, the Third Person of the Trinity – *God the Spirit* – will be busy in the world!

II. THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL BROADCAST THE GOSPEL TO THE WORLD (John 16:8-11)

And when he comes, he will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment: concerning sin, because they do not believe in me; concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father, and you will see me no longer; concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged. (John 16:8-11)

1. Jesus states that the Holy Spirit's witness will **carry on** the witness of Christ and...
2. **Spearhead** the witness of the Church.
3. The Holy Spirit will **extend** the message and ministry of Jesus in three ways the disciples could not have foreseen.
 - a. *And when he comes, he will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment. (John 16:8)*
 - b. *Sin...righteousness...judgment...*
 - c. **First:** The Spirit will convict the world of sin
 - i. *...concerning sin, because they do not believe in me... (John 16:9)*
 - ii. Just as Jesus did in His ministry...

If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have been guilty of sin, but now they have no excuse for their sin. Whoever hates me hates my Father also. If I had not done among them the works that no one else did, they would not be guilty of sin, but now they have seen and hated both me and my Father. (John 15:22-24)
 - iii. Their root sin? *They do not believe in Jesus Christ.*
 - iv. *But whoever has doubts is condemned if he eats, because the eating is not from faith. For whatever does not proceed from faith is sin. (Romans 14:23)*

Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God. Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him. (John 3:18, 36)
 - d. **Second:** The Spirit will convict the world of righteousness.
 - i. *...concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father, and you will see me no longer... (John 16:10)*

- ii. *Dikaioisune* (righteousness): only time in John where this word occurs (16:10)
 - iii. If unbelief is the essence of sin, then faith in Christ is the essence of righteousness.
 - iv. *For what does the Scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness." (Romans 4:3)*
 - v. *"...because I go to the Father": meaning: As Jesus goes to heaven, the Spirit will continue the work of pressing the claims of God's righteousness upon the world.*
 - vi. (Romans 1:16-17)
 - vii. *For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth. For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse. For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Claiming to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things. Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves, because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen. (Romans 1:18-25)*
- e. **Third:** The Spirit will convict the world of judgment.
- i. *...concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged. (John 16:11)*
 - ii. How unrighteously the world treated Christ; how much they deserve judgment for their own sins against God's law; how they will go the way of Satan if they do not repent and believe in Christ.
 - iii. *"...because the ruler (prince) of this world is judged (stands condemned)..."*
 - iv. The resurrection and ascension to glory is the proof that Satan's kingdom has been judged, is condemned and will ultimately collapse in ruin.
 - v. *Now is the judgment of this world; now will the ruler of this world be cast out. And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself. (John 12:31-32)*
 - vi. **F. F. Bruce:** *The Gospel of John; pp. 319-320.*
Behind the men who acted as Jesus' prosecutors and judges stood the adversary-in-chief, 'the ruler of this world.' The presence of the Spirit is the token that this prediction has been fulfilled: judgment in the supreme court has been given for the Son of Man and against the world; and the world's spirit-ruler, in consequence of that adverse judgment, has been deposed. 'Our great foe is baffled; Christ Jesus is King!'
4. The Holy Spirit is, and remains to this day, the **Lord of the Conscience**. He continues to speak in a convincing, convicting, and condemning manner to all mankind through:
- a. **Genesis Revelation:** Creation, Conscience, Culture

b. **Special Revelation:** Christ, Canon, Church

5. **Here is Christ's point:** *The world may reject the Gospel, persecute the Church, refuse to listen to preachers, ridicule Christian witnessing, burn all the bibles in the world, and kill every single Christian on the face of the earth, and still the Holy Spirit's witness will go on powerfully, invincibly, invisibly...*

And when he comes, he will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment: concerning sin, because they do not believe in me; concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father, and you will see me no longer; concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged. (John 16:8-11)

6. **You cannot silence the witness of the Spirit!**

7. **Illustration:** *The young Russian Communist Airman who spanked a Christian girl into humiliation "until her skin came off in pieces in my hand." But then was convicted of sin, turned to Christ, defected to the US and then Canada, was hunted down and killed by the KGB... only to see more young Russian soldiers, who knew this Pilot, come to Christ!*

III. THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL BLESS THE WORLD WITH GOSPEL RELIGION (John 16:12-15)

I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you. All that the Father has is mine; therefore I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you. (John 16:12-15)

1. Here is the fifth and final statement about the *Paraclete*...
2. Jesus has "*many things to say*" to the apostles, but He had not enough time and the disciples were not yet ready to receive the Spirit's New Testament Revelation.
3. But Jesus promises them that the Holy Spirit will give to them the Gospel message in its fullness
 - a. *Four accounts of Christ's life, ministry, message*
 - b. *The Acts of the Apostles* (history of the early church)
 - c. *21 Epistles* by Paul, Peter, John, James, Jude, and others
 - d. *The Revelation of John:* The vision of the consummation of redemptive history
 - e. *When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you. All that the Father has is mine ;therefore I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you. (John 16:13-15)*
 - f. **The Old Testament** of God the Father
The Gospels of Jesus the Christ
The New Testament of the Holy Spirit

4. “*The Spirit of Truth*” is the Spirit of Revelation: the One who gives us the Scripture:

- a. *Inspiration*: He breathes out God’s Word

All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness... (2 Timothy 3:16)

- b. *Superintendence*: supervising the transmission of God’s Word

...knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone’s own interpretation. For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit. (2 Peter 1:20-21)

- c. *Illumination*: explaining and interpreting God’s Word

But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you. (John 14:26)

- d. *Empowerment*: Giving the Word the living power of God

For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. (Romans 1:16)

For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart. (Hebrews 4:12)

5. **Andreas J. Köstenberger**: *John: ECNT*; p. 473.

- a. *In one very important sense, Jesus is the eschatological Word who has explained the Father. In another sense, however, it is the Spirit who guides his followers in “all” truth.*

Send out your light and your truth;

let them lead me;

let them bring me to your holy hill

and to your dwelling! (Psalm 43:3)

Teach me to do your will,

for you are my God!

Let your good Spirit lead me

on level ground! (Psalm 143:10)

Like livestock that go down into the valley,

the Spirit of the LORD gave them rest.

So you led your people,

to make for yourself a glorious name. (Isaiah 63:14)

6. “...guide you into all (the) truth...and he will declare to you the things that are to come...”

- a. A reference not just to New Testament predictive prophecy
- b. And more than the entire New Testament
- c. But also the *Christian Faith and Church*:
- i. Creeds, confessions, catechisms
 - ii. Sacraments and the means of grace

- iii. Body life of the local church (reciprocal commands)
 - iv. Christian ministry and mission
 - v. The use of spiritual gifts
 - vi. Spiritual disciplines
 - vii. Christian morality, ethics, and principles
7. **The Holy Spirit will remain with the church to enlighten it and instruct it through His Word, and to develop, mature and commission it as His witness in the world.**
8. **The Spirit...the Word...the Church...**

CONCLUSION: Jesus Christ is still working in the world through the Spirit, the Word and the Church...

1. **John Stott** called his masterful commentary on the book of Acts, *The Spirit, the Church, and the World (BST)*.
 - a. **In his introduction, he writes (pp. 36-37)**

In the Upper Room, according to John, Jesus had already promised the apostles that the Spirit of truth would both remind them of what he had taught them and supplement it with what he had not been able to teach them. Now Jesus commands them to wait in Jerusalem until the promised gift has been received. Not till God has fulfilled his promise and they have been ‘clothed with power from on high’, can they fulfill their commission. Of course in a secondary sense all the disciples of Jesus can claim that he has chosen us, revealed himself to us, commissioned us as his witnesses, and both promised and given us his Spirit.
 - b. The Church in the World preaching the Word in the power of the Spirit of Truth.
 - c. **The Acts of the Apostles is really the Acts of the Spirit in the World.**
2. Every person ever converted was brought to saving faith, through the Word, into the Church by means of *The Spirit of Truth*.
3. **Examples** are so numerous that they are staggering proof of this fact:
 - a. **C. S. Lewis** determined to read the Bible in order to prove it was incorrect and full of myths. He was converted.
 - b. **An African man** decided to “smoke through the New Testament” that a missionary had given him from the American Bible Society. The Missionary asked him to start with the gospels and read each page before he smoked it. He got to John 3:16 and was converted.
 - c. **Louie Zemperini:** A World War II airman, ex-POW to the Japanese, and an alcoholic with a failing marriage, reluctantly attended a crusade in Los Angeles, in 1949, where a young man named **Billy Graham** was preaching.
 - d. **Laura Hildebrand:** *Unbroken: A World War II Story of Survival, Resilience, and Redemption (pp. 373-376)*

“Darkness doesn’t hide the eyes of God,” Graham said. “God takes down your life from the time you were born to the time you die. And when you stand before God on the great judgment day, you’re going to say, ‘Lord I wasn’t such a bad fellow,’ and they are going to pull down the screen and they are going to shoot the moving picture of your life from the cradle to the grave, and you are going to hear every thought that was going through your mind every minute of the day, every second of the minute, and you’re going to hear the words that you said. And your own words, and your own thoughts, and your own deeds, are going to condemn you as you stand before God on that day. “Louie felt indignant rage flaring in him, a struck match. I am a good man, he thought. I am a good man. Even as he had this thought, he felt the lie in it. He knew what he had become. Graham looked out over his audience. “Here tonight, there’s a drowning man, a drowning woman, a drowning man, a drowning boy, a drowning girl that is out lost in the sea of life.” He told of hell and salvation, men saved and men lost, always coming back to the stooped figure drawing letters in the sand. Louie grew more and more angry and more and more spooked. “Every head bowed and every eye closed,” said Graham, offering a traditional invitation to repentance, a declaration of faith, and absolution. Louie grabbed Cynthia’s arm, stood up, and bulled his way from the tent. All morning Sunday, she tried to coax him into seeing Graham again. Louie, angry and threatened, refused. For several hours, Cynthia and Louie argued. Exhausted by her persistence, Louie finally agreed to go, with one caveat: When Graham said, “Every head bowed, every eye closed,” they were leaving. Under the tent that night, Graham spoke of how the world was in an age of war, an age defined by persecution and suffering. Graham went on. He spoke of God reaching into the world through miracles and the intangible blessings that give men the strength to outlast their sorrows. What God asks of men, said Graham, is faith. Louie shone with sweat. He felt accused, cornered, pressed by a frantic urge to flee. As Graham asked for heads to bow and eyes to close, Louie stood abruptly and rushed for the street, towing Cynthia behind him. “Nobody leaving,” said Graham. “You can leave while I’m preaching but not now. Everybody is still and quiet. Every head bowed, every eye closed.” He asked the faithful to come forward. Louie pushed past the congregants in his row, charging for the exit. His mind was tumbling. He felt enraged, violent, on the edge of explosion. He wanted to hit someone. As he reached the aisle, he stopped. Cynthia, the rows of bowed heads, the sawdust underfoot, the tent around him, all disappeared. A memory long beaten back, the memory from which he had run the evening before, was upon him. Louie was on the raft. He was a body on a raft, dying of thirst. He felt words whisper from his swollen lips. It was a promise thrown at heaven, a promise he had not kept, a promise he had allowed himself to forget until just this instant: If you will save me, I will serve you forever. It was the last flashback he would ever have. Louie let go of Cynthia and turned toward Graham. He felt supremely alive. He began walking. “This is it,” said Graham. “God has spoken to you. You come on.” Cynthia kept her eyes on Louie all the way home. When they entered the apartment, Louie went straight to his cache of liquor. It was the time of night when the need usually took hold of him, but for the first time in years, Louie had no desire to drink. He carried the bottles to the kitchen sink, opened them, and poured their contents into the drain. Then he hurried through the apartment, gathering packs of cigarettes, a secret stash of girlie magazines, everything that was part of his ruined years. He heaved it all down the trash chute. In the morning, he woke feeling cleansed. Louie dug out the Bible that had been issued to him by the air corps and mailed home to his mother when he was believed

dead. He walked to Barnsdall Park, he found a spot under a tree, sat down, and began reading. Resting in the shade and the stillness, Louie felt profound peace. When he thought of his history, what resonated with him now was not all that he had suffered but the divine love that he believed had intervened to save him. He was not the worthless, broken forsaken man that the Bird had striven to make of him. In a single, silent moment, his rage, his fear, his humiliation and helplessness, had fallen away. That morning, he believed, he was a new creation. Softly, he wept.

4. And there are more stories of redemption – **Billions of them** since 30 AD – all including three elements

- a. *The convicting work of the Holy Spirit upon the human conscience*
- b. *The convincing power of the Holy Scriptures that invade the human mind*
- c. *The compassionate mission of the Church of Christ reaching out to human souls*

5. Jesus, as always, knew exactly what he was talking about:

Nevertheless, I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you. And when he comes, he will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment: concerning sin, because they do not believe in me; concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father, and you will see me no longer; concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged. (John 16:7-11)

6. **In the Summer of 1974**, a young man in graduate school went out on a date with a young girl who was his classmate.

- a. That June, just a month prior, the young lady had become a Christian.
- b. That evening she shared the Gospel with her boyfriend and they talked.
- c. She said to him, that night, “*You are not far from the Kingdom of God.*”
- d. She told him, the next day, that she could no longer go out with him. She was falling in love with him, but he was not a Christian.
- e. He graduated 3 weeks later, moved and began a new job.
- f. That first Sunday in his new hometown he attended church and signed up for a Bible study.
- g. Later, his friends invited him to their church and their Bible studies.
- h. Over a span of almost 2 years, the Holy Spirit worked in that young fellow’s soul...
- i. Convicting him of *sin* in his life, *righteousness* that he lacked, and *judgment* that was coming\
- j. Eventually, on a hot August night, he was converted – *almost one year to the day of that date with his Christian girlfriend.*

7. That young man was I. And I have joined the ranks of all those whom the Spirit has brought to Christ.

8. Perhaps today...this morning...right now, *You* might be ready to turn from your sin, receive the righteousness of Christ, and escape the judgment of God!

