

# The Holy Spirit

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[ 0 : 0 0 ] Dismissed our kids to children's ministry. One of the things I have grown to love about Providence Yeah, if I was back there, there's no way.

There's no way. One of the things that's exciting about the sanctuary remodel is I suspect that over the years Satan has sent various armies of squirrels into our ceiling and I suspect like he's got a team of little squirrel Navy SEAL types you know, squirrel special operators who like come and mess with us and so when we get all this exposed I suspect we might find a few bodies and also a few gnawed wires so we're looking forward to hopefully seeing new wires and a new lot of things come in September, starting in May.

Well, we are really going to be short on time today this is a massive endeavor we're undertaking and I have great sympathy for the attention spans of the people who have to listen to me so I don't think that the solution is just to talk longer I think I just need to get right to it We're going to talk about the Holy Spirit today The subject that we've probably neglected the most as we've examined Jesus' farewell discourse is all of the references and teachings he makes about the Holy Spirit and so we'll jump right into it and say first of all Jesus tells us that the role about the role the Holy Spirit plays in salvation and that's really what Jesus is talking about in our main text today John 16 1 through 11 What is salvation most fundamentally?

We often think of salvation as being something related to our sin we are saved from our sins we are saved from the guilt incurred because of our sins salvation is actually doing something much bigger than that the reason that we sin is because we cannot see God rightly without the Holy Spirit so in our natural state we do not see God as He is and this leads us to do dumb things sinful things so look at John 16 verse 1 I have said all these things to keep you from falling away they will put you out of the synagogues indeed the hour is coming when whoever kills you will think he is offering service to God and they will do these things because they have not known the Father nor me you see the problem there they are doing things wrong things with full affirmation of their conscience because they are ignorant of the reality of who God is so sin is actually not our main problem it goes deeper than that sin is simply a symptom of our inability to see God clearly and correctly now you will notice the reference to synagogues here

Jesus is specifically speaking here in particular about the Jews for the rest of the New Testament going all the way into the book of Revelation the Jews wind up being the primary antagonist to the gospel of Jesus Christ so that the majority not all but the majority of persecution that you see in the first century especially in the first half of the first century is taking place through the hands of the Jews why is that?

[ 4 : 1 4 ] well Paul says very clearly that this is because they do not see God rightly Romans 10 1-2 brothers my heart's desire and prayer to God for them speaking of his fellow Jewish brothers is that they be saved for I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God but not according to knowledge for being ignorant of the righteousness of God and seeking to establish their own they did not submit to God's righteousness and that's exactly what we see Jesus describing in John 16 they will kick you out of your synagogues they will even kill you and they will do all these things thinking they are offering service to God and this is because Jesus says they do not know the Father nor me so the early instances of persecution in the New Testament age are fundamentally or primarily rather

Jewish and Paul is an example of this he of course was a persecutor of the saints and he kept breathing murderous threats against the church until Jesus showed himself to him what cured Paul of his persecuting tendencies a vision of Jesus Christ and so when we talk about the Holy Spirit's role in salvation it's important to understand what he is doing amongst many things is he is revealing the truth to us about who God is we can see this quite clearly in 2 Corinthians 4:4 through 6 in their case Paul speaking about all unbelievers in their case the God of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ who is the image of God what's the real problem what do we really need to be saved from we need to be saved from spiritual blindness that keeps us from seeing the truth about God and so Paul prescribes a particular cure for this particular problem as he continues in 2 Corinthians he says for what we proclaim is not ourselves but Jesus Christ as Lord with ourselves as your servants for Jesus sake for God who said let light shine out of darkness has shown in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ Jesus salvation solves the problem of spiritual blindness and as we press into the scriptures we see that this is not merely a Jewish problem there are plenty of examples where we see the Gentiles doing the exact same thing for instance in Acts 17

Paul is walking into Athens and his deep monotheistic spirit is stirred to the core because he sees a land littered with idols but what does he do to correct them he tells them true things about God in Acts 17 verse 22 he speaks to the intellectuals of the day gathered in the Areopagus men of Athens I perceive that in every way you are very religious for as I passed along and observed the objects of your worship I found also an altar with this inscription to the unknown God what therefore you worship as unknown this I proclaim to you the God who made the world and everything in it being Lord the Lord of heaven and earth does not live in temples made by man nor is he served by human hands as though he needed anything since he himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything and from there he moves on to telling them specifically about Christ notice the word ignorance in verse 30 of Acts 17 the times of ignorance

God overlooked speaking specifically of the Gentiles but now he commands people everywhere to repent because he has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed and of this he has given full assurance to all by raising him from the dead so the big idea I'm trying to communicate related to the Holy Spirit's role in salvation is that the fundamental problem of all humanity both Jew and Gentile is a failure to see God rightly and it is this ignorance this inability to see God rightly that is sort of the engine that drives our sinful behavior the main idea here that we see in John 16:1 through 3 where Jesus talks about people sinning in great ways thinking they're serving God the main idea to take away there is that that's what everybody does every major religion and indeed every individualistic religion

I pause there for a second people who say they are not religious but spiritual people who claim to not be affiliated with any kind of religion I promise you this they actually have their own Sharia law written on their own hearts and it takes the contours of their culture and their appetites and their own feelings and so on and so forth everybody is a religious zealot everybody is a religious zealot and everybody does everything as a result of what they believe at a metaphysical level so the key is to get the metaphysics right to get the truth about God right because then that will lead downstream to right behavior and that's what salvation does and that's what the spirit does the spirit reveals the truth of God through the glory of Jesus Christ and that's actually kind of the whole kind of meta view of what salvation really is the Jews acted in ignorance in their own particular way the Gentiles acted in their own particular way in ignorance the problem is universal every major religion and every individualized religion it's all the same deal you get the wrong idea of God in your head and it will lead you to wrong actions and that's what the Holy Spirit has come to do it's come to give people the right idea about God namely by revealing

[ 10 : 40 ] Jesus Christ to the world now this brings up a second problem that Jesus is dealing with in this passage one problem human beings have the wrong idea about God they do wrong things thinking they're serving their understanding of God problem two right now to quote Michael Scott all of the disciples the totality of the church could fit in a rowboat like it's a very small group of people here they are all actually able probably more accurately to fit in a single room and so now you see a second problem that Jesus is speaking of when he brings up this idea of persecution and that is guys I'm about to set you out into a chaotic churning sea of self-righteous people who see God wrongly I'm about to send you out into a world full of people who will hurt you thinking they're doing the right thing and so Jesus in addition to explaining sort of what the Holy Spirit does to comfort to convict people he wants to say guys it's okay you are a small band you are a little fishing boat set out to go into the global sea of self-righteousness but you're going to be okay look at verse 4

John 16 verse 4 but I have said these things to you that when their hour comes the persecutors you may remember that I told them to you I did not say these things to you from the beginning because I was 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 where are you going but because I have said these things to you sorrow has filled your heart nevertheless here's our key 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 speaking of the spirit there 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 so he's saying listen I know this is scary the world is full of a sea of self-righteousness everyone acting in their own sort of the way that seems right to themselves and they're going to do all sorts of terrible things as a consequence of their terrible view of God but trust me when the spirit comes he will do a work on the world he will convict the world of sin righteousness and judgment primarily by showing them who Jesus is so 2,000 years have passed since this promise was made 2,000 years have passed since all of the Christians in the whole world could fit in a single room and they stared out into a stormy sea full of self-righteous people 2,000 years have passed and what we can see through a study of church history is that the promise of God has come to pass and is coming to pass

Habakkuk 2,14 is coming to pass Habakkuk 2,14 says for the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord that's Jesus Jesus is the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea the Holy Spirit has been for the last 2,000 years calming the seas of self-righteousness by revealing the truth of Christ what began as a small group of believers in a single room has now become a navy of Christians in local churches patrolling the waters and proclaiming the glory of God what appeared to be an impossible task when Jesus first sent them out now if we are looking carefully seems to be clear evidence that indeed the Holy Spirit has been doing what Jesus said he would do he has been systematically relentlessly convicting the world of sin righteousness and judgment he is going around the world even today showing people who are doing what's right in their own eyes showing them Christ and showing them therefore their own sin and the righteousness of Jesus and God's perfect standard for righteousness and the judgment to come guys think about it in the last 24 hours some Muslim in the Middle East woke up from their sleep having had a dream in which the Lord Jesus told them that he is the way the truth and the life some stubborn little atheistic troll deep in his mom's basement came to the knowledge of Jesus Christ in the last 24 hours think about that the Holy Spirit is doing exactly what Jesus promised he would do and we can see that quite clearly not only through church history but simply by reading the headlines the Holy Spirit is on the move

I talk about the Holy Spirit's work as a kind of merciful militancy by militancy I mean he aims to make Psalm 110 1 true that Jesus would sit at the right hand of the Father until he makes all of Jesus' enemies his footstool the Holy Spirit is out and on the move conquering lives for the sake of King Jesus so it's militant in that regard he's not going to let up but it's merciful in the way that God has chosen to destroy his enemies namely by bringing them to the cross and making them see that they have been crucified with Christ and no longer live and the life they now live they live by faith in the Son of God who loved them and gave himself up for them it's a merciful militancy it's a conquering through conversion not coercion coerct conversion the Holy Spirit simply keeps showing people

Jesus and this massive what once was a massive sea of self-righteousness the pagans doing it their way the Jews doing it their way it's getting calmer as the gospel of peace is spoken over the world day in and day out century after century so that's the Holy Spirit's work in salvation to show people who God really is and we see who God really is when we look at Jesus who Hebrews 1 says is the image of the invisible God the exact imprint and radiance of his glory so what about the Holy Spirit's work in sanctification you know there's some troubled waters out here there's also some troubled waters in here there's some self-righteousness out there there's also some self-righteousness in here and the same problem that the unconverted world has that causes them to sin is the same problem you and I have as we continue to sin and that is we simply need to see

[ 18 : 46 ] Christ more clearly and more consistently than we do the same thing that saves a person is the same thing that sanctifies a person that's why gospel centeredness works across all iterations or levels of the Christian life it works to save someone it works to sanctify someone what is the gospel the gospel is the revelation of Jesus Christ it's showing you showing the world showing me who Jesus is and so the Holy work the Holy Spirit's work in sanctification is the same as it is in salvation namely to show us Christ look at John 16 12 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 truth for he will not speak of his own authority but whatever he hears he will speak and he will declare it to you the things that are to come he will glorify me for he will take what is mine and declare it to you you see the Holy

Spirit's still doing the same thing he's still showing us Christ the disciples though saved still needed to be progressively sanctified they needed to bring their thoughts and their actions and their attitudes into conformity to the truth of God and you and I need that too and how do we get there with the same Holy Spirit that shows the ignorant world the reality of Christ and therefore brings them into salvation also shows us the glory of Christ and brings us into sanctification that's what Paul was talking about to begin with in 2nd Corinthians we read from 2nd Corinthians 4 where he's talking about the unbeliever but in 2nd Corinthians 3 he's talking about the believer and he says this in verse 16 but when one turns to the Lord the veil the blindness is removed now the Lord is the spirit and where the spirit of the Lord is there is freedom and we all with unveiled face beholding the glory of the

Lord are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another there's your sanctification progressive sanctification becoming more and more like Jesus that's what that means it's progressive from one degree of glory to another Paul says in 2nd Corinthians 3 how does this happen how does this transformation take place from one degree of glory to the other we'll look back what he said and we with unveiled face we don't have the blinders on behold the glory of the Lord that's Jesus and by beholding Jesus we are transformed from one degree of glory to the other how does the Holy Spirit affect salvation chosen Christ how does the Holy Spirit affect sanctification he shows us Christ this is really the main goal of the Holy Spirit so when Jesus says I have many things to say to you you can't bear them now but the Holy Spirit will say them to you he's saying the Holy

Spirit is going to keep doing the thing he's doing all along and that is he's going to keep showing you Christ now let's just we're not done but let's drop into realities I mean there's a lot you could do but here's a couple of ideas the first one is is that we have a tendency to be overwhelmed by the brokenness we see in the world we have a tendency to be overwhelmed by the brokenness we see in the world way back what feels like forever ago in 1995 Andrew the Bronco wrote a book called The Death of Satan how Americans have lost a gulf has opened up in our culture between the visibility of evil and the intellectual resources available for coping with it never before have images of horror been so widely disseminated and so appalling from organized death camps to children starving in famines that might have been averted rarely does a week go by without newspaper and television accounts of teenagers performing contract killings for a few women murdered on the street for their purses young men shot in the head for the keys to their jeep and these are only the domestic bulletins he goes on to say the repertoire of evil has never been richer yet never have our responses been so weak we have no language for connecting our inner lives with the horrors that pass before our eyes in the outer world the key takeaway

I want you to get from that quote is if that was true in 1995 how much more true is it now we literally sort of live in this world that feels like we're surrounded by IMAX screens that show tragedy nonstop it's like going to the sphere in Las Vegas and just accept it's Fox News you know it's like well this isn't going to encourage anybody what do we do with all of this evidence whether it's government corruption exceedingly perplexing and disturbing violence what do we do with all this well we got to stop looking at the sea and start looking at the spirit who is still hovering over the waters and forming a new creation on behalf of King Jesus we've got to understand that we have to avert or avoid the mistake Peter made when he attempted to walk on water with

[ 24 : 45 ] Jesus take your eyes off of all the troubles of this world don't be perplexed by this make sure you view all of this through the eyes of faith and understand that the Holy Spirit has been marching through both the institutions and the individuals of this world for 2,000 years his work is evident and you can trust that he will not stop or grow weary in doing good that's one thing we can do with these truths we can be reminded that we ought to look up more than out and as it relates to the question of sanctification the idea is the same right because one of the ways that we can be discouraged is to look out there and see all of this crazy foolish darkness we gotta look up and see the spirit and realize he's working well sometimes you can look in and see some pretty crazy foolish darkness and that too can be a great source of discouragement but there again

Jesus invites us to look not in but up and see that the Holy Spirit is equally relentless in our sanctification as he is in pursuing the salvation of the many lost that he will save even this week Holy Spirit this incredible gift to the world revealing the glory of Jesus curing all of the various calamities caused by ignorance he's engaged in a global work but he's engaged in a personal work and you can count him faithful in both regards you know if you really wanted to summarize what our spiritual forefathers in Christ most wanted us to understand it would be this issue of looking up and not in or out I think that for the most part if you could say to Martin

Luther to J.C. Ryle to John Owen to Jonathan Edwards to Charles Spurgeon give me your top three lessons that every single one of them would say in their top three stop looking in so much and start looking up J.C.

Ryle turn your eyes away from your own handiwork and look simply at Christ the less you pour over your own heart and the more you fix your thoughts on him the better Martin Luther therefore let us not look at our own righteousness or unrighteousness but let us look at Christ who is our righteousness sanctification and redemption Charles look away from self to Christ do not spend your time studying your own heart and character to see whether or not you're a Christian but get your eye on Christ the perfect pattern and leave the results with God John Owen let us live in the constant contemplation of the glory of Christ and virtue will proceed from him to repair all of our decays to renew a right spirit within us and to cause us to abound in all our duties of obedience praise God for the tremendous gift of the

Holy Spirit for he does the most important thing that needs to be done on the face of the earth he reveals the glory of God in the face of Christ Jesus and that is the cure all that is what fixes everything ultimately now I have one last point to consider we've seen the Holy Spirit's work in salvation we've seen the Holy Spirit's work in sanctification but I also want to make sure you understand that the Holy Spirit chooses almost exclusively to work through scripture this is important the Holy Spirit chooses almost exclusively to do this Christ revealing work both to save and sanctify through scripture Jesus hints at this in John 16 where he says the Holy Spirit will come and he will take all that I have and reveal it to you but he's more explicit in earlier on in the farewell discourse in chapter 14 verse 25 listen to this but Jesus this is all still the same talk

[ 29 : 25 ] John 14 15 16 is all the same talk and Jesus is just kind of going back to these themes he's doing the weave and he brings this up in John 14 25 these things I have spoken to you while I am still with you but the helper the Holy Spirit whom the Father will send in my name he will teach you all things life changer underline and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you friends let me be super clear about something the way that the Holy Spirit saves people is by sending out preachers with the word of God the way the Holy Spirit saves people is through the word of God the way he reveals Jesus to people is through the word of God Romans 10 13 for everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved but how then will they be saved how then will they call on him in whom they have not believed and how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard and how are they to hear without someone preaching likewise

Holy Spirit's sanctifying work in your life will follow the same pattern he will use the Bible to reveal Christ to you and this is important because you need to understand not all Christians will experience the Holy Spirit equally and this is not because God is playing favorites but rather because the Holy Spirit tends to only use the amount of Bible each believer knows that's what Jesus is speaking of in John 14 he says the Holy Spirit will bring to mind all the remember help you to remember remember he's not giving you new things he's letting you access the stuff you've already heard from God's word the Holy Spirit's primary power lies in helping you remember the word you've previously read so friends your experience with the Holy

Spirit is pretty significantly going to be pinned and fixed to your time in the Holy Scriptures if you wonder what would it be like optimally to experience the Holy Spirit well I can tell you as someone who's been reading the word and studying it for a long time what that looks like is when you go through your day because you've got all this scripture in the database the Holy Spirit carefully goes through quickly by the way perfectly and grabs something you've already hidden in your heart that applies to this particular or that particular circumstance and so it is very much similar for my computer nerds fellow computer nerd it's very much similar to a concept like augmented reality where you're walking around and you see the world Tony Stark style right but superimposed on your understanding of the world are all of these scriptures that you've put into your heart and the

Holy Spirit is the one pulling those things up and giving you wisdom for your life and giving you truth giving you insight and so the people who are going to experience the Holy Spirit the most are the people who have the most scripture hidden in their hearts think of it this way most of us because we're all we live in Kansas City most of us understand that quarterbacks have speakers in their helmets and that the offensive coordinator speaks through a microphone communicating plays calling plays to the quarterback and I think at least many of the football fans understand that that dynamic is wildly different for a brand new quarterback who only knows a few plays and a seasoned quarterback who has the playbook memorized frontwards and backwards friends we live in particular in a city that gets the Holy Spirit wrong a lot and its main error has to do with somehow imagining that the Holy Spirit and the scriptures function separate from one another and is simply not the case the Holy Spirit wrote those scriptures and he gives you the power to understand them and apply them in real time so I'll just tell you point blank your experience with the Holy Spirit whatever sensations you may claim is not actually experience with the Holy Spirit unless it comes through the word and makes much of Christ the truth is is that much of the hyper charismatic movement both in this city and elsewhere focuses almost entirely on sensualism everything about it is rooted in sensualism including their view of the Holy Spirit and when you pull certain rocks up you find the worms of sensuality everywhere and it's connected both to their view of the Holy Spirit their view of authority to everything

I'll do a podcast on it this week well in reality dumb lame I would be absolutely labeled by those people as spiritually dead absolutely but in reality I spent 30 plus years meditating on the word of God and now due to his grace alone frequently experience the Holy Spirit's work in the way that Jesus says he works by calling to mind and bringing to remembrance what he has previously told me so to summarize the sermon we just say three things one don't be dismayed by the massive sea of self-righteousness you see out in the world all the darkness and ignorance it does come from a place of self-righteousness people are doing what is right in their own eyes don't be dismayed by that don't look out at the choppy seas look up at the Spirit hovering above the waters consistently ruthlessly militantly convicting the world of sin righteousness and judgment he's already done a tremendous work we have no reason to doubt him secondly don't be dismayed by the lack of progress in your own personal conformity to Christ the same Spirit who is converting people is also conforming you and he has the same gung-ho attitude about you that he does about them he will surely do it he will surely do it love that and third don't neglect the Bible if you want to experience the Spirit don't neglect the Bible it's what the Holy Spirit uses to do his work now turning to communion

[ 36 : 46 ] I want to make sure I have one aspect of this particularly clear the text begins John 16 begins with Jesus saying there's going to be this period of time when people do terrible murderous things thinking they're offering service to God and he's talking to them about them but the reason we have we have this table is because well before they got to them the apostles they got to him Jesus the truth is is that God used both Jewish and Gentile ignorance to accomplish his cruciform purposes so you have these two worldviews that were constantly hostile to one another Judaism and paganism and they found unusual unity common cause on one issue in particular that man needs to die and together they crucified the Lord of glory but I want you to hear what

Peter says in Acts 2 about that teaming up of these two discordant parties that crucified the Lord of glory Peter says all of it all of it took place according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God the thing we've learned about the Holy Spirit today is just part of a larger lesson and that is God always wins God always wins and one of the things he has won is many of you and he has you in mind in initiating this table he has won you and he will keep you by reminding you over and over again of who he is and what he has done for you so Jesus is your Lord and Savior and you can see that the Holy Spirit has once cured you of your spiritual blindness but Jesus knows your vision still gets a little fuzzy and so he has given us this table by which we remember who he is and what he has done for us so if Jesus is your Lord and Savior come today and taste and see that the Lord is good come receive these elements return to your seat and I'll lead us in partaking of them what do you do