

INTRODUCTION

I love to study the American Presidents. One of my favorites was Calvin Coolidge. He was called "Silent Cal" because he was known as a man of few words and yet he possessed a dry sense of humor. One of my favorite stories comes from when Calvin Coolidge was Vice President under Warren G. Harding, which made him President of the U.S. Senate. One day there was a heated debate on the floor of the Senate and one of the Senators told another one, "Well, you can just go to hell!" The offended Senator appealed to Coolidge and said, "Mr. President, he can't talk to me like that can he?" Coolidge looked down and thumbed through the rulebook for a few moments and said, "Why, yes, he can tell you to go to hell." Then Coolidge paused and said, "But you don't have to go if you don't want to." There was a lot of laughter and the tension level was lowered.

As I reflect on that story, the devil would love for you to go to hell. But the Holy Spirit came to convince you that you don't have to go if you don't want to.

Let's remember the setting of this passage. It's the night before the crucifixion. Jesus and the eleven disciples are on the way to the Garden of Gethsemane. On the way, Jesus shared some powerful teaching in these final words before the cross. He is telling the disciples that He is going away, but He is going to send a helper, a counselor—the Holy Spirit. He said, "I have been WITH you, but He will be IN you."

John used a special word for the Holy Spirit that we only find five times in the New Testament. In Greek, it's the word "*Paraclete*." It is comprised of two words, *para*, which means alongside, and *kaleo* which means to be called. It literally means, "one called alongside." It's translated different ways—as Comforter, Counselor, Helper, and Advocate. But I like just calling the Holy Spirit the Paraclete.

I was teaching on this once and someone asked me, "Now what did you say about the parakete?" It's *paraclete*.

When I was taking Greek in college, there was one test where we were asked to define "*Paraclete*." One of my classmates hadn't paid attention, so next to the word "*Paraclete*" he wrote, "Two football shoes." Our professor got such a laugh out of it that he gave him credit. But *paraclete* means the Holy Spirit.

John 15:26-27: "When the Counselor [Paraclete] comes, the one I will send to you from the Father—the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father—he will testify about me. You also will testify, because you have been with me from the beginning."

There should be no chapter break here, so keep reading in John 16:1:

John 16:1-15. "I have told you these things to keep you from stumbling. They will ban you from the synagogues. In fact, a time is coming when anyone who kills you will think he is offering service to God. They will do these things because they haven't known the Father or me. But I

have told you these things so that when their time comes you will remember I told them to you. I didn't tell you these things from the beginning, because I was with you. But now I am going away to him who sent me, and not one of you asks me, 'Where are you going?' Yet, because I have spoken these things to you, sorrow has filled your heart. Nevertheless, I am telling you the truth. It is for your benefit that I go away, because if I don't go away the Counselor [Paraclete] will not come to you. If I go, I will send him to you. When he comes, he will convict the world about sin, righteousness, and judgment: About sin, because they do not believe in me; about righteousness, because I am going to the Father and you will no longer see me; and about judgment, because the ruler of this world has been judged.

"I still have many things to tell you, but you can't 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, but he will speak whatever he hears. He will also declare to you what is to come. He will glorify me, because he will take from what is mine and declare it to you. Everything the Father has is mine. This is why I told you that he takes from what is mine and will declare it to you."

For many Christians, the Holy Spirit is a mystery. I grew up in a Southern Baptist Church, and I don't recall ever hearing one full message on the Holy Spirit. But we must remember that the Holy Spirit is the third person of the Godhead. He is co-equal and co-eternal with the Father and the Son. There are many different names of the Holy Spirit in the New Testament. Here are some of them: He's called the Holy Ghost in the King James Version. But Holy Ghost and Holy Spirit have the same meaning. He's called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, Spirit of Truth, Spirit of Jesus, Spirit of Jesus Christ, Spirit of the Lord, Spirit of the Living God, The Eternal Spirit, The Spirit of Life, The Spirit of your Father, The Spirit of the Son and just the Spirit.

When Jesus ascended to Heaven, He returned in the person of the Holy Spirit to live in believers. So when we talk about having Jesus live in our hearts, it is the Spirit of Jesus. But note that Jesus said the Holy Spirit won't bear witness to Himself, instead He will testify of Jesus. So when you have the Holy Spirit living in you, you'll talk more about Jesus than you will the Holy Spirit.

In the passage Jesus basically gives us the three-fold job description of the Holy Spirit. We see this in our key verse of John 16:8: "When he comes, he will convict the world about sin, righteousness, and judgment." So there are our three points: Sin, righteousness and judgment.

I. SIN: THE HOLY SPIRIT SHOWS US WHAT'S WRONG.

We are all sinners, but there are two kinds of sinners in this world. There are forgiven sinners and lost sinners. But it is the Holy Spirit who reveals sin to us. Jesus said, "About sin because they do not believe in me." (John 16:9 CSB) So the Holy Spirit relates to lost people and Christians in two different ways.

A. He convicts lost people of unbelief.

We are all sinners by nature and by choice. That means we are born with a sin nature. You don't have to teach a little child to be selfish or to lie—it is built into our DNA. But we reach an age where we know the difference between right and wrong, and then we choose to commit sin. That's the point where we become accountable to God for our sin and we must seek Jesus for forgiveness. But our sinful nature also wants us to deny that we're sinful. We say to ourselves, "Oh, I'm not THAT bad." So in order to become aware of our sinful condition, the Holy Spirit convicts us.

I think it's a perfect time for us to focus on the work of the Holy Spirit today, because today is Pentecost Sunday. It's seven weeks since Easter. Pentecost was and is a Jewish festival that marked 50 days from Passover, thus the name Pente-cost. But for Christians it also marks the birth of the church. Because it was on the Day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit came and filled those 120 disciples gathered in the upper room. Filled with the Holy Spirit, Peter began to preach the Gospel with great power and boldness. And those hearing His words came under conviction of their sin. We read in Acts 2:37-38: "When they heard this, they were pierced to the heart [that's conviction] and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, 'Brothers, what should we do?' Peter replied, 'Repent and be baptized, each of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.'" Three-thousand of them repented and were baptized. It was the Holy Spirit who pierced their hearts and showed them their need for Jesus.

I was a nine-year-old boy when I experienced the conviction of the Holy Spirit. I had been in church all my life and could tell you the story of the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. But on this particular night, I first became aware that it was MY sin that sent Jesus to the cross. Like those people in Acts 2 I was pierced to the heart. My heart was broken and I gave my life to Jesus that night. Do you recall when you first experienced the conviction of the Holy Spirit?

B. He guides believers into obedience.

Once you trust Jesus, the Holy Spirit plays a different role. Rather than convicting us of sin, He guides us in the way we should live. Jesus said, "When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth." (John 16:13 CSB)

The map apps on our phones are pretty reliable now. But do you recall the early days of GPS? Sometimes the GPS could steer you wrong. I used a GPS to try to attend a meeting of the BCFS in San Antonio once and the GPS led me straight to the front gate of Lackland Air Force Base and the guard with a firearm said, "Sir, you're not supposed to be here, please turn around and leave."

But the Holy Spirit always guides us toward truth and obedience. But we must surrender control of our lives to Him. Have you ever seen the bumper sticker that says, "God is my co-pilot?" God doesn't want to be your co-pilot. He wants to be in control. It's the difference

between having Jesus as a passenger in your car, and you're behind the wheel, you'll make some wrong turns for sure. Instead, you should say, "Jesus I surrender control of my life to you. You take the wheel and I'll be the passenger."

In 1 Thessalonians 5 Paul writes, "Don't quench the Spirit." Do you know what I think that means? Sometimes you get an impression from the Holy Spirit to do something kind or loving for someone. You get a sense, "You know, I should write that person a note of encouragement." Or "I should give that person a gift card just to show them I love them." That may be the prompting of the Holy Spirit. And then when you just forget about it and don't follow through, that's quenching the Holy Spirit.

II. RIGHTEOUSNESS: HE SHOWS US WHAT'S RIGHT.

When Jesus talks about righteousness He's not talking about goodness or right behavior. He's talking about right standing before God. Jesus was the standard for righteousness, so when He returned to Heaven we would need the Holy Spirit to show us how to have right standing before a Holy God. Jesus said, "About righteousness, because I am going to the Father and you will no longer see me." (John 16:10 CSB)

When it comes to righteousness most people are really confused. As human beings, we believe we understand what righteousness is.

A. We think we know the right way.

If you ask the average person on the street how they think they can go to Heaven, the #1 answer is to be good or to do good. But this kind of thinking leads to death. The Bible says in Proverbs 14:12: "There is a way that seems right to a person, but its end is the way to death."

I read about a 19-year-old man who died in Dallas one night. He was driving on one of the expressways and there was some construction going on. He got confused and bypassed some warning barriers and drove right off an uncompleted exit ramp and crashed. There were no tire marks. In other words, right up until the fatal moment he thought he was on the right road. Sadly, there are a lot of people who believe that they will get to Heaven by doing more good deeds than bad deeds. That's a road that leads to eternal death.

B. Jesus offers us His righteousness.

Righteousness is not something you can earn. It is a gift that God bestows on us when we trust Jesus as our Savior. Since I've been pastor, I've asked this question of our congregation. "How many of you are righteous, hold up your hand." Not many people hold up their hands. Then I ask, "How many of you are going to Heaven when you die?" And many hands go up. I said, "Well, we have a problem, here because only those who are righteous will be in Heaven. I realize it's a confusing question, because when I ask, "How many of you are righteous?" you think I'm asking if you are self-righteous. And the Bible says all our self-righteousness is as filthy rags. But God offers us the gift of the righteousness of Jesus.

Consider this powerful promise: "He made the one who did not know sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God." (2 Corinthians 5:21 CSB) What a great exchange! On the cross Jesus took my sin, and when I trust Him, and He comes to live in me in the person of the Spirit of Jesus, I am declared righteous.

Years ago I read a novel about an American Ambassador who was serving in a South American country. One of the U.S. soldiers who worked at the Embassy had been arrested by the local government and charged with spying. He was declared guilty and was set to be killed by a firing squad. The Ambassador was a brave man who stood before the officer in charge of the firing squad and said, "This man is an American citizen and you cannot execute him." The officer said, "He is a spy and he will be shot." Then the Ambassador produced an American flag and he walked up to the soldier who was tied up and wrapped the flag around him. Then the Ambassador turned to the officer in charge and said, "If you shoot this man all the power the Sovereign United States of America represented by this flag will retaliate on your country." That was enough to convince the government and the soldier was released.

The devil is the accuser of the believers and he wants to try to remind you how dirty and filthy you are. But you need to understand that if the Spirit of Jesus is dwelling in you, when God looks at you, He sees you wrapped in the pure white robes of the righteousness of Jesus Christ.

III. JUDGMENT: THE HOLY SPIRIT SHOWS US WHAT'S COMING.

The Bible says every person is destined to die and after that to face judgment. One of the jobs of the Holy Spirit is to confirm in our hearts that we will all face judgment. Jesus said, "And about judgment, because the ruler of this world has been judged." (John 16:11 CSB) The ruler of this present world is the devil. But he is the ruler over a dead, depraved world. The Holy Spirit reveals to aspects about judgment to us.

A. Satan has been judged and condemned.

Sometimes we don't give the devil his due, but more often we give him *more* than he's due. The devil isn't some lesser god, or the dark side of the force. He is a fallen angel. Ever since he tried to exalt himself above God, he's been going down, down, down. This isn't some cosmic battle that is still up for grabs and God finally wins with a last second field goal. The devil is a defeated foe and He knows it. He has been tried, judged, and condemned. The only thing that hasn't happened yet is his sentence. But we read about it in Revelation 20:10: "The devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur where the beast and the false prophet are, and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever." I like to remind the devil as often as I can that he should keep reading Revelation 20:10. He is a defeated foe.

B. People will be judged by how they respond to Jesus.

We will all face judgment after we die, but the kind of judgment depends on how we respond to God's offer of eternal life. Those who reject God's offer will face a judgment of condemnation

described in Revelation 20:15. It says, "And everyone whose name was not found written in the Lamb's book of life was cast into the lake of fire which is the second death."

But if you know Jesus and His Holy Spirit lives in you, there will be NO condemnation. We'll appear before the judgment seat of Christ—but this isn't a judgment of condemnation, it is a judgement of commendation when God will pass out rewards. It's like the medal ceremony at the Olympics. Which judgment you face depends on how you respond to Jesus. Paul preached this powerful warning to the Greek philosophers in Athens. "Therefore, having overlooked the times of ignorance, God now commands all people everywhere to repent, because he has set a day when he is going to judge the world in righteousness by the man he has appointed. He has provided proof of this to everyone by raising him from the dead." (Acts 17:30-31 CSB)

CONCLUSION

When I was a pastor in Alabama, a lady in our church introduced me to her sister, Elizabeth, who was visiting from Vero Beach, Florida. Elizabeth was having some problems in her marriage and came to stay with her sister. After the first Sunday Elizabeth was in church she came up to me after the service. I thought she'd say something like, "That was a nice message, pastor." But instead, she was angry. She said, "You're wrong! If there is a God He would never send anyone to hell. I'm a good person and I don't need to be saved. And for you to claim that Jesus is the only way to Heaven is offensive to me and any other intelligent person." Elizabeth stormed off, and her sister apologized for her behavior.

What I didn't know is that Elizabeth's sister had gotten three or four cassette tapes of my messages and asked her to listen to them. So Elizabeth listened to the tapes and wrote me a scathing letter about how wrong I was. But her sister told me Elizabeth would listen to those same cassette tapes over and over again.

A few weeks later, I saw on my calendar that Elizabeth and her sister had set up and appointment to come see me. When I saw that on my schedule, I thought, "Uh oh. This isn't going to be fun."

I'll never forget that afternoon when my assistant showed them into my office. Elizabeth had those cassette tapes in her hand and before she sat down she threw those cassette tapes at me and hit me in the chest. Then she said, "You were right. I was wrong! I don't know what happened, but I have come to believe what you say about the Bible and Jesus."

So we sat down and I shared the plan of salvation with Elizabeth and she trusted the Lord. I later heard that she returned to Florida and led her husband to Christ. What happened? It wasn't my preaching that convinced Elizabeth. It was the conviction of the Holy Spirit. Sad stories may bring tears, and scary stories may bring fears, but only the Spirit of God can bring true conviction for our need for Jesus.

Would you like to trust Jesus today?

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For the Joy...
Pastor David Dykes



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