

Growing Spiritually: The Holy Spirit
John 14:15-26; 15:1-11
Sermon Outline

Introduction: Many people these days express an interest in spiritual growth. Jesus is more interested in spiritual growth than we are and has given the Holy Spirit so that we may abound in it.

I) What does the Holy Spirit do?

He brings God into our lives

14.20: In that day you will know that I am in the Father and you are in me and I in you.

A) The Holy Spirit brings the truth of God into our lives

14.16: The Father will give you another Helper...even the Spirit of truth.

14.25-26: ...he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said

The New Testament

Some implications:

- Spirituality is not primarily about you
- Spiritual questing without Scriptural immersion is a dead end

B) The Holy Spirit brings the love of God into our lives

14.23: If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him.

Love: not just to us, but into us; not just human love, but divine love

Implication:

- True spirituality isn't about you; it's about us
- Pursuing God in isolation quenches the Spirit.

C) The Holy Spirit brings God's presence to us

14.18: I will not leave you as orphans. I will come to you

16.16: ...He will give you another Helper to be with you forever

He doesn't just do things: he is there.

Not an invitation to quench or grieve; but a great relief.

II) What do we do to cultivate the ministry of the Spirit in us?

Obey Jesus

14.15: If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father and he will give you another Helper.

14.21: Whoever has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me. And he...will be loved by my Father, and I ...will manifest myself to him.

14.23: If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him...

Questions for Reflection this Week

- 1) How would you define a spiritual person? How is this different, if it is, from how someone on Oprah might define a spiritual person? Why the difference—if there is one? Why not—if there is not?
- 2) How many references are there in John 14 to the teaching and truth-giving ministry of the Holy Spirit? Why is this important, particularly in the light of popular notions of what it means to be a spiritual person?
- 3) Reflect on the following: “If you are interested in spiritual growth essentially because you are looking for a way to be happy, to self-actualize, to succeed or to cope, the Holy Spirit will disappoint you. He may even resist you. For his essential aim is to make God known.”
- 4) If our spiritual questing is heavy on prayer but light on the Bible, we will not grow spiritually, for by that omission we quench the Spirit in his truth-giving mission. Do an inventory on the relative weight you give to the Scriptures in your personal devotional life, in your small group life, and in the spiritual dynamic at home. If there is an imbalance, what can you do to redress it?
- 5) Reflect on the following: “Everybody wants love. And here, in the mission of the Holy Spirit according to John 14.23, love comes not only to us, but into us. And the love that comes is not simply human love; it is essential and eternal love, the love that has always been, the love by which all other love is measured, and the love from which all true love flows.”
- 6) Why, if the Holy Spirit has brought the love of the Father and the Son into the church, is the church so often weak in love? What can we do about this problem?
- 7) Reflect on the following: “It is immensely consoling to know that the Holy Spirit is simply with us (John 14.16)—that, like a good friend, he isn’t going to leave us. Sent by the Father, who already gave his Son to pay for our sins, and sent by the Son, who willingly bore all our sins away, he is there for the duration. No sin can surprise him or shock him into leaving. No rudeness or indifference will ultimately drive him off. No hiding or unexplained behavior will make him give up on the relationship.”
- 8) Look at vv. 15, 21, and 23. They all command us to love Jesus by obeying him, and they all say (either explicitly or implicitly) that obeying Jesus issues in the Father’s sending of the Spirit. Why the link between obedience and the Spirit? Does obedience earn the Spirit—or somehow obligate the Father to act? If not, then what is the dynamic?
- 9) Jesus says that to love him is to obey him, and, by implication, not to obey him is not to love him. Identify one area where you are presently disobeying Jesus and ask for the Spirit’s help to change.