

WHEN THE SPIRIT COMES

JOHN 15:26-27; 16:7-15

(Prepared by Gene Thompson using LifeWay's ETB material.)

1. What news sources do you trust to report the truth?
2. Can two people watch the same event and come away with different accounts of the event?
3. How do you know a source can be trusted?

Two reporters can cover the same event and yet walk away with very different stories if they consult different sources. If we read both reporters' stories, we may wonder if we can trust either to be accurate or discredit one based on our own bias.

This becomes more complicated when we consider issues that impact our lives and the lives of others. We need a reliable source we can trust. The Holy Spirit is that trustworthy Source!

4. When it comes to spiritual truths who or what can be trusted? (God's Word and the Holy Spirit.) Jesus identified the "Spirit of truth." He wants believers to trust the Spirit to guide them to do what's right. Today's passage offers details about the Holy Spirit's ministry.

TESTIFY! Read John 15:26-27

1. Consider your knowledge about the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Which one would you feel like you know the most about, and which one do you know the least about?

Some churches all but ignore the Holy Spirit, while other churches put way too much emphasis on Him. But Jesus wanted His disciples to have a solid understanding of the Spirit. (If you have the "Learning Pack, handout copies of item 14, "The Role of the Holy Spirit." Encourage members to read it this week.)

2. According to these two verses, what will the Holy Spirit do when he comes? (He will come along beside them as a counselor and testify about Jesus.)

The Holy Spirit is called "the Counselor" or parakletos here because He will come along beside the believer.

3. How do you think the disciples responded to what Jesus said? (They were confused and did not understand but would later after the Holy Spirit comes.)

Notice all three persons of the Trinity are mentioned here. The reason the disciple's witness is so powerful is that "you have been with me from the beginning."

"There is a progression of authority for missions in this discourse: The Father sends the Son, the Father and Son send the Spirit, and the Triune Godhead sends the church to the world."—Grant Osborne. We do not go into the world alone; we go in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Testifying about Jesus (and helping us testify about Him) is only part of the Spirit's work in the world. Jesus shared more about the Spirit's ministry in chapter 16.

CONVICTS! Read John 16:7-11

Before anyone asks the question, it is not clear why the Holy Spirit cannot come until Jesus ascends to the right hand of the Father. However, we should not assume the Holy Spirit and Jesus could not co-exist. The three Persons of the Godhead are co-existent, co-equal, and co-eternal. The Spirit was involved in Jesus' miraculous conception and was present at His baptism. He also led Jesus into the desert to be tempted by Satan.

1. What did Jesus promise the disciples? (He would send the Holy Spirit.)

Jesus' departure was a blessing. Through the Spirit, they would accomplish so much more than they could have without Him. If Jesus remained on the earth all His disciples would want to be with Him, if He left the Holy Spirit would actually live in the heart of every believer and be able to spread around the entire world. Jesus had to go for them to experience the fullness of the Spirit in their lives.

2. What would you rather have...the Spirit in you, or Jesus physically with you? Acts 1:1 “In my former book...I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and to teach until the day He was taken up to heaven.” What Jesus did for His 33 years on earth was only what He began to do and to teach. His ministry continues through His Spirit in the church.

3. What is the Holy Spirit’s job? (“Convict the world about sin, righteousness, and judgment.”)

Josh Moody: “The Spirit stirs in people a sense that things are not as they should be, that their lives are not as they were meant to be, and that there is some accounting still to come.”

4. Why do people need to be convicted of sin? (To realize we are lost and without hope in our sin. We have missed the mark.)

We must be convicted of sin before we realize we need a Savior. The only unpardonable sin is rejection of Jesus.

When Jesus was here with His disciples, He showed them what it meant to live a righteous life, now the Holy Spirit convicts us of our unrighteousness.

5. Do most people believe they are sinners?

Mark Batterson: “Our salvation cost us nothing, but it demands everything. Many Christians are in spiritual no-man’s-land. We’re too Christian to enjoy sin and too sinful to enjoy Christ. We’ve got just enough Jesus to be informed, but not enough to be transformed.”

6. What does it mean to convict the world of judgment? (The prince of this world now stands condemned. The prince of this world—the devil or Satan—is cast out and defeated by the work of Christ. Jesus drives him away from those who are under his influence.)

The believer’s slavery under sin has already been broken by Christ and is henceforth a thing of the past.

7. How can we, as believers, cooperate with the Holy Spirit to bring people to repentance and faith? (Share our testimony with others. Plant a seed in someone’s life and pray for the Holy Spirit to use it to bring them to salvation.)

GUIDES! Read John 16:12-15

1. If you had to choose someone to speak on your behalf, who would it be?

2. Why would you consider that person a trustworthy spokesperson?

Jesus still had a lot to tell the disciples, but they still weren’t ready to hear it all. He knew that the Spirit would help them work through their pain and confusion, while teaching them everything they needed to know.

3. What is the significance of Jesus calling the Counselor the “Spirit of truth”? (He will speak only what he hears from the Son and the Son only speaks what He hears from the Father.)

4. Why is it necessary for us to have a Guide when it comes to the truth? (Truth is discovered as we read God’s Word and listen to the Holy Spirit who lives in us. Like Jesus, He only shares what He hears from the Father. As He shares those messages, He brings glory to the Son.)

SUMMARY AND CHALLENGE!

Read the following passages and identify the work of the Holy Spirit found in each passage:

- John 14:26 Teach and remind what Jesus said
- John 16:7-8 Convict of sin, righteousness and judgment
- John 16:13-15 Guide, speak what He hears and declare what is to come
- Romans 8:26-27 Intercedes, according to God’s will
- Eph. 1:13 Sealed with the Holy Spirit
- 2 Tim. 3:16 Inspires Scripture.
- Titus 3:4-6 Renewal by the Holy Spirit He poured out on us abundantly

1. What questions and situations did the Holy Spirit use to move you toward Jesus?

2. How can you help others be more open to hearing God’s truth?

3. In what areas of your life do you need the Holy Spirit's guidance?
4. What is the Holy Spirit telling you about sin, righteousness, and judgment?
5. How might the Holy Spirit use this study to help you increase your understanding of yourself and of the truth?

Pray thanking God for sending His Spirit to live in us!