

The Remarkable Range of the Holy Spirit's Ministry

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[0 : 0 0] And we're now going to turn to our Bible reading for this evening. Edward Lobb is preaching to us again, continuing his series through what is known as the farewell or the upper room discourse in John's Gospel. And this evening, we're going to be reading from John! chapter 16. So do grab a Bible. If you don't have one with you, we've got plenty of visitors' ones, the red Bibles at the front, at the sides. If you would like one, don't know where they are, wave your hand. Someone in the welcome team would love to get one to you. And do open up and follow along. If you're using one of those, it's page 902. And we're going to read John! chapter 16, beginning verse 1 through to 15.

And Jesus says, I have said all these things to you 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. But I have said these things to you, that when there are comes, you may remember that I told them to you. 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.

[2 : 4 7] 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.

Well, amen. This is God's word and we'll return to it shortly. Well, good evening, friends. Very good to see you all here. Let's turn to John's gospel, chapter 16.

And our passage is the first 15 verses of that chapter. So John's gospel, chapter 16, 1 to 15. And my title this evening is The Remarkable Range of the Holy Spirit's Ministry.

Now, if you've been here in recent weeks, you'll know that we're working our way through chapters 14, 15 and 16 of John's gospel. And this is the section of Jesus's teaching, which is known as the upper room discourse, because Jesus and his apostles are sitting together in a first floor room, having just shared the annual Passover meal together.

But on this occasion, the Passover meal was unique because it was the last supper and Jesus was about to be crucified on the following day. Now, he knew that he was to be executed on the next day.

[4 : 1 6] And he knew that he was to be raised two days subsequently. And he knew that 40 days after his resurrection, he was to be taken up to glory, to be with his father.

But the apostles did not know these things. They'd been living very closely with Jesus for about three years. And on several occasions, he had explained to them that he was to be crucified and raised from the dead.

But they couldn't get their heads around this extraordinary information. He had told them very clearly, but they simply could not understand how such a thing might be possible.

Crucified, dead, buried, raised from the grave. How could such things be? One of the features of the four Gospels is that the apostles only very gradually began to see what was really going on.

They only very gradually began to perceive who Jesus was. And we can hardly blame them. After all, had God ever before in the history of the world appeared in human form as a flesh and blood man?

[5 : 28] He had not. So the apostles were like men stumbling about in the dark and largely failing to find their bearings. Jesus could see the end from the beginning.

But the apostles couldn't even see the beginning. But the fact is that on that Thursday evening, they were on the brink of witnessing the most important events in the history of the world.

The events that effectively separated B.C. from A.D., the era before Christ to the era Anno Domini, the year of our Lord. Before Christ, the history of the world was looking forward to the outpouring of grace and truth with the coming of Jesus.

And since the coming of Christ, we have dated the centuries back to the year of his birth. But the birth of Christ only happened in order to make the death, the resurrection and the ascension possible.

They are the crucial events, the death, resurrection and ascension. And in these chapters of John's gospel, Jesus is teaching his apostles and us how to understand these things.

[6 : 40] At a very basic level, John 14, 15 and 16 are teaching us world history and how to interpret it rightly. Now, the apostles came to understand these things clearly at a later date.

But at this stage in the upper room, they are just beginning to see one or two chinks of light shining in the darkness. In particular, they're beginning to grasp the idea that Jesus has to go, that he has to leave them.

I forget whether it was Romeo to Juliet or Juliet to Romeo, but one of those lovebirds said to the other, parting is such sweet sorrow. But there was nothing sweet in the apostles' view of Jesus being parted from them.

It was total sorrow as far as they were concerned. As Jesus says to the apostles in our passage at verse 6, Because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your hearts.

These 11 men are shaken and sad and bewildered at this point. But you'll see that the very next verse, verse 7, begins with a big nevertheless.

[7 : 51] And what Jesus says after that nevertheless is going to lift their sorrow and open out their view of world history. But we'll come back to that. Just look again at verse 6.

Because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your heart. What things has Jesus said to bring sorrow into their hearts? Well, as I've just mentioned, he's been telling them that he has to go, to leave.

He says it in verse 5. But now I am going to him who sent me. But he's been saying exactly that right since the back end of chapter 13. If you look back to chapter 13 and verse 33.

13, 33. He says to them, where I am going, there's the word going again, you cannot come. In chapter 13, verse 36, Simon Peter begins to take this on board.

Because he says to Jesus, Lord, where are you going? Jesus answers him rather cryptically. But when he gets to chapter 14, verse 2, he is explicit.

- [8 : 56] He is going to his father's house to prepare a place for the apostles. So that finally, they should go there too, to be with him. And he mentions his going at two or three other points before we get to chapter 16, verse 5.

But there are other things that Jesus has been saying to them, which can only have filled their hearts with sorrow and foreboding. Particularly, the passage we looked at last week.

Chapter 15, verses 18 to 25. Perhaps you just look back to chapter 15, verse 18. If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you.

And then look at verse 20. If they persecuted me, which they certainly did, they will also persecute you. Even the most rhinoceros skinned human being shrinks from being hated and persecuted.

But there's worse still to come. Look at chapter 16, verse 2. 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.

- [10 : 08] So it's not only the prospect of Jesus leaving them. It's the prospect of hatred, persecution, and martyrdom that is filling their hearts with fear and sorrow.

I discovered just the other day that there's an old tradition that says that every one of the apostles, everyone apart from John, was martyred.

So this upper room discourse is not for the faint-hearted. How is it then that the apostles, obviously so sorrowful and weak at this stage, how is it that somehow they became so bold and so committed to Jesus that they were prepared to die for him rather than deny him?

The reason must be that Jesus also brings them great comfort and assurance in this discourse. It isn't all challenge and foreboding. So he says at the beginning of chapter 14, very beginning of the chapter, let not your hearts be troubled.

He says the same words at chapter 14, verse 27. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid. Having just said in the same verse, peace I leave with you, my peace I give to you.

- [11 : 20] There's great comfort here which is going to sustain them through persecution and even martyrdom. But the other great reason for the apostles' endurance was the coming of the Holy Spirit.

And there are five passages in this upper room discourse in which Jesus gives them his teaching about the Holy Spirit. There are two passages in chapter 14, one in chapter 15, and two in chapter 16.

And it's the Holy Spirit's coming that lies behind that nevertheless in chapter 16, verse 7. Look again at verses 6 and 7 in chapter 16.

Sorrow has filled your heart.

Staying with us. Well, he explains it here in verse 7. The reason is that if I do not go away, the helper will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you.

- [12 : 40] And when you come to understand his power and his work, you will see that the kingdom of God is advancing far more wonderfully than it could ever have done if I had remained with you.

That's what he means. When I will come back to verse 8 in a moment, but I first just want to bring together, take a little break as it were, but to bring together these five passages in the upper room discourse in which Jesus explains the remarkable range of the Holy Spirit's ministry.

So this is a quick overview for the next few minutes. The first passage comes in chapter 14, verses 16 and 17. Perhaps you turn with me back to that.

Chapter 14, 16 and 17. In these verses, Jesus shows the apostles the indwelling ministry of the Holy Spirit.

So 16 and 17. I will ask the Father, and he will give you another helper to be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him.

[13 : 44] You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you. So this means that every Christian, every Christian congregation, becomes a temple of the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit dwells with us and in us. Now for each individual Christian, this brings about the new birth. The very life breath of God takes up residence in our hearts, and he begins to change us.

He reorientates our wills and our desires. We begin to love God. We begin to be hungry to know the meaning of the Bible. We begin to love other Christian people and to desire their company.

And the Holy Spirit battles with our sinful nature, subduing it. Now our sinful nature doesn't always enjoy that battle. It does a bit of kicking and screaming sometimes.

But as time goes on, we learn to be very grateful that the Holy Spirit reconstructs our very thinking. A bit like a potter who takes an unpromising blob of clay and fashions it into something beautiful and useful.

[14 : 55] So that's the first thing Jesus teaches us about the Holy Spirit. He dwells with us and in us. He is God dwelling in the hearts and lives of Christian men and women.

Now the second passage is at chapter 14, verse 26. Just the one verse, 14, 26. 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.

So if that first ministry is the Spirit's indwelling ministry, the second one is the Spirit's reminding ministry. Now it first applies to the apostles themselves.

They were not able to remember very much of what Jesus had taught them. Certainly not at this stage at the time of His death. They were too upset, too traumatized, to be thinking clearly at such a difficult point in their lives.

But in this verse 26, Jesus is promising that the Spirit will enable them to remember all that He had said to them. Now why did they need to remember all His teaching?

[16 : 04] Well, the main reason is so they could pass it on down through the generations of the Christian church in the form of the four Gospels, but also the New Testament letters, which, although they don't contain the actual words spoken by Jesus, are still an unfolding of the implications of His teaching.

So first and foremost, the Holy Spirit had a reminding ministry to the apostles themselves for their ongoing teaching work. But in a secondary sense, He reminds us, too, of Jesus' teaching.

He brings to our memory things that the Lord Jesus has said. It's good, of course, that we should read His words in the four Gospels as often as we can. Then they begin to sink into our memories, and it's the Holy Spirit who brings them up into our conscious minds and uses them to guide our thinking, our imaginations, and our decision-making.

Now the third passage comes at chapter 15, verses 26 and 27. Perhaps you'd look at that, 15, 26 and 27.

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. And you also will bear witness, because you've been with Me from the beginning.

[17 : 29] Well, here Jesus is showing us the witnessing ministry of the Holy Spirit. And look at the end of verse 26. He will bear witness about Me.

Because He's the Spirit of truth, His job will be to tell people, to tell the world, the truth about Jesus. His constant message will be, look at Jesus, because salvation can only be found in Him.

But how will He do this? He will do it through the apostles, and through the Christian church all over the world. That's what verse 27 is saying. You also will bear witness.

So the Holy Spirit, who is the primary witness-bearer, will bear witness through the truthful witness of Christian people as we present Jesus to the world. So far then, the Holy Spirit has an indwelling ministry, a reminding ministry, a witnessing ministry, and now two more ministries, which are both taught by Jesus in our passage for tonight.

So we'll come to them in a moment. But first, a word about the Holy Spirit Himself. There is something mysterious about Him. Of course there is. In the Upper Room Discourse, Jesus speaks of Him more in terms of what He does than in terms of who or what He is.

[18 : 52] But Jesus does tell us some key things about His nature as well as about His works. I'll just mention three things. First of all, He is the Spirit. Now the word translated Spirit means breath or wind.

But it's a word that speaks of almighty power. My breath, or your breath, is pretty weak. We go red in the face just trying to blow up a balloon.

But in the Bible, the Spirit of God has immense power. He is the life breath of God, not the breath of a weak human being. Do you remember that wonderful moment in Genesis chapter 2, how God leans over the figure of Adam, who is lying quietly in his native dust, and He breathes into His nostrils the breath of life, and He becomes a living being.

The Spirit is the breath of God. But secondly, the Spirit is God. We rightly speak of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.

In the language of our forefathers, He was often referred to as the Holy Ghost. Now that phrase does Him no favors, because it makes Him seem insubstantial and fragile.

[20 : 07] But He is God. He is God in action. God bringing regeneration to unbelieving men and women. God bringing the life-changing gospel to the world. He's not some impersonal substance.

He shares the full deity of the Father and the Son. He is God. Third, He is the helper. Now the word translated helper is the word *parakletos*.

And that means literally somebody who is called alongside to bring strength into a situation of weakness or despair. Some Bible translations use the word comforter rather than helper.

And that word is okay, provided you realize that the purpose of the comfort is to strengthen rather than to soothe. It's not like the comfort of the hot water bottle. Let me illustrate this.

You may have heard that the famous Bayer tapestry is coming back to England sometime next year from France. Apparently it's been in France for about 950 years, but the Brits are getting it back on loan just for a year or so.

[21 : 15] Anyway, it's a remarkable piece of artwork. It's like a kind of cartoon, a strip cartoon, and it shows in a series of tapestry pictures an account of the Norman conquest and the Battle of Hastings in 1066.

One of the pictures shows a bishop, and this bishop has a small group of soldiers in front of him, and the soldiers are looking frightened and very unwilling to plunge into the battle.

The bishop has a long spear in his hands, and with the point of his spear, he's prodding the backsides of the soldiers. And the caption reads, Bishop so-and-so comforts his troops.

Now that is not the comfort of soothing. It's the comfort of strengthening, giving courage and endurance to those who are feeling weak. Now that's the kind of comfort that the Holy Spirit gives to Christian people.

He's the helper, and the help he brings is drawn from an immense reservoir of divine power. There's nothing weak about him. He's not some insubstantial, tagged-on member of the Holy Trinity.

[22 : 25] He is God in action, God powerfully at work in the Christian, in the church, and in the world. Now this brings us to verse 8 in our chapter.

And to the fourth ministry of the Holy Spirit, which is his convicting ministry. Let me read verses 8 to 11. 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.

Well, let's start with verse 8. When he comes at Pentecost, and throughout history following Pentecost, he will do something, says Jesus, in relation to the world.

Now remember two things about the meaning of the word world in John's Gospel. First, first, the world means all of human society which is hostile to God. The pervasive, fallen, godless aspect of humanity which is in rebellion against God.

[23 : 39] But second, remember that God loves the world. He doesn't love its rebelliousness, but he loves people who are lost and who need salvation.

And he has demonstrated his love for the lost and rebellious world by giving up his son to death so that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

Now the work Jesus came to do in order to provide salvation was to die, to be raised, and to be exalted to heaven. But even though his great work was completed when he ascended to heaven, the world still had to be persuaded that the work of Jesus was important.

that it required a response, a response of repentance and faith. The world's natural attitude to the death and resurrection and ascension of Jesus is to ignore it, even to thumb its nose at it.

If you were to go to Socky Hall Street on a busy shopping day carrying a placard which announced Jesus died, Jesus rose, Jesus has ascended, so what are you going to do about it?

[24 : 49] Most people who bother to read your placard would be unmoved by it. They'd be more interested in buying an ice cream than in thinking about the death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus.

So although Jesus has completed his work on earth, the message about his power to save the lost has to be believed and responded to.

And it's only by an act of divine power that men and women of the world, and that's where we all start, that men and women of the world have their thinking about Jesus turned right around.

They have to be convicted, persuaded, that all they've been living for is not worth a brass farthing compared to knowing the saving power of Jesus. And it's only the supernatural power of the Holy Spirit that can bring that kind of conviction.

How can a man of the world who has lived in defiance of God come to be convinced that he was deeply wrong all along? It's impossible unless he is persuaded by divine power.

[25 : 55] Now we must notice the very close connection between verse 7 and verse 8 in our passage. In verse 7, Jesus tells the eleven apostles how the Holy Spirit is going to come.

Now look at the end of verse 7. I will send him to you, to you, not to the people of Reykjavik or Los Angeles or London, but to you.

So when the Holy Spirit came in power from heaven a few weeks later, he came to the apostles in Jerusalem and to the small group of Christians who were with them. Now this helps us to understand verse 8.

Verse 8 does not mean that when the Holy Spirit came, he somehow descended upon the world in many places simultaneously, turning people's hearts to the Lord everywhere from Tasmania to Greenland.

No. What happened was much more specific and focused. He came to the apostles. Jesus says, I will send him to you. So when in verse 8 he begins to convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment, he's going to be doing this work through these apostles.

[27 : 08] The Spirit is initially located in them. He is coming to them. So the convicting of the world is going to happen through their preaching and teaching and influence.

So Jesus is saying to Peter and Andrew and James and John and the other apostles, you've got work to do, my friends. Away with all this sorrow about my leaving you. The truth is I'm about to send to you the power from heaven that is going to change the world through your preaching and teaching.

Now when the Spirit arrived, just a few weeks later at Pentecost, Simon Peter, in his famous Pentecost sermon in Acts chapter 2 explained that all of Christ's people would have the Spirit poured out upon them, young and old, male and female, highborn and lowborn, and all would be able to speak about Jesus and bear witness about him.

And as soon as the Spirit had been poured out at Pentecost, many Christians, in addition to the apostles, began to preach the gospel. Read the apostles and you see it happening.

Stephen, Philip, soon afterwards Paul and Barnabas, Silas, Timothy, countless others. But what were they preaching? They weren't inventing their message.

[28 : 26] They were preaching the apostolic gospel, the gospel first entrusted to the apostles as the Holy Spirit reminded them of everything that Jesus had told them.

And they began to travel widely preaching this gospel. And people quickly, in their thousands, began to come to Christ. And this has been continuing now for 2,000 years.

The Holy Spirit continues to be poured out on the Lord's people. And the Spirit uses the preaching and teaching of the apostles to convict the hearts and consciences of men and women and to persuade them to come to Christ.

Contemporary Christians like us don't invent the message any more than Christians did in the first century. What we preach today is exactly what the apostles were taught to preach back then.

That Jesus died, was raised, was exalted to the right hand of God and that he will return to judge the living and the dead. And therefore, we must repent and believe the good news.

[29 : 30] And it's the Holy Spirit who brings persuasion and conviction to men and women of the world. If you have become a Christian, you have been on the receiving end of the convicting power of the Holy Spirit.

Well, let's explore this convicting ministry of the Spirit a bit more carefully. Let's notice that the verb used of the Spirit is the verb convict.

Now, that's a strong word. It's more than just convince. It conveys the idea of a masterly king's council in a court of law, a tip-top barrister who not only convinces a jury of the truth of his arguments, but does so with a kind of logical fierceness, arguments of irresistible power that cannot be refuted so that the jury sits back open-mouthed, realizing that someone has spoken whom nobody can gainsay.

Now, that's what happens when a man or woman of the world becomes a Christian. That man or woman realizes that what the apostles are saying about Jesus cannot be resisted.

The knee has to be bowed to the king. And then the impossible thing happens. You're persuaded to the core of your being that Jesus is the king and therefore you must run up the white flag and surrender to him.

[30 : 56] This is what conversion means. You're persuaded and you capitulate. Let me say this. If there is anybody here who has not yet run up the white flag and surrendered to Jesus, capitulation to him is the only important decision for you to make between now and the end of your life.

Let's look at the way that Jesus breaks this down. He speaks of this conviction by the Holy Spirit in three categories in verses 8 to 11. When the Spirit comes, he will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment.

First of all, in verse 9, concerning sin. And then Jesus explains, because they do not believe in me. Now what does he mean by that?

Imagine a young man or a young woman aged about 20 who's on the point of becoming a Christian. They've been listening to the gospel for some time they've been reading the Bible, discussing the whole thing with Christian friends, coming to church and so on.

What the Holy Spirit will do for that person is persuade them that their major problem is sin. And that may well be a novel idea.

[32 : 17] They perhaps thought of themselves up to now as bright and interesting and fun to know. And on the human level, they may well be. But the Holy Spirit now addresses them forcefully as they think about Jesus.

And the Holy Spirit opens their eyes to see not only that they are sinners, not only that the wages of sin is death, but that in particular, as verse 9 puts it, their sin is that for the last 20 years they have not believed in Jesus.

They've lived life as if Jesus were no more important than Julius Caesar or Oliver Cromwell, just another historical figure who had some influence and started a movement called Christianity.

But now, the Holy Spirit presses them to realize that Jesus is in a different category from all other people, that he came to earth as the rescuer, the savior, the only savior.

And they will realize too that the most heinous and wicked thing in the world is to resist him and reject him. And they will say in the end, what have I done for these last 20 years?

[33 : 25] I've held myself aloof from the Son of God who loved me and died for me so that I should be saved. Have you felt the pressure of that line of thought? That the most wicked thing in the world, the heart of sin, is to withhold your belief in Jesus and your submission to him.

That's the force of verse 9. The heart of sin is not to believe in him. Now secondly, verse 10, concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father and you will see me no longer.

When you're on the point of becoming a Christian, you realize that Jesus is righteous, that unlike any other human being, he is flawless. So what is the force of verse 10?

The Jewish leaders who were about to have Jesus crucified regarded him as unrighteous. To their way of thinking, he was an imposter, a blasphemer, a self-styled messiah who lacked all credibility and authority.

In fact, they hated him so much that they determined to do away with him. But do you remember what that centurion said, who stood by the cross and watched Jesus die?

[34 : 42] He said, surely, this was a righteous man. And Jesus' point here in verse 10 is that his righteousness is proved by his going to the father.

If he had been just an imposter or just a poor soul suffering from religious mania, after his death, he would have been buried in Jerusalem and his remains would still be there.

But that is not what happened. His father raised him and exalted him to heaven, thus vindicating him and showing the world that his son was indeed righteous.

Then thirdly, verse 11, concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged. Now, the ruler of this world is not the Roman emperor.

It's one of Jesus' descriptions of the devil. Jesus uses the same phrase at chapter 14, verse 30. And it's a surprising phrase for him to use, because Jesus knows full well that God the father rules everything, everywhere.

[35 : 48] But he describes Satan as the ruler of this world because he knows that the father has allowed Satan a certain temporary grip on the human race. So the point of verse 11 is that the Holy Spirit will convince the world that Satan's power is being torn down by the death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus.

The cross, in particular, signals the judgment of Satan. Satan's final dismissal into the lake of fire will happen at the end. But with the death and resurrection of Jesus, Satan's doom is pronounced already, and his judgment is sealed.

Now, when we become Christians, the Holy Spirit opens our eyes to see this. Yes, we're aware that the devil is still active and powerful, that he continues to practice deception in every level of society, that he rages malevolently because he knows that his time will soon be up.

But judgment and sentence have already been pronounced upon him, therefore he is no longer to be feared. The Christian is beyond his grasp, and while he still deceives people and rages about, the kingdom of Christ is growing in this world.

Every day, tens of thousands of people are leaving the devil's dominion and coming to Christ. So Jesus is teaching here the convicting ministry of the Holy Spirit.

[37 : 19] The Spirit drills the gospel into our minds and hearts, persuading us that the heart of sin is not to believe in Jesus. The demonstration of Jesus' righteousness is that the Father has raised him and exalted him.

And the great truth about judgment is that the devil, although causing trouble in the world now, will ultimately be sent to a place from which there will be no return.

And that will be a great relief to us. So, the Holy Spirit blesses us with an indwelling ministry, a reminding ministry, a witnessing ministry, a convicting ministry, and fifth and last, a teaching ministry.

There it is in verse 13. 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.

This little paragraph, verses 12 to 15, it's a glorious little passage, because these verses set out the syllabus of the Christian life, a syllabus for our ongoing education with the Holy Spirit as our teacher.

[38 : 38] The apostles themselves had so much to learn. The questions they put to Jesus during the course of the upper room discourse show that there were huge gaps in their understanding.

They were hardly out of primary one. So Thomas says to Jesus, chapter 14, verse 5, Lord, we do not know where you are going, so how can we know the way?

We're clueless about your destination and clueless about the route to it. Philip says to him, chapter 14, verse 8, Lord, show us the father and we'll be satisfied.

And Jesus replies, Philip, you dear beloved primary one student, have I been with you all this time and still you don't recognize who I am? If you've seen me, you've seen the father.

And so it goes on. There are further questions and further displays of ignorance. So it's no surprise that Jesus says to them in chapter 16, verse 12, I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now.

[39 : 43] You're tired, you're dispirited, you're confused, but you will come to understand so much because, verse 13, when the spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth.

And then Jesus explains how and why the spirit will do this. He says, for the spirit will not speak on his own authority. He doesn't operate independently of God the father any more than I do.

The three persons of the Holy Trinity are ultimately indivisible. The Holy Spirit will speak whatever he hears. He's constantly listening, he's in touch with headquarters in heaven.

So what he speaks to you will be the truth, not some message of his own invention. And then verse 13, he will declare to you the things that are to come, which almost certainly means that he will enable you to understand the meaning of the great events of the immediate future, the things that are just about to happen, the death and resurrection and ascension of Jesus.

The things that are to come must be the things that are about to happen to Jesus, because verses 14 and 15, which are all about Jesus are really an unpacking of verse 13.

[41 : 03] Do you see how Jesus uses the word declare in all three of these verses, 13, 14 and 15? In verse 13, the Spirit will declare, in other words, open up the meaning of the things that are about to happen.

And as he does so, verse 14, he will glorify me. He will show you the true glory of my death, my resurrection, and my ascension. These great events, which are the very reason for my coming into the world, he will reveal the meaning of these things to you.

That's what declare means here. The Spirit will replace your ignorance of these things and give you a profound understanding of them. He will enable you to grasp the reason for my death and the meaning of my resurrection and ascension.

He will take what is mine, that is the pivotal unique truths of my existence, and he will teach you their meaning. He will give you a revelatory declaration of the meaning of these things so that you can really understand them.

Verse 15 again emphasizes the indivisible closeness of the Father and the Son. So just as the Spirit's words in verse 13 are not given independently of God the Father, so Jesus' actions in verse 15 are a full expression of the Father's will and purpose.

[42 : 29] Verses 12 to 15 form a condensed little passage, but these verses are emphasizing with great clarity the way in which the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, while all having different parts to play in the bringing of our salvation, work together in total unison.

So the Spirit's role is to teach the apostles. apostles. Jesus says in verse 13 he will guide you into all the truth. And by extension, that's what he does for us today.

He opens our minds to understand the gospel. He takes the words of Jesus and declares their meaning to us. In one way, we're like the apostles.

That is slow to learn, slow to move from primary one to primary two, but the Holy Spirit is a gracious and patient teacher. Let's pray that we become increasingly teachable.

Do you think of yourself as teachable? Are you hungry for truth? Are you hungry to know the gospel better? Hungry to understand what the church is all about and how it's intended to operate?

[43 : 40] The growing Christian is the hungry Christian. The Christian who cries out rather like the author of Psalm 119, teach me, teach me, Lord, according to your word.

So let's pray for each other that our hunger for Bible truth will increase day by day and year on year. Let's aim to be still teachable and hungry at the age of 90.

So in John 14, 15, and 16, Jesus is opening up to us five ministries of the Holy Spirit. His indwelling ministry, his reminding ministry, his witnessing ministry, his convicting ministry, and his teaching ministry.

But we should notice one more thing about the ministry of the Holy Spirit, which I think we could call a sixth ministry, and that is that his ministry is entirely Jesus-centered, Jesus-focused.

Now you know how in some churches the Holy Spirit is magnified in a way that is foreign to Jesus' teaching. He's brought into the center of the stage in a way that Jesus never presents him.

[44 : 47] just look at the way Jesus speaks about him. In chapter 14, verse 26, Jesus says, the Spirit will bring into your remembrance all that I have said to you.

In other words, he magnifies the words of Jesus. In chapter 15, verse 26, Jesus says that the Spirit will bear witness about me, not draw attention to himself.

then in chapter 16, verse 14, he will glorify me for he will take what is mine and declare it to you. The Spirit doesn't put himself in the center of the stage.

You might almost describe him as the shy member of the Holy Trinity. He says, don't look at me, look at Jesus. My job is to glorify Jesus, to show the world the glory of Jesus' death and resurrection and ascension and future return.

So we need to get the right balance in our understanding between the Holy Spirit and Jesus. The Spirit is very important and very wonderful and that's why Jesus has a lot to say about him in these chapters.

[45 : 57] Jesus wants us to understand who the Spirit is and what he does. But his ministry is Jesus-centered. Jesus is the beginning, the middle, and the end of the gospel.

So every time our understanding of Jesus grows, every time our desire to serve Jesus grows, every time our love for the Lord Jesus is deepened, we can be sure that the Holy Spirit is at work in our hearts, teaching us to center our thinking, our living, and our loving on the Lord Jesus Christ.

Christ. Let's bow our heads and we'll pray together. Amen. we thank you, our dear Father, that at Pentecost, you sent your Spirit to the church and gave your people an irresistible desire to present Jesus to the world as its Lord and only Savior.

fill our hearts afresh with the Holy Spirit day by day we pray and help us with confidence and with joy to bear witness to the one who laid down his life for our salvation.

We ask it in Jesus' name. Amen.