

Jesus said, it was to our benefit that He should go away. His departure meant that He would receive the gift of the Spirit to His followers after He had been exalted to the right hand of God the Father. The Holy Spirit is the provision from Jesus for His disciples during His physical absence from them. Though there is much which God does by His Spirit for the believer, Jesus focuses on two tasks, which relate particularly to the absence of Jesus. While in the world, people could come to know Him, the Christ, the Son of God, and His glory was revealed (cf. John 1:14). In His absence, the Spirit would continue with these tasks, revealing Jesus, His person, work and will, and bringing glory to Jesus.

I. *In the physical absence of Jesus, the Holy Spirit continues to reveal Jesus Christ.*

1. *Jesus Christ is the primary content of the Spirit's revelation.*

- a. Jesus said that He had much more to say to the disciples, that they couldn't then bear (16:12), from which we can infer that when the Spirit came, they would be told.

This is confirmed both by the prologue to the book of Acts (Acts 1:1) and by the report of the Spirit's work proclaiming and explaining Jesus through the disciples. This was the Apostle Paul's claim as well, that his message came directly from Jesus.

- b. Jesus also said that the Spirit would lead them into all truth (16:13).

The greater context of John's Gospel points to Jesus as the truth (cf. 1:14, 17; 5:33ff; 8:31-32; 14:6). Jesus is the Truth and what He says is truth. Therefore, He is here promising them further revelation about Himself.

At least two important themes concerning the person, work and will of Christ were yet to be revealed after Pentecost. (1) The Body of Christ would include Gentiles in the people of God without first having to become Jews. This was a special "mystery" of Christ (Ephesians 3:4-6). (2) There is prophecy scattered throughout the Epistles and extensively developed in Revelation, a revelation from Jesus about the future as well as a revelation about Jesus.

- c. Jesus finally affirms this Christ-centered revelation (16:13-15).

The Spirit will only reveal that which Jesus tells Him to, hence we learn what Jesus wants us to know. The Spirit reveals only that which belongs to Jesus, hence we learn about Jesus. The focus of Biblical revelation is Jesus Christ. We are to learn about Jesus, about God through Jesus, about His redemption, about His will for us. "All truth" is not every detail of history or every fact of science, but it is all that we need to know in order to know God and to walk pleasing to Him.

2. *Without the Holy Spirit they would not have been capable of grasping this revelation (16:12).*

"Bear" refers to carrying something, but often with the sense of it being burdensome. Although it is true that we need the Spirit to understand the thoughts of God, Jesus probably had in mind the radical changes which would come upon these Jewish disciples, as Jesus revealed to them by His Spirit the mystery of the church. The New Testament records the struggle, which Jews had in accepting the union of Gentile and Jew into one new body.

There is more to being guided into the truth than gaining more information. We must respond to the truth and obey what Jesus says. Without the Spirit this would be something that none of us could bear. By His Spirit we have a changed heart. By His Spirit Jesus places us into His body, by which we grow together. When God requires of us radical change, it is possible, because He has given us His Spirit.

II. *In the physical absence of Jesus, the Holy Spirit continues to glorify Jesus Christ (16:14).*

Obedying the truth is spiritual fruit, which brings glory to the Father. This work of the Spirit brings glory as well to the Son. The primary aim of the Spirit is to glorify Jesus by revealing the person, work and will of Jesus.

1. *The primary aim of the Spirit is to glorify Jesus.*

God's purpose in creation and even in our salvation is to bring glory to Himself. The purpose of the church and our redemption is to bring glory to God in Jesus Christ (cf. Ephesians 3:21; Philippians 2:9-11). God's glory and glory to the Son will become a theme in Jesus's prayer in John 17.

Though the Spirit is equally God with the Father and the Son, equally a person, and equally worthy of honor, the function of the Spirit is not to draw attention to Himself, but to direct attention to the Son and thereby bring glory to God the Father. Though this period of history has a unique and special ministry of the Spirit, the primary purpose of the presence and activity of the Spirit of God is to glory Jesus Christ.

If God the Spirit, who is worthy of honor, directs attention to Jesus and purposes to glorify Him, how much more should we direct our attention to Jesus and seek to glorify Him rather than ourselves.

2. *The primary means of the Spirit is to reveal the person, work and will of Jesus.*

Jesus told the disciples that the Spirit would take what belonged to Him (in whom is the fullness of the Godhead) and make it known to them. In so doing the Spirit reveals God. Jesus by His Spirit moved some of His disciples to record all that we needed to know to live righteously and please God.

Understanding the Word of God and putting it into practice will lead to Jesus's glory. Evidence of God's saving power in us brings glory to Jesus Christ.

The Spirit was given in Jesus's absence to reveal Jesus and bring glory to Him. As we respond in worship and obedience to the person and will of Jesus Christ, we will bring glory to Him and to God the Father. In so doing we are in accord with the purposes and desire of God.