

The Promise Of My Father
Luke 24:49

In our most recent study, as we spoke about the Lord Jesus "opening" the disciple's hearts and minds to the truths of God, we noted these brief words in verse 49 . . .

⁴⁹ Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high." (Luke 24:49)

And as we who have put our trust in Christ as our Savior well know, this "Promise of God the Father" is His blessed Holy Spirit. And yes, He, God's Holy Spirit truly did bring "Power from on high" with Him as He came to live among us and to "Abide" within us.

And oh what a wonderful plan God has put into place for those of us that He would call His "Chosen", "His Elect", those who would receive Christ as their Lord and Savior.

From the very beginning, it was God's plan to save us from our sins. And then to do exactly this, to send His Holy Spirit to fill us, to enable us, to protect us and to guide us into all truth as we then stepped forward into the next part of His loving plan, to "go ye into all the world and make disciples throughout every nation".

And again, to do that it would be His blessed Holy Spirit who would lead the way. His Holy Spirit would become the "sum and the substance" of all that the disciples then, and you and I now, would need to carry forward with God's divine plan.

What do I mean by that? Simply put, Jesus had now completed His part of God's great "Plan of Salvation", and he would return to heaven. But then immediately, God's Holy Spirit would step forward with His part of God's Plan,

Yes, the Holy Spirit had been working behind the scenes of daily existence from the beginning of time, drawing men's souls to salvation. But now, with the Lord Jesus returning to heaven, the Holy Spirit would step on forward and be our guide, our comforter, our helper as we would continue on in the "Great Plan of Salvation" that the Lord Jesus had begun.

May I read those words from John chapter 16 for us? There, beginning in verse 7, Jesus said,

⁷ . . . 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.

⁸ And when he comes, he will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment: ⁹ concerning sin, because they do not believe in me; ¹⁰ concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father, and you will see me no longer; ¹¹ concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged.

¹² "I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now.

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. ¹⁴ He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you. ¹⁵ All that the Father has is mine; therefore I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you. (John 16:7-15)

The Holy Spirit whom Jesus would "breathe into" His disciples and whom He would soon "pour out" upon them, would not only carry forward all that Jesus had begun through His teachings and then through His death, burial and resurrection. The Holy Spirit would do so much, much more, and in some ways, through us, He would do even more than the Lord Jesus Himself had been able to do.

Jesus said those very words on an earlier occasion. He said in John chapter 14,

¹² "Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater works than these he will do, because I go to My Father. ¹³ And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. ¹⁴ If you ask anything in My name, I will do it. (John 14:12-14)

In these words, the Lord Jesus was assuring us that as the Holy Spirit lives and abides within us, we will, through faith, be able to know things and say things and do things that we never imagined before. And we will have a more far-reaching ministry than He Himself was able to have.

That is a surprising statement and we wonder how that could be possible? But, simply put, in His human form, Jesus was only able to be in one place at one time. But we who believe in Him and have His Spirit abiding within us are spread

throughout the whole world. And because we are so widespread, we can give His gospel and we can witness His salvation to so many, many more people than He was able to encounter in His short tenure there in Israel. And what a precious opportunity we have!

Folks, even after being a Christian for over fifty years, I still can't grasp all of the precious delights that are available to me as God's Holy Spirit dwells in me. I do fear that I miss out on most of the benefits of His presence.

And note here again this word in John 16 that describes the Holy Spirit as "the Helper".

At first glance, the word "Helper" seems so unassuming. But it isn't! Not at all! The word "Helper" is from the Greek word "Paraclete", meaning "One who comes along side and is ever-present to help us".

And not just in times of trouble, but God's Holy Spirit is ever and always present, strengthening us, guiding us, bringing light to our minds, comforting us and helping us with even the smallest of details of daily life.

Also, a moment ago, I used the expression that the Holy Spirit is the "sum and substance" of all that we are to be in our relationship with Christ. May I emphasize that understanding further? And may I give us some additional thoughts about who the Holy Spirit really is.

Because, as we read the many books being published and as we listen to the many preachers who preach about the person and the work of the Holy Spirit, we can see that misconceptions about who He really is are rampant.

The Jehovah's Witnesses regard the Holy Spirit as simply being just an extension of the mind and thoughts and emotions of God the Father and nothing more.

Others believe the Holy Spirit to be an impersonal power that God makes available to the followers of Christ.

Still others view the Holy Spirit as being some mystical force within the universe who guides men's thoughts and directions.

But folks, man's personal opinion about who the Holy Spirit is does not really count, nor even matter at all. The "mind of man" is much too "small" to comprehend such an "unknowable" Person as the Holy Spirit. And that is why God very graciously gave us these scriptures to tell us who the Holy Spirit really is.

Simply put, the Bible declares that the Holy Spirit is God, that in the same way that God the Father and God the Son are individual divine persons, so also is the Holy Spirit a divine individual Person, a Being with a mind, emotions, and a will. But though individual and separate, He is mysteriously intertwined in His being with both God the Father and God the Son, the three forming "One God" within the Holy Trinity.

His being an individual Person and also being God is clearly seen throughout these Scriptures. In Acts chapter 5,

³ Peter said (to), "Ananias, how is it that Satan has so filled your heart that you have lied to the Holy Spirit and have kept for yourself some of the money you received for the land? ⁴ Didn't it belong to you before it was sold? And after it was sold, wasn't the money at your disposal? What made you think of doing such a thing? You have not lied to men but to God." (Acts 5:3-4)

In these words, it's clear that the Holy Spirit is a Person who can be lied too and that in lying to the Holy Spirit Ananias was lying to God.

We can also know that the Holy Spirit is God because He possesses all the characteristics of God. For example, He is omnipresent, everywhere at the same time. In Psalm chapter 139 verse 7 we read . . .

⁷ "Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there." (Psalm 139:7)

Then in 1 Corinthians chapter 2 we see that the Holy Spirit is omniscient, knowing all things, even the most secret things of God. There we read,

⁶ We . . . speak a message of wisdom among the mature, but not the wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing. ⁷ No, we speak of God's secret wisdom, a wisdom that has been hidden and that God destined for our glory before time began. ⁸ None of the rulers of this age understood it, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. ⁹ However, as it is written: "No eye has seen, no

ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him"-- ¹⁰ but God has revealed it to us by his Spirit. The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God. (1 Corinthians 2:6-10)

And yes, because He is a Person with all the attributes of a Person, the Holy Spirit can be grieved. We're warned in chapter 4 of the Book of Ephesians that we must not "grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption."

And in Romans chapter 8, we're told how the Spirit intercedes for us in our times of need and especially as we are trying to pray but just don't know how we should do it. There in verse 26 we read,

²⁶ In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express. ²⁷ And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God's will.(Romans 8:26-27)

One of my favorite preachers liked to say that God "fixes our prayers on the way up". And I take special comfort in that thought.

And also, the Holy Spirit makes decisions according to His own will, and gives special gifts to each of us. In 1 Corinthians chapter 12 we read,

⁷ Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. ⁸ To one there is given through the Spirit the message of wisdom, to another the message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, ⁹ to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, ¹⁰ to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues. ¹¹ All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he gives them to each one, just as he determines. (1 Corinthians 12:7-11)

Oh dear Christian, the Holy Spirit truly is God, the third Person of the Trinity. And as God, the Holy Spirit can truly be the intimate Counselor, Helper and Comforter that Jesus promised He would be. Listen!

¹⁶ And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever-- ¹⁷ the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him,

because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you. (John 14:16-17)

And in verse 25 of John chapter 14 Jesus said,

²⁵ "All this I have spoken while still with you. ²⁶ But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you. (John 14:25-26)

And in John chapter 15, Jesus said,

²⁶ But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceeds from the Father, he shall testify of me. (John 15:26)

This last verse, John 15:26, is especially helpful to me during difficult times when my family and I encounter personal suffering and strife. Here, the Holy Spirit is called the "Comforter". It's the name that I mentioned a few moments ago, "Paraclete", one who comes alongside in a very intimate way and provides comfort to our troubled hearts as the onslaughts of the world, the flesh and the devil take their toll on us.

He brings the "peace of Christ" to our souls, the peace that Jesus spoke about in John chapter 14 when He said,

²⁵ These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you. ²⁶ But the Comforter, which is the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you. (John 14:25-26)

And in Verse 27 of John chapter 14, Jesus said,

²⁷ Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid. (John 14:27)

Peace is so easily lost when we get into the trenches of daily life. Our soul can quickly descend into despair as the enemy attacks and fear beats at our door.

But with the Spirit of Christ dwelling within us, we have all of the precious "fruits" of who He is living and abiding and filling our heart, soul, mind and strength. We have His love, His joy, His peace, His patience, His kindness, His gentleness, His goodness, His faithfulness and His self-control, all of His precious "fruits".

Oh dear Christian, the Holy Spirit truly is our Paraclete, our Helper, our counselor and our Comforter every minute of every day. And with Him being beside us and within us, we can experience a peace that surpasses all understanding.

Those words in the Book of Philippians chapter 4,

⁴ Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice! ⁵ Let your gentleness be known to all men. The Lord is at hand. ⁶ Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; ⁷ and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.
(Philippians 4:4-7)

Here in today's passage, as Jesus was preparing to leave His disciples and return to His throne in heaven, He was assuring each of them, and also you and me, that He was not abandoning them and us. But to the contrary, as He told us in John chapter 16 "I tell you the truth, It is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Counselor will not come to you, but if I go, I will send him to you."

And again, may I say that as we enter into our relationship with the Lord Jesus, His Holy Spirit that He gave to us in our salvation really does become the sum and substance of all that our relationship with Christ has within it. And praise be to God for Him!

. . . Before we conclude these thoughts regarding God's precious Holy Spirit, may I offer one more revelation from these scriptures that is not necessarily agreed upon by all mainline Christian denominational leaders, but I believe it is worthy of mention.

As believers, you and I are exhorted to "be ye filled with the Spirit". And it is our common belief that in our first moment of receiving Christ, God's Holy Spirit comes to live and abide within us.

But with that being said, it does seem from these words, "be ye filled with the Spirit" that we can be "more filled" with His presence than we often are. And with that being so, how can that take place? How can we be "more filled" with the Holy Spirit's presence than we often are

It is my understanding and belief that such “filling” can only take place if and as we surrender our whole heart to Christ and invite His Spirit to “manifest” His presence within us.

I do fear however that not many believers receive His “manifest presence” in that way. And by not surrendering their whole heart as they should, they miss out on a greater joy that they could be experiencing.

But again, we need only to surrender our “will”, our “self” to Him and He will immediately begin to “fill” our souls and show Himself strong and powerful in all the intimate details of our daily lives.

Finally, may I add that these scriptures also speak about another level of this special presence of the Holy Spirit, a level of experience that few seem to ever have, at least not knowingly.

It is the experience of having God “pour out” His Spirit upon us with power. Listen to these words given to us in Acts chapter 2. There in verse 16, we’re told,
¹⁶ . . . this is what was uttered through the prophet Joel: ¹⁷ ““And in the last days it shall be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams. (Acts 2:16-17)

These words were spoken by the Apostle Peter as he explained the special mystical visitation by the Holy Spirit upon the disciples at Pentecost.

It is argued that such “pouring out” of God’s Spirit was only for those days and for those times. But was it? Does God still pour out His Spirit upon the souls of men and women, enabling them to know things and to do things that are beyond the human realm, to have faith that goes beyond normal understanding, to preach with power that is not within common man, to pray and receive miracles that will not otherwise take place?

May I say simply that, as for me, I see nowhere in these scriptures that God has ceased those marvelous works of His Spirit. While no, we might not, during our days, see some of the manifestation of God’s Spirit that was present during the days of the Lord Jesus, He still is very, very present and able to do anything He pleases.

And so, for each one of us today, I pray that God will generously “pour out” His beloved Holy Spirit upon each one of us, upon me and upon my beloved family members, and upon each one of you and upon your beloved family members, all who have surrendered their hearts to the Lord Jesus.

May we pray . . .