

## SERMON DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

July 20, 2025

Summer Wildfires

**“What Did the Holy Spirit Come to Do?”**

**John 16:5-15**

**Rev. Mike Toluba**

On Wednesday night at Sunday Wildfires, we talked about the Holy Spirit being a divine person distinct from the Father and the Son. During my experience being part of the Methodist Church, we talk a lot about God the Father and God the Son. We most often associate the Father with creation, but we have discussed how Jesus and the Holy Spirit were also involved in creation. God the Father is the most prominent person of the Trinity throughout the Old Testament. We also talked a lot about Jesus. Oh how we love Jesus! We love the Gospel and rightly focus on the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. Yet, we don't talk about the Holy Spirit nearly as much.

The beginning of our catechism for the Global Methodist Church outlines our theology and doctrine through the lens of the Nicene Creed. Dr. David deSilva makes an excellent point about the Holy Spirit.

**“An earlier version of the Creed of Nicaea, like the Apostles' Creed, said nothing about the Holy Spirit apart from “We/I believe in the Holy Spirit.” While this is primarily a reflection of the absence of controversies concerning the Holy Spirit, it potentially gives the impression that the Holy Spirit is an afterthought—a “third wheel” within the Trinity. This portion of the creed was expanded at the Council of Constantinople in 381, and it is in that form that the Nicene Creed has been used by Catholic, Orthodox, and Protestant Christians.”**

**(Christian Faith and Doctrine by David A. deSilva, PhD)**

Today, we are focusing on the Holy Spirit. We join Jesus and the disciples as Jesus is teaching about what the Holy Spirit will do when He comes. Let's look at John 16 together.

**John 16:5-15**

***“But now I am going away to the one who sent me, and not one of you is asking where I am going. Instead, you grieve because of what I've told you. But in fact, it is best for you that I go away, because if I don't, the Advocate won't come. If I do go away, then I will send him to you. And when he comes, he will convict the world of its sin, and of God's righteousness, and of the coming judgment. The world's sin is that it refuses to believe in me.***

***Righteousness is available because I go to the Father, and you will see me no more. Judgment will come because the ruler of this world has already been judged.***

***“There is so much more I want to tell you, but you can’t bear it now. When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own but will tell you what he has heard. He will tell you about the future. He will bring me glory by telling you whatever he receives from me. All that belongs to the Father is mine; this is why I said, The Spirit will tell you whatever he receives from me. (John 16: 5-15 New Living Translation)***

Jesus tells his disciples that it is best for Jesus to go away and return to the heavenly realm. If Jesus does not go away, then the Holy Spirit will not come. Being in the presence of Jesus must have been incredible. However, Jesus was not always physically present with the disciples. Jesus would often go by Himself to pray, or the disciples would be sent out to different places. The Holy Spirit will be different and always be with us and even dwell within us. Jesus promises to send the Holy Spirit to the disciples. In our Scripture passage today, Jesus called the Holy Spirit the Advocate.

## **THE HOLY SPIRIT**

***In Greek: Paraclete / παράκλητος***

**Translated as Advocate, Comforter, Encourager, or Counselor.**

**Jesus tells us the Holy Spirit will convict the world of its sin, and of God’s righteousness, and of the coming judgment.** Let’s breakdown what Jesus is teaching us. First, the Spirit will convict the world. “The world” is a phrase commonly used to describe people who haven’t become Christians yet. So the Spirit will reveal the truth and give awareness to people from all over the world who have yet to become Christians about sin, righteousness, and judgement.

The Holy Spirit convicts people about their sin. The specific sin Jesus mentions here is not believing in Jesus, but the Holy Spirit’s conviction extends to all the sins people commit. Part of the Spirit’s ministry is to bring sin to people’s attention. We’re often blind to our own sin. Even if we can identify a few sins in our lives, we often don’t think those sins are very serious. We think of them more as imperfections or simple mistakes rather than acts of rebellion against God.

Little things can become big things very quickly. Has anyone even been caught speeding before? I remember getting a speeding ticket for going 41 mph in a 35 mph in my 1986 Chevy Nova on Abercorn Street in Savannah, GA. Maybe going 6 mph was not the biggest deal, but what about going 80 mph or 85 mph on Interstate 10. No matter how fast you go over the speed limit you are still speeding. So I have made the commitment in my life to obey the speed limit. I am not 100% perfect, but I am always very aware and very careful to obey the speed limit.

When the Holy Spirit comes into your life, He opens our eyes to the sin in our lives. The Holy Spirit helps us see we're actually guilty of sin and in need of God's saving grace. He convicts us not only of sin but also the Spirit shows us just how desperately we need God's righteousness. If we're ever going to be reconciled to God, escape God's judgment for our sin and be with God forever in heaven, then we need a righteousness that we do not have. In fact, we need a righteousness we're not capable of having—because the holiness of God demands perfect righteousness.

Since we don't have perfect righteousness, there's only one thing left for us: judgment. The Spirit convicts people concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged. (See John 16:7) Now "the ruler of this world" is none other than Satan. Satan has temporary power over this world, but Jesus says Satan's has already been judged. The Holy Spirit helps people see and understand this coming reality about judgment.

Here is the Good News! Jesus came to the world to rescue us from sin and judgement. Jesus came to provide for us that righteousness we so desperately needed. All of our sins were placed on Jesus' shoulders. Jesus rose again from the dead to redeem us. Jesus took our sin and in return gave us His righteousness. And if you feel the Holy Spirit right now convicting you of these things and telling you that all of these things are true, don't ignore that. Instead turn to Jesus and put your trust in Jesus for rescue, and that exchange of sin and righteousness can be true for you also.

Jesus wants to tell the disciples so much more in John 16, but they could not bear any more in that moment. Yet, when the Holy Spirit comes, He will guide us into all truth.

## **THE SPIRIT OF TRUTH**

Jesus refers to the Holy Spirit as the Spirit of Truth over the course of His teaching in John chapters 14-16. Three different times in these three chapters. By repeating this phrase over and over again, Jesus was driving home a truth into His disciples' hearts. The Holy Spirit is trustworthy and would never mislead them or misguide them.

When Jesus used the word truth to describe the Holy Spirit, it was the equivalent of saying: you don't need to worry that the Spirit will lead you astray or that He will lead you wrongly. You can depend upon Him and you can trust Him. Jesus wanted the disciples to relax and understand that they could depend on the Holy Spirit to lead them to understand all truth.

Many followers of Jesus have a hard time following the leading of the Holy Spirit because they cannot see Him or physically hear His voice. It would be incredible for Jesus to be here with us and tell us what to do in every situation. Yet, Jesus said it is better for him to go away and for the Holy Spirit to come. We need to rejoice that we have the Holy Spirit in our lives, because the Holy Spirit will never mislead us. We need to develop the ability to listen for the Holy Spirit's voice. We live in a very busy, noisy, and often chaotic world. When we take the time regularly to worship, to read Scripture,

to pray, to gather in small groups, to serve our neighbors, and to share Jesus with others, our ability to slow down the pace of our lives increases our ability to hear the Holy Spirit speak. These spiritual practices help us to become more aware of the Holy Spirit's presence in our life. The reality is the Holy Spirit will always guide you to where you need to be. He is the Spirit of Truth!

This means you can be sure that when the Holy Spirit nudges your heart to do something, it is the right thing to do. When the Holy Spirit puts a thought in your mind, it is a right idea. When He guides your spirit, He knows something you don't and is trying to lead you on the best possible path through the obstacles in your life. He is always the Spirit of Truth, you can rely that the Holy Spirit will never mislead you.

If we're going to experience real, supernatural Christian living, we must come to a place of surrender to the Holy Spirit. He is always trying to coach and direct us even when we're not listening. He is always as close as our next breath, dwelling in our spirits — speaking, directing, encouraging, and trying to help us experience of Best of God's will in our lives. Whether or not we listen to Holy Spirit, He is still there on the inside of us because that's the job assignment the Spirit has received from the Father and the Son. When we listen to the Spirit of truth and follow His direction, we experience more of the Holy Spirit's role in our lives.

We must learn to trust the Holy Spirit's leadership and do what He leads us to do. He is a divine Coach sent by the Father and the Son to help us. For the Holy Spirit to help us, it requires our ears, our hearts, our trust, and our obedience. Anything short of this commitment will produce less than God's best for us. The Holy Spirit has entered our natural world to help us experience the abundance and holiness of God and give us more understanding of God's supernatural power. Since He is the Spirit of truth, He is completely reliable and trustworthy. It's time to lay down any fears and objections and begin to let the Holy Spirit do His job of coaching us. It's like Jesus gives us a money back guarantee!

*Let's pray together. Father, I confess that I have sometimes been fearful about following the leadership of the Holy Spirit. Today I admit it; I confess it; and I turn from it. Holy Spirit, I want to experience more of your coaching ministry in my life. You are the Spirit of truth. Starting today, I choose to put aside everything that is holding me back and surrender to your leadership. Oh Holy Spirit with your help, I will follow your leading and let you guide my life.*

SUGGESTED RESOURCES: (Books marked with \* are available to be checked-out in the Asbury Discipleship Resource Center)

- *The Holy Bible* (Several FREE copies are available in the DRC)
- *Christian Faith and Doctrine*, David A. deSilva
- *The Cross of Christ*, John Stott
- *Jesus: The Greatest Life of All*, Charles R. Swindoll
- *Forgotten God: Reversing Our Tragic Neglect of the Holy Spirit*, Francis Chan
- *The Holy Spirit: Who He Is, and What He Does*, R. C. Sproul
- *Keep in Step with the Spirit: Finding Fullness in Our Walk with God*, J. I. Packer

Icebreaker I – If you could ask the Holy Spirit one question and hear a direct answer, what would it be?

Icebreaker II – Share a time when you sensed God's presence in an unexpected way. How did it impact you?

1. Why do you think the Holy Spirit is often overlooked or misunderstood in the life of the Church today?
2. Jesus said it was *better* for Him to leave so that the Holy Spirit could come (John 16:7). What does that tell us about the importance of the Holy Spirit's presence?
3. The Holy Spirit is called the *Advocate*, *Comforter*, *Encourager*, and *Counselor*. Which of these roles has been most evident in your life recently, and how?
4. What does it mean for the Holy Spirit to "convict the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment"? How have you experienced that conviction personally?
5. Jesus calls the Spirit the *Spirit of Truth*. How do we discern if we are truly hearing from the Holy Spirit and not our own voice or desires?
6. What are some spiritual practices that help you better hear and respond to the leading of the Holy Spirit?
7. What fears or hesitations might you need to surrender in order to follow the Holy Spirit more fully in your life?
8. What impacted you most from the sermon? How might you apply this week's sermon to your life?
9. How might this group pray for you this week?