

Supernatural: The Person of the Holy Spirit John 14:15-31

Leader notes:

- John describes the Spirit as “another Christ” (John 14:16) and stresses the individual’s relationship to Christ through the Spirit. John the Baptist describes his revelation of Jesus’ identity “on whom you see the Spirit descend” (John 1:33). Rebirth comes through the Spirit “blowing where it chooses” (John 3:5- 8). God is Spirit (John 4:24). Life to the fullest comes from the Spirit (John 6:63).
- John says the Spirit is a Paraclete, an advocate, counselor, or comforter. The Paraclete’s functions are copied from those of Jesus: developing Jesus’ teaching to meet new situations (John 16:14)—“what Jesus would have said” or what John did in writing his Gospel; stressing and teaching what has already come with Jesus, even though there are a future resurrection, judgement, and Parousia (John 5:28-29).
- John’s greatest contribution is this teaching of the ongoing presence of Jesus in the heart of each individual (1 John 3:24).

Open:

- Who was the best counselor you ever had? What was it about this person that made him/her so special?

Dig:

- Read John 14:15-31
- How are the disciples to show love to each other (13:34)? To Jesus (14:15)?

Why is this idea repeated four times?

- How does Jesus set the example for us in verse 31?
- What do you learn about the Spirit in verses 16-17 and 25-27? What is the relationship of the Father, Jesus and the Spirit to the believer? To each other?
- What is the difference between how Jesus gives peace and how the world does?
- Since Satan has no power over Jesus, why must Jesus die (see 3:14-15; 6:53-54)?

Reflect:

- How “at home” are the Father, Son, and Spirit in your life? Are they more like owners, or temporary guests?
- On a scale from 1 (smooth sailing) to 10 (furious storm), what is your “peace” quotient now? Why? Where do you need Jesus’ peace? Where can you find hope in this passage?
- Of all the promises made here (vv.16-18, 21, 23, 26-27), which one means the most to you? Why?

Supernatural: The Presence of the Holy Spirit John 16:5-16

Leader notes:

- In Greek, the word “Paraclete”, is formally a passive verbal adjective, “one called alongside” (especially to offer assistance in a court). The functions attributed to “the Paraclete” in John are primarily teaching, revealing and interpreting Jesus to the disciples.
- Other meanings have also been attributed like “comforter” (to encourage), an “exhorter” (to encourage), and “helper” (to assist).

Open:

- How are you at saying “goodbye”?
- Is it harder for you to be the one leaving home, or the one left behind? Explain.

Dig:

- Read John 16:5-16
- What are the disciples feeling now? What is their grief keeping them from understanding?
- How would you paraphrase the three goals of the Spirit’s work (vv.8-11)? What other roles does the Spirit play (14:16-17, 26-27; 16:7-11, 13-15)? Therefore, why is it good that Jesus goes away?
- If you were a disciple during Jesus’ day, how would you feel after hearing verse 16?

Reflect:

- What is your response to Jesus’ comment, “it’s better that I go away” (v. 7)? What does that tell you about the Spirit?
- Of the various roles of the Holy Spirit described here, which one have you come to appreciate recently? How so?

Supernatural: The Promise of the Holy Spirit Acts 2:1-47

Leader notes:

- The promise of the Holy Spirit is the assurance that after Jesus's departure, God would send the Holy Spirit to be an everlasting advocate, helper, and comforter for believers.
- This promise includes the Spirit guiding believers into all truth, teaching them, reminding them of Jesus's teachings, and empowering them. According to scripture, this promise is not just for the immediate followers of Jesus but for all who believe, and the Spirit will permanently reside within them.

Open:

- How does your day begin? What are you usually doing at 9:00 AM on a Saturday? On Sunday? Midweek?

Dig:

- Read Acts 2:1-47
- What is the point Peter wants the people to understand about current events (vv.13, 17, 18)?
- How familiar were these people with the events of Jesus' life? How might they be dealing with the rumors of the empty tomb? Given that, why does Peter emphasize the resurrection?
- What are the implications of the resurrection and ascension for Jesus (vv.24, 30-31)?
- How would you use Peter's answer (vv.38-40) to explain what it means to become a Christian? What is required? What is promised?
- Remembering where these 3000 came from (vv.8-11), in what way is Acts 1:8 partially fulfilled here?

Reflect:

- To repent and be baptized meant to turn away from all other loyalties and affirm allegiance to Jesus. In what ways does that call still present a challenge to you? How have you experienced the reality of God's promises to those who answer that call?
- When did you make your initial commitment to Christ? Who was influential in that process? What convinced you to follow?
- In chapter 2, what roles do the apostles and God have in witnessing? How does that encourage you in your witness for Christ?
- What was the last time you seized an opportunity to witness for Jesus? What happened? How are you like Peter? Unlike him? What encourages you as you watch Peter? Why?