

December 12, 2021

## “God’s Gift of the Indwelling Spirit”

John 14:16-26

FCF: Feeling alone and abandoned

**PROPOSITION:** (anchor) We are not alone  
(magnet) for God has sent the indwelling Spirit.

### SCRIPTURE INTRODUCTION:

The 1990 film, *Home Alone*, is the story of Kevin McCallister, a young boy who defends his Chicago home from burglars after his family accidentally leaves him behind on their vacation to Paris. It’s full of slapstick moments and remembered for Macaulay Culkin’s amusing antics.

It’s great comedy. But also a sad reality. For many really are home alone, not feeling the “most wonderful time of the year” vibe at all, the songs “Blue Christmas” and “I’ll Be Home for Christmas” at the top of their playlist. All of which is often but a token of the rest of the year.

Which makes it good to hear of the third in our series of the gifts God gives at Christmas. First, there was the gift of justification - we can be accepted. Second, there was sanctification - we are free from bondage to sin. And now, we come to the indwelling Spirit - we are not alone.

**SCRIPTURE READING:** [John 14:16-26](#)

### PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

### SERMON INTRODUCTION:

So here’s a headline that might get your attention - “9 Apps to Help You Beat Holiday Stress”. A lot of folks have a lot to take care of this time of year and are looking for some help. Here are a couple of examples. *Punchbowl* lets you send custom invitations to everyone on your list. They can be sent via text and you get notifications as soon as a guest RSVP’s. Then there’s *Drizly*. The idea here being that if your plans include alcohol, you don’t need to trek to the ABC store. You can just have the holiday cheer delivered. All of which can be helpful. But it can really only go so far - especially since much of our busyness is just a cover for our loneliness.

So we need something more. And Jesus is speaking to that and our fear of abandonment. In our text, He is speaking to His disciples, preparing them for His departure, the transition of His presence with them. He is fortifying His followers for ministry, assuring them that while He will be physically absent He will still be spiritually present in the person of the Holy Spirit.

Understand that we can’t hope to cover all there is to say about one of the three members of the Trinity in one message. But we can certainly explore what we learn in this amazing text. Jesus is telling us that we are not alone. We are not alone for God has sent the indwelling Spirit.

The indwelling Spirit. Let’s consider the answers to three questions here. First, who is He? Second, what does He do? And, third, how do we receive Him? Who, what, and how.

## I. WHO HE IS

The Spirit is clearly very much present and a part of Jesus’ coming. Gabriel delivers this shocking news to Mary. She then asks how this could be ([READ Luke 1:35](#)). But who is this?

A) *The Personality of the Spirit*

1. Not a force

Let's start with the personality of the Spirit. He is not a force or some sort of cosmic energy.

2. But a person

The Spirit is a person. Note the use of the personal pronouns - not "it" but "he". He also does things only a person can do. We see He teaches. Later on, we read that He guides and convicts.

*B) The Divinity of the Spirit*

Let us be clear on who He is - His personality and also His divinity as part of the Trinity.

1. Summary of the whole

Throughout the Bible, we see that divine attributes and authority are attributed to the Spirit.

2. This passage

In this particular passage, we read of His being "another Helper" (READ John 14:16). Meaning that Jesus has been this to the disciples. And the Spirit will continue that work. But stop and ask, "How does Jesus speak of Himself?" Simply in John's Gospel with the "I am" statements, it's clear He is God in the flesh. And the Spirit is spoken of as "another," as like Jesus. Meaning that He is as equally God as Jesus, as equally part of the Trinity as both the Father and the Son.

Again, we need to be clear on who the Spirit is - both His personality and divinity.

*Illustration:*

One of the traditions of Christmas is the wrapping of gifts. Why do we do this? To hide, conceal, to throw the recipient off the trail, to not give anything away. It's just the opposite with the gift of the Holy Spirit. Who He is couldn't be any plainer. And we're meant to know that.

*Application:*

(READ John 14:17c) That is not "near" or "in the midst of" as with the Old Testament temple. The Spirit dwells with and in us. Do you know who has taken up residence within you? Do you know who lives at the center core of your life? What would that begin to look like?

Think of it this way. Because the Spirit is personal, we can have a relationship with Him. We can pray to Him. And because He is divine, He enters into all our worries, pain, and burdens.

What a gift. We are not alone. We are not alone for God has sent the indwelling Spirit.

## **II. WHAT HE DOES**

That's who He is. Which brings us to what He does. So much could be said but plenty is given just here. Let's look at how He is described, the titles (READ John 14:16-17a; 16:12-13).

*A) The Spirit of Truth*

1. He speaks only the truth

He is the Spirit of truth. Meaning that He speaks only the truth - as opposed to the lies and the accusations of the world, our sinful hearts, and Satan. And that is important for us to know.

2. The books of the New Testament

But this is also tied to something else (**READ John 14:25-26**). To be sure, there is the reality of the Spirit's broader teaching and guiding of all believers. Even us. But here, Jesus is speaking to the inspiration of the books of the New Testament. Which is a source of tremendous confidence. The 27 books of the New Testament are as authoritative and sure as the 39 of the Old Testament.

#### *B) The Paraclete*

So the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of truth. But there's something else, another title given.

##### 1. Various translations

We see this in 14:16, 26; 15:26; 16:7. Different translations handle the word in various ways. He is the Counselor - a person of wisdom. He is the Comforter - offering strength and solace. He is our Advocate - standing with and for you in a court. He is the Helper - offering assistance.

##### 2. The literal meaning

The Greek word is *paraclete*. Para - to come alongside. Kaleo - to call or argue. Meaning that He confronts others for you, including you. He is a friend like no other. He will challenge and convict you of your sin. And He will encourage and remind you of the great truth of the gospel.

This is who the Spirit is and what He does for us. He is our great Paraclete.

#### *Application:*

Do you have any friends like that? You may have someone like that but even the best of friends is but an echo of this. Think with me. The Spirit dwells within you. He is everywhere you go, no matter the circumstances. And He is "with (us) forever" which means no matter what you do or fail to do, He sticks with you and will speak to your heart exactly what and how you need. He knows you so well and loves you so thoroughly that He cannot but speak into your life.

Do you have this friend? We are not alone for God has sent the indwelling Spirit.

### **III. HOW WE RECEIVE HIM**

Which brings us to this last point - how we receive Him. Note what Jesus says of the Spirit. (**READ John 14:12**) Not that we will do more spectacular things but that they will be greater in number and scope. (**READ John 16:7**) It is better for Jesus to go so that the Spirit may come. Which means we are in a better position than the disciples were before the Spirit came.

#### *A) Once for All*

So how then do we receive the Spirit? For starters, by believing once for all, by trusting in and living out of the work of the first Paraclete, Jesus Himself (**READ 1 John 2:1-2**).

##### 1. The propitiation

Jesus is the propitiation for our sins. He is the sacrifice bearing God's just wrath due to us which then turns that wrath from us. So now there is nothing left to bear. There is no debt left to pay.

##### 2. The paraclete

Jesus, our propitiation, is also our Paraclete, our Advocate. Here the word takes the context of a court. Jesus is our legal representative, making a case. What is the case He is making? He is

demanding justice. He is saying “Yes, he is guilty. Yes, she has violated your law. But I have paid for that. I bear the scars even now. So it would be unjust to punish them now. It would be unjust. So now, for justice’s sake, they must now go free.” That is Jesus’ work as our Paraclete. And to know the work of the Spirit, the second Paraclete, you must embrace the work of the first.

### B) Ongoing

But there’s something else. To receive the Spirit, to really enjoy His presence as we are meant to, there is an ongoing believing as well. Which means resisting two very common lies.

#### 1. Secular deception

The first is a secular deception (**READ John 14:17a**). This is still true - not just in terms of a relational estrangement with our Creator but an outright disbelief in the spiritual realm and anything that cannot be defined or explained. And that infection has seeped into the church.

#### 2. Theological convenience

We have to resist this secular deception that would deny the reality of the Holy Spirit. But the second lie to resist is that of a theological convenience that has no room for mystery. As image bearers of a God of order, it does make sense we would try to make sense of God and His ways. And we should, always in submission to the Scriptures. But we must never do so in such a way that we think we have figured God out, cornered the market, and sorted out all the mystery.

There is a receiving of the Spirit. It comes once for all when we come to Jesus and put our trust in Him. And it comes continually as we resist the lies and continually rely upon Him.

### CONCLUSION:

All of this brings us into something greater, a story begun before the world’s beginning. It’s like the stories of old, the hero’s journey as the main character is given a gift that enables them to press through the dangers, to survive the quest, to arrive at their destination. Arthur had Excalibur. In Tolkien’s *The Lord of the Rings*, Frodo had the Phial of Galadriel. In George MacDonald’s *The Princess and the Goblin*, Irene has a magic ring. The end in each is secure.

Which is where the Hallmark Christmas movies fall short. Obviously they’re popular. Some 50 million people watched at least one in 2019. They are also a bit predictable. A woman reluctantly returns to her hometown. Sworn enemies fall in love. The conflict is overcome by a Christmas miracle. And there is always a happy ending. But what happens after the credits? What happens to that couple in January? We are never told. The ultimate ending is unanswered.

Not so with this story, with the true tall tale of the coming of King Jesus. In this story, the end is certain. How do we know? Jesus is sending us, His disciples, out into the world. And He has given us these gifts, including His presence in the Holy Spirit, a partial fulfillment of the ancient Immanuel promise. “I will be your God and I will be with you. I will be with you.”

My friends, we are not alone. We are not alone for God has sent the indwelling Spirit.

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