# Week 26

# ***The Spirit & the Disciples***

##### John 15:26-16:22

## Day One

“Life is hard, and then you die!” is how one cynic put it. We would have to agree, particularly where the Christian is concerned. Perhaps when you got saved you were under the impression that all would be good now. It will be great later, but for now …

*Father,*

*Steel my faith to read and consider these truths today. Do not let fear overcome me, but help me to rely upon Your Sovereignty and to look for Your glory in all of this!*

*Amen*

1. Why and to what extent, were the disciples to suffer persecution *(16:2-3)? cf. Acts 8:1-3; 9:1-2*
2. Why had Christ said nothing about this at the beginning of His ministry *(16:4)?*

*Would you want to know what next year will be like for you? Why or why not?*

## Day Two

The disciples sorrow was largely because Jesus was going away. This gave Him the opportunity to comfort and teach them about the coming of the Spirit.

*Oh God of All Comfort,*

*You have revealed Yourself as the lover of man. All You have done has been to show us the glory of Your loving plan for us. Even in adversity, You prove Yourself true. Open my heart and well as my mind to Your work in me and in the world around me.*

*Amen*

1. Why was it better for Jesus to "go away" *(16:7)? Cf. John 6:17; 11:21; Hebrews 13:5-6*
2. Of what does the Holy Spirit convict the world *(16:8-11)?*

*How have you seen the Spirit at work in sharing your faith?*

## Day Three

Today we want to take a broader look at the working of the Spirit of Truth as a background for understanding how this teaching fits. You will be looking up various other references to what He is doing now.

*Father,*

*Show me today through this study just what the Spirit is doing. Help me to walk in the Spirit in the path of light, love, and victory.*

*Amen*

1. What are some of the ways in which the Holy Spirit ministers to believers?

*Romans 8:2*

*2 Corinthians 3:17*

*1 Corinthians 2:12-13*

*Romans 8:13*

*1 Corinthians 12:4-11*

*Ephesians 4:3-4*

*Romans 8:26-27*

*Galatians 5:22-23*

*Romans 14:17*

*Romans 15:13*

*Ephesians 3:16*

*For what work of the Spirit listed in your study are you particularly grateful today?*

## Day Four

One of the encouraging things about the disciples is that they did NOT get everything Jesus was telling them. At least we are in good company. Today you are going to sit in the seat vacated by Judas Iscariot and listen …

*Lord,*

*I am such a slow thinking person. There is much about You and Your plans that I do not understand. I thank you for the work of Your Son and of His disciples in writing this down for my benefit. Help me to listen and rejoice.*

*Amen*

1. To what event or events would you have thought Jesus referred *(16:16-17)?*
2. Why was this confusing to the disciples *(16:18)?*

*How does not having to understand everything Jesus said before you can be His disciple encourage you?*

## Day Five

Jesus not only wants us to learn and understand, He wants us to not let sorrow get the better of us. We have sorrow, but we can deal with it through the comfort He gives.

*Father,*

*Show me the same comfort that You showed to these disciples through Your Son. Help me to not only understand what He is saying to them, but open my eyes to see how this applies to me as His disciple.*

*Amen*

1. How does Jesus’ question demonstrate His abilities *(16:19)?*
2. What comfort is He able to give to the disciples *(16:20-22)?*

*If you were to write a prayer of thanksgiving expressing how the Father has ministered to you this week, what would you say?*

## Bonus Material

v. 26 "the Spirit . . . who goes out from the Father . . . " This "going out from the Father" does not refer to the Spirit’s *being*, but to his *mission*. In other words, it refers to the fact that God the Holy Spirit is sent into the world by the God the Father, just as God the Son was sent (Jn. 5:23). His purpose is not to draw attention to himself, but to testify about Christ, a work he fulfills through us as we witness to Christ (v. 27).

16:2 "a time is coming when anyone who kills you will think he is offering a service to God . . . " Sincerity and good intentions are not enough. Unless guided by a knowledge of the truth, they produce death, not life.

v. 5 "yet none of you asks me, ’Where are you going? . . . " It is difficult to reconcile this with 13:36 and 14:5. Perhaps Jesus means that, although they had earlier been asking him such questions, they now were so saddened at their own loss (v. 6) that they no longer cared where he was going and had stopped asking. Or perhaps he means that, although they were asking such questions, their real intent was not to learn about his destination, but to protest the fact that he was leaving them.

vv. 6-7 "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 . . . " However blessed it was to live and fellowship with Jesus during his earthly ministry, the experience available to his disciples since the coming of the Spirit at Pentecost (Acts 2:1-4) is even greater. For now Jesus not only lives *with* us, he actually dwells *in* us all the time through his Spirit (14:17; Rom. 8:9). The Spirit’s ministry to believers includes, first, the new birth (Jn. 3:5-8), regeneration (Titus 3:5), and baptism into the body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:13); then, peace, joy, and hope (Rom. 8:6; 14:17; 15:13; 1 Th. 1:6); an inner witness that we are children of God (Rom. 8:15-16); freedom from the Law (Rom 8:2; 2 Cor. 3:17); understanding of spiritual truth (1 Cor. 2:12-13); guidance (Rom. 8:14); inner strength and the power to resist sin (Rom 8:13; Eph. 3:16); growth in Christian character (2 Cor. 3:18; Gal. 5:22-23); access to God and help in prayer (Rom. 8:27; Eph. 2:18, 6:18); unity with other believers and gifts of ministry to build them up in Christ (1 Cor. 12:4-11; Eph. 2:22, 4:3-4, 4:12); and power for the work of the gospel (Acts 1:8). These things are possible because the age of the Spirit, the messianic age, has been inaugurated in Jesus’ death, resurrection, and exaltation (see Acts 2:17-21, 2:32-36).

vv. 8-11 "When he comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment . . . " (Note: the words "of guilt" have been added in the NIV; the NASV, *"he will convict the world concerning sin, and righteousness, and judgment,"* is more accurate.) This passage has been understood in various ways: that the Spirit will convict the world in a judicial sense by obtaining a verdict of "guilty" against it in God’s courtroom; that He will persuade the world of the truth about sin, righteousness, and judgment; or that He will bring about an acknowledgment of personal sin and guilt in the hearts of individuals. The last alternative is most consistent with other New Testament uses of the verb *elenxei*, "to convict" (see Mt. 18:15; 1 Cor. 14:24). Thus, the Holy Spirit will convict the world of its sin, pre-eminently the sin of unbelief; He will convict the world of the emptiness of its own righteousness and of its need for true righteousness (Is. 64:5; Mt. 5:20; Rom. 10:3), because Jesus is going to the Father and can no longer perform this ministry directly; and he will convict the world of the judgment which it deserves, the judgment which it will share with Satan, its "prince," unless it repents (Mt. 25:41). In other words, the Spirit will convict the world of the *sin* of which it is guilty, the *righteousness* which it lacks, and the *judgment* which it deserves, in order to bring about repentance, thus calling out of the world those who were formerly "by nature objects of wrath" (Eph. 2:3). His ministry is not merely to convince people of the truth of the gospel, but to open their eyes to their own need of a savior.

vv. 12-13 "I have much more to say to you, more than you can now bear . . . " The "much more" of v. 12 is parallel to the "all truth" of v. 13 and the "all things" of 14:26; referring to the fullness of revelation which the Spirit will bring concerning the person and ministry of Jesus Christ, who himself is the perfect and complete revelation of God (Heb. 1:1-3; see vv. 14-15). It is probably best to see vv. 12-15 as primarily intended for the Eleven (the Twelve minus Judas), rather than for all believers at all times, since v. 12 makes reference to their personal capacity to absorb additional revelation, and also includes a promise to reveal the future: "he will tell you what is yet to come" (see 15:27; notes on 14:26).

vv. 14-15 "He will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it known to you . . . " The purpose of the Spirit’s ministry is not to bring honor and glory to himself, but to honor and glorify the Son (see 5:23). He will do this by continuing to unfold to the disciples the meaning and significance of Jesus’ words and works, which in turn reveal the Father.

v. 16 "In a little while you will see me no more, and then after a little while you will see me . . . " The time when the disciples will see Jesus no more is the time following his death; at this time they will "weep and mourn" (v. 20). A "little while" after that, he will be raised from the dead; then they will see him and rejoice (v. 22).

v. 20 "you will weep and mourn while the world rejoices . . . but your grief will turn to joy . . . " As promised, when the risen Christ appeared to them, "The disciples were overjoyed . . ." (Jn. 20:20). While the disciples mourned, the world, and Satan, the "prince of this world," (14:30) rejoiced. But the enemy’s apparent triumph was actually a stunning defeat, for it was through death that Christ *"disarmed the powers and authorities . . . triumphing over them by the cross"* (Col. 2:15). As it was then, so it will be when Christ returns: at a time when Satan seems to have the upper hand, Christ will come and utterly destroy him and his works (2 Thess. 2:3-8).

vv. 21-22 Jesus illustrates his point with the figure of a woman in childbirth; her pain and suffering is changed into great joy when she sees the child. This figure echoes an Old Testament theme of the suffering that Israel will undergo prior to her eventual deliverance and the coming of the messianic age (Isa. 26:16-27:13; 66:7-24). This does not make the events surrounding Jesus’ death a fulfillment of Isaiah’s prophecy, but it does suggest that the messianic age which Israel looked forward to has been inaugurated in the exaltation and reign of Jesus Messiah (Acts 2:33-36).