The Sending of the Spirit

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[0:00] In Jesus' name, amen. Well, what would you prefer? I've got a question. Would you like to have Jesus with you?!

What do you reckon would be better? A Jesus who is here with us, right here, right now, Jesus in the flesh, where you can look at him, see his face, you can listen to him and hear his voice, you can watch how he behaves and how he speaks.
Or, would you have a Jesus that you can't see? What do you think would be the most help to you or to all of us? Well, I guess the answer seems pretty obvious, doesn't it?
You'd choose the Jesus you could see rather than the Jesus that you couldn't. Surely it would be far better to have Jesus here with us in the flesh. And that's how the disciples must have felt in our Bible reading, because they had been with Jesus throughout his earthly ministry, and here they are with Jesus the night before he died in the upper room as he teaches them.
And Jesus keeps telling his disciples that he will be leaving them, that he's going away, which doesn't seem very good, does it? And yet Jesus puts a different spin on it.
[1:37] Because in what we've just read, but also later on, Jesus says that it is to his disciples' advantage that he leaves, that he goes away from them. Just flick over one page to chapter 16 and verse 7, and Jesus says there, But very truly I tell you, it is for your good that I am going away.

Unless I go away, the advocate, it's a word we've heard in our reading referring to the Holy Spirit, unless I go away, the advocate will not come to you, but if I go, I will send him to you.
Okay, so Jesus says that unless he goes away, the Spirit won't come. And so Jesus is teaching his disciples here that his departure doesn't mean that he is leaving them.
So in one sense, he is going away, he will die, but in another sense, he will still be with them because he is sending his Spirit.
So Jesus is wanting to prepare his disciples for what it is going to be like for them after his death. But they're probably not thinking that Jesus' absence and the Spirit's presence is the best deal.
[2:52] Like, surely it's better that Jesus just stays with us and we can see him. And yet they wouldn't lose Jesus because they'd actually have Jesus with them in a new and in an intimate way.

And so Jesus here is teaching who the Holy Spirit is and what the Holy Spirit does. And so we'll see what the Spirit would do for the disciples, but also what he does for us.
So let's think about these three points from this passage this afternoon. First, who the Spirit is. Second, what the Spirit does. And then thirdly, what we do.
So first of all, who the Spirit is. This is about the person of the Holy Spirit. Who is the Holy Spirit? That's the first thing to see in what Jesus teaches his disciples.
Let's read verse 15 to 17 again. If you love me, keep my commands and I will ask the Father and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever.
[3:55] 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.

So Jesus talks about the Holy Spirit as a person. He's not just a power, not just a force, and he certainly isn't an it. He's a person.
Jesus refers to the Holy Spirit as he. So verse 17, Jesus says, The world neither sees him nor knows him, but the disciples know him for he lives with them and will be in them.
So Jesus is talking about a person, not some kind of divine energy. And so when Jesus says he will be another advocate, he's saying another person is coming.
Not one who would be different from Jesus, but another of the same kind as Jesus. Jesus is essentially saying here, I'm going to the Father, but the Father will give the Spirit who will be to you everything that I have been to you.

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[5:09] And so there's a continuity, but there's also a difference. Because the Spirit will not only continue to be with them just as Jesus had been with them, but he will be in them and be with them forever.

So it's actually for their good that Jesus goes away because they won't lose Jesus at all. Jesus will be with them in a much closer way.
But of course, they couldn't grasp this at the time. So Jesus says to them, he's not going to leave them as orphans. Verse 18, I will not leave you as orphans. I will come to you.
He assures his disciples that he's coming back to them. And he's not talking here about his resurrection when he will come back and they'll see him again. And he's not talking here about his return, the second coming, when everybody will see him.
Jesus is talking about his coming in the Spirit. Where the complete union between Jesus and the Spirit means the coming of the Spirit is the coming of Jesus.
[6:13] Where the Spirit is like Jesus' successor or his replacement even. Not some kind of impersonal force. Because the Spirit is the Spirit of Jesus.

And so it's through the person of the Holy Spirit that the disciples will be able to see Jesus. Even though he won't be with them in bodily form. Okay, verse 19 says, Before long the world will not see me anymore, but you will see me because I live, you also will live.
So in one sense, Jesus will be gone. He's about to die. But in another sense, Jesus will continue to be with them in the Spirit. So the world won't see Jesus anymore.
But his people will see him. Because Jesus will be in them. And so that's who the Spirit is. So let's listen then to what Jesus teaches about what the Spirit does.
And that's our second point. What the Spirit does. And this is about the work of the Holy Spirit. That's what Jesus is teaching his disciples. And of course there's much more to say about the work of the Holy Spirit.
[7:27] But here Jesus gives three images of the Holy Spirit's work. Three words, in a sense, capture Jesus' teaching. The first is advocate.

The second is homemaker. And the third is teacher. So the first advocate in verse 15 to 17. This is the first word that Jesus uses for the Holy Spirit in our translation.
It's the word advocate. And he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever. The Spirit of truth.
Now other Bibles might translate this as helper or counselor or comforter. And it's really because there's a richness to the original Greek word.
Which is the word parakletos. That's why translators have found it hard to find one English word that has justice to the original Greek word. And this word parakletos means someone called alongside.
[8:31] So it's two words that come together. Para meaning come alongside. And kletos means to call or to direct. And still in English we use that prefix para.

Don't we? In some of our English words like paramedic. What's a paramedic's job? Well a paramedic is someone with medical skill who is called alongside you to help you and to care for you.
Or maybe even paralegal. It's a paralegal's job. Well it's someone with legal skill who is called alongside you to help you get justice.
And so Jesus here calls the Spirit another advocate. So what does that mean? Well if there's another advocate it means that there's first of all a first advocate. And Jesus is the first advocate. And the Holy Spirit is the second. And so the other time that this word is used outside of referring to the Holy Spirit.
[9:35] Here in John chapter 14 and 15 and 16. It's used. This word is used to describe Jesus in 1 John chapter 2. And we read there, but if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ, the righteous one.

So the word's got this legal sense where Jesus serves as our advocate. Now apparently in secular Greek, this word refers to somebody who would help you in court.
Similar to today. So if you needed somebody to speak up for you before the judge, you would have this friend. Somebody who knows you who would come along and would advocate for you on your behalf.

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They would literally come alongside you, stand by your side in court, but they would also be on your side. They're for you.
They're there to help you. They'd plead your case, acting maybe like a defense lawyer. And they would represent you. They would help you. They would defend you. They'd speak up for you and they'd tell the truth to the judge on your behalf.
[10:44] Which helps us understand the work of the Holy Spirit. So every Christian, Jesus is saying here, has two advocates. In Jesus, we have an advocate with the Father.

And in the Spirit, we have an advocate with us and in us. So the first advocate speaks to the Father for us.
The second advocate speaks to us, for us. And so advocate helps bring out the richness of the Spirit's work as well as Jesus' work for us.
Just as an advocate, if you ever need one, today in court would help, would counsel, would comfort, would come alongside to represent and direct you, which is what Jesus has been doing, isn't it, for his disciples in his ministry and in the upper room.
And now Jesus is promising that the Spirit will come to continue this role in their lives. So the disciples will not be left alone like they think, which is a good thing because they would need help, they would need counsel, and they would need comfort.
[12:00] And so all of this tells us the work of the Holy Spirit is so significant in living the Christian life. But Jesus uses another image here to describe the Spirit's work, one that perhaps is less familiar, but it's no less important because it speaks of the intimate presence of God in us.

So there's advocate, first of all, but then secondly, there's a word, homemaker, which you won't find, but it's how Jesus describes the Spirit's work.
And it's there in verse 18 to 24, the Holy Spirit's described as a homemaker. Now, Jesus has already described himself as a homemaker, a homemaker for the disciples.
So you remember back in chapter 14, verse 2, he says, my Father's house has many rooms. I'm going there to prepare a place for you. And now he's saying the Holy Spirit will be the homemaker for the presence of the Father and the Son in the lives of God's people.
So look at verse 23, my Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them. And that's the amazing reality of the Holy Spirit's work.
[13:26] The Spirit will make our lives a home for the Father and the Son to live in. Now, you might be thinking, homemaker is such a weird term to use.

Like, who speaks about a homemaker today? A bit odd. And perhaps it's because words like housewife or househusband or stay-at-home parent or whatever make it an odd word.
But a homemaker essentially describes someone who manages the home for the family. And normally they don't have a job outside of the home. And I guess today as a result of that, it's seen as an unimportant or an undervalued role.
And yet we all value our homes, don't we? We want our homes to be great places for our families to live in. And that's not just because we would love to have lovely carpets and nice paintings and all the gadgets possible, but we would like it to have a nice atmosphere, for it to be a good place to be for our family and for anyone who comes to visit.
And so the homemaker describes somebody who essentially transforms a house into a home. We want to live in a home, don't we? Don't we just want to live in a house where things always go wrong, boilers break down or whatever.
[14:52] And so homemaker might not be a common term, but it describes the role of the Holy Spirit in our lives. It's what Jesus is saying here. The Spirit makes our lives a good home for the presence of the Father and the Son.

And it's such an intimate picture of the Holy Spirit's work. Jesus was sending the Spirit to His disciples and to us so that God can be at home in our lives.
And of course, you know as well as I do that homes aren't always good places to be, are they? We know this. We may even have experienced it. But we all long to feel at home, to be in a place that is welcoming, that is warm, that is loving, that is peaceful, that is truthful, where there's a real intimacy of relationship and a great atmosphere.
Well, the Holy Spirit's work is to transform our lives into this kind of home. His work is to make us into a place where the Father and the Son will feel at home, in.

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And so God, the Holy Spirit, will work on renovating our hearts and our lives. He'll make the needed changes. He'll sort out the problems. He'll clear out the mess.
[16:17] He'll keep the place clean. He'll create this better atmosphere. Listen to how writer C.S. Lewis puts it in Mere Christianity. He says, Imagine yourself as a living house.

God comes in to rebuild that house. At first, perhaps, you can understand what he is doing. He is getting the drains right and stopping the leaks in the roof and so on. You knew that those jobs needed doing, and so you're not surprised.
But presently, he starts knocking the house about in a way that hurts abominably and does not seem to make any sense. What on earth is he up to? The explanation is that he is building quite a different house from the one you thought of, throwing out a new wing here, putting on an extra floor there, running up towers, making courtyards.
You thought you were being made into a decent little cottage. But he is building a palace. He intends to come and live in it himself. It's a great illustration, isn't it, of the Holy Spirit's work as a homemaker.
He wants to make us into a comfortable home for the Father and the Son to live in. So that's the second word to describe the Spirit's work.
[17:33] First, advocate. Second, homemaker. And third, teacher. That's the third image that Jesus uses here. The Holy Spirit as teacher. Let's read verse 25 and 26 again to see this.

All this I have spoken while still with you, but the advocate, 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.
Now, Jesus was the disciples' teacher, but he'd soon be going. And so the Spirit's work was to teach the disciples all things and to remind them of everything that Jesus said.
Because at this point, remember, they didn't understand about Jesus. They hadn't fully grasped the implications of the death and resurrection of Jesus because Jesus was still alive and he hadn't been raised from the dead yet.
And so the Holy Spirit would take on this role as their teacher. Well, what would it be like? Well, we've got John's gospel for a start, haven't we?
[18:42] John, listening to Jesus, hearing him teach all these things, could then after the Spirit had come, write down this gospel which is rich in explaining the message of Jesus for us.

And there is the rest of the New Testament to teach us the good news of Jesus so that we believe in him, all inspired by the Holy Spirit as the teacher. the Holy Spirit to enable the disciples to have a deeper understanding of the person and work of Jesus.
One they couldn't have, they couldn't possibly have when Jesus was with them. So in a sense, their eyes weren't open to see the truth and the beauty and the significance of what Jesus had taught them during his ministry.
And so the Spirit would teach them after Jesus had gone, teach them about the Father and about Jesus' relationship to the Father and teach them about Jesus, his death, his resurrection, and also his relationship to them through the Spirit.
And so after Jesus had gone, they'd be able to recall accurately what Jesus taught them and they'd be able to pass it on and write it down. The Spirit would be their teacher.
[19:57] And the Holy Spirit is our teacher too. And that's the only way any of us can understand the truth about Jesus. It is if the Spirit of truth teaches us the truth, helps us grasp the significance of who Jesus is and why Jesus came.

And so the implications of the Spirit's work are staggering. Because if Jesus tells his disciples the Holy Spirit would teach them all things, then they could only understand all things after Jesus had gone.
Which takes us back full circle to where we began. And when I ask the question of whether it would be better to have Jesus with us in the flesh, and we would assume, well, yeah, it would be better to have Jesus here so we could see him and hear him.
It would be much easier. I guess if we lived around 2,000 years ago, just over 2,000 miles away from here, if we lived when Jesus was around, well, we could see him, we could hear him, maybe even we could meet him.
So we'd think that we would be able to know him better. But Jesus' teaching here about the work of the Holy Spirit proves all this to be wrong. Jesus had to go for the Spirit to come so we can know Jesus through the Spirit's teaching and influence.

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[21:28] Because the Holy Spirit helps us see Jesus more clearly, understand him more fully, experience him more deeply, and know his presence far better.

Actually far better than even the disciples could in that upper room. In other words, the Father and the Son dwelling in us through the Spirit means that we are in a more privileged position today than those disciples were back with Jesus in that upper room when he was physically with them.
And so it's astonishing when you consider the implications of Jesus' teaching on the Holy Spirit. The Spirit Jesus promised his disciples is the Spirit of Jesus.
And there is only one Holy Spirit, which means the Spirit that indwelt Jesus on earth is the same Spirit who indwells all of Jesus' people to help us, to counsel us, to comfort us, to transform our lives and to teach us.
Meaning that we can have no deeper intimacy of relationship with Jesus than those disciples had.
Okay, so that's who the Spirit is and what the Spirit does.
[22:58] Thirdly and finally, let's think about what we do. And that is to love and obey. It's clear that Jesus wants his disciples to love and obey. And this one word is translated both as obey and as keep in the passage.

It's woven through. So every time this word keep or obey is connected with love for Jesus. And I wonder if you spotted that. Verse 15, 21, 23, and 24.
So just see verse 15. If you love me, keep my commands. See verse 21. Whoever has my commands and keeps them is the one who loves me.
See verse 23. Anyone who loves me will obey my teaching. And then counter to this in verse 24. Anyone who does not love me will not obey my teaching.
Jesus couldn't be clearer. Could he? Obeying Jesus shows that we love him. Now, of course, we don't grudgingly obey in order to become a follower of Jesus.
[24:07] But the mark of following Jesus is that we lovingly obey him. It's those who love and obey who have God dwelling in them where only his presence can give us peace.

And that's why Jesus says to his disciples in verse 27, peace I leave with you, my peace I give you. I do not give you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.
So without the work of the Spirit, we can't know Jesus or experience his peace in our lives. The world can't give us deep and lasting peace.
A peace that can calm our troubled hearts so that we aren't afraid. If you think about the world's peace, it is shallow and it is short-lived. Like, we can have peace when things are good.
Like, when life is going well, when money's not a problem, when your job is secure, when you're fit and healthy, when your children are flourishing, well, yeah, you can have peace then.
[25:20] We understand that is a peaceful life. But what about when things aren't going so well? Like, when money is tight or when you've failed at work or you lose your job or when you've been diagnosed with cancer or when your child is in trouble, well, there will be no peace then, will there?

Because the world's peace is based on circumstances being good, isn't it? And so when circumstances change for the worse, then the peace evaporates and it disappears and our minds are disturbed and our hearts are troubled and we're full of fear.
And yet Jesus is saying here the Spirit will come to His people and His people can have a unique peace. And so the peace can only be ours through the work of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.
And we need it. Just like Jesus' disciples needed it. Because as Jesus left them, they needed to know His presence would still be with them. And I think that's why this section of teaching finishes with Jesus saying to His disciples in verse 31, come now, let us leave.
It's a strange thing to say because they don't actually leave at that moment in time. It's not until chapter 18 in verse 1 that they leave the upper room. Now it could be, of course, that they just kept on talking, like when people come round to visit your house and they say to you that they're leaving and then half an hour later they're still there and they're still talking and they haven't left yet.
[27:03] But I suspect that's not the case here. Because Jesus has just said, verse 30 to 31, the devil is coming. And while he's the ruler of this world, he has got no authority over Jesus.

And yet there is a conflict coming and so it seems that Jesus doesn't mean physically getting up and going, but about getting up and being ready for the spiritual conflict that will come.
Because the devil would be against the disciples and the world would hate the disciples, but Jesus is Lord and he promises his disciples to send the Holy Spirit to help them and to be with them

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forever.
And so when we know Jesus as our Savior and our Lord, the same Spirit, the Spirit of Jesus Christ is in us and will be with us forever.
And so we can know peace. for this little year to him. This little need you to get out of your Euan and this kind of will be with us.
[28:22] We know this little but we can see it as as as as as as as as as as as as as as as as as as as as as

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