

THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

John 16:1-33

Key Verse: 16:23

"In that day you will no longer ask me anything. I tell you the truth, my Father will give you whatever you ask in my name."

In the last passage, we studied the last part of John chapter fifteen with the title, "You are my friends." We thank and praise God that in our fellowship there are many friends among men, as well as among women. When we review Christian history, we find that Christian history was not carried out by multitudes of people; it was carried out by many friends among men, like David and Jonathan, Melancthon and Luther, Calvin and Zwingli, Reinhold Niebuhr and Dietrich Bonhoeffer. In the last passage, we also learned that Jesus helped his twelve disciples to become friends by loving one another in Jesus. Finally they became friends and conquered the whole world with the gospel of our [Lord Jesus Christ](#). Thank God that we have so many names of the disciples of Jesus Christ among men and women in this country. The same is true with people in the Russian Federation. Thank God that God chose each of us and set us apart to bear much fruit in this generation. Today Jesus teaches his disciples the work of the Holy Spirit. In the first part, they didn't understand what Jesus was talking about because of their separation anxiety. But later they understood the work of the Holy Spirit, and they all became victorious. May God help us to understand the work of the Holy Spirit.

First, "they will persecute you" (1-4). Jesus tells them plainly that after his departure, [the Jewish](#) leaders will persecute them. First, they will discriminate against them as the sect of Jesus the Nazarene; then they will excommunicate them. Finally, they will brand them as political criminals so as to destroy them. That was their common trick. In John chapter 9 there is a young blind beggar. Even though he was young, he was a blind beggar. He had to sit on the corner of the street and beg money from passers-by for his survival, saying, "Alms for the blind! Alms for the blind!" Jesus had great pity on him. When Jesus saw the blind man, he had great compassion on him. Nevertheless, at the moment, Jesus didn't have any medical tools, even pieces of tissue. Still, out of his compassion, Jesus could not bypass the blind man and go away. Jesus looked around here and there and found some mud on the ground. Jesus spat on it, mixed it with his saliva and applied it to the blind man's eyes. Here we learn that where there is a will, there is a way. We also learn that Jesus' compassion produced a miracle; the blind man's eyes were opened. But to the Jews, it was done on the Sabbath. They immediately found a basis for a charge against Jesus. They wanted [to arrest](#) Jesus. But Jesus disappeared all of a sudden. Then they found the man once blind and pressed him hard to say he was not the blind man. But the blind man said, "I was blind, but now I see!" (9:25) The Jewish leaders came to him again and threatened him, saying "Give glory to God!" But the man didn't listen to them. Then they cast him out of the community. So he lost his beggar's [job](#). As a result, he had no place to go and nothing to eat. In the past, anybody who was excommunicated was treated like a Gentile dog. The persecution they received was more than one could say. St. Peter was working hard

right after the Pentecost event. Then the Jewish leaders came and threatened him. He said to them boldly in Acts 4:19, "Judge for yourselves whether it is right in God's sight to obey you rather than God." Of course Peter was excommunicated, and his name was on the list for the death penalty. When we see St. Paul's case, he was chosen by the Risen Jesus and became a light for the Gentiles. Then the Jewish leaders not only excommunicated him, but also conspired to kill him (Ac 9:23). So Jesus said in verse 2, "They will put you out of the synagogue; in fact, a time is coming when anyone who kills you will think he is offering a service to God."

Why did the Jewish leaders do such evil things? Verse 3 says, "They will do such things because they have not known the Father or me." The Jewish leaders were chosen people and supposed to be the shepherds for God's flock. But it was a tragedy that they did not know God. So they did everything they wanted to do. In light of the Jewish leaders, we realize that it is not wise to marry an ungodly man or woman. When we have no God, we become servants of Satan. First of all, ungodly people think they don't have to retain the knowledge of God. When they have no righteous God in their souls, they become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed and depravity. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit and malice. They are arrogant and insolent. They invent ways of doing evil. Most of all, they hate God intensively, and they justify their evildoing as right (Ro 1:18-32). They know that if they do these things, they deserve death in the end. But they do not stop doing evil, because they are under the power of Satan. So to become a Christian seems to be inviting persecution for ourselves. Why does Jesus tell his disciples such a horrible story? Jesus tells them this so that they will not go astray (1), but remember about what Jesus had warned them about. When we think of their situation after Jesus' departure, it seems horrible. But this is not the case.

Second, Jesus teaches them independent faith through the Holy Spirit (5-11). In this part Jesus tells them he will give them the Holy Spirit. Jesus says in verses 5-6, "Now I am going to him who sent me, yet none of you asks me, 'Where are you going?' Because I have said these things you are filled with grief." That was right. The disciples were only thinking about Jesus' departure, and that they would be like orphans, and excommunicated. And they were trembling in the anticipation of fierce persecutions.

Jesus says in verse 7, "But I tell you the truth: 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." Jesus says this so that his disciples might receive the Holy Spirit. Moreover, Jesus wants them to be independent by depending on the Holy Spirit. There is a story that a 120-year-old father told his 90-year-old son, "Be careful when you cross the street. Do you have bus fare?" His 90-year-old son said, "No, I have no bus fare or lunch money." Even though he was a 90-year-old son, he was very dependent upon his 120-year-old father. At that time, the disciples were dependent like the 90-year-old son. There are two kinds of people in the world: The first kind is unusually independent people. The second kind is totally dependent people. Unusually independent people have fire in their hearts and yearning desire to do something great. Virtually, they all become men of standing in the world, and some become great servants of

God. Because of the unusually independent people, the world will be bright. The second kind is dependent people. They are always burdensome. They don't even support their families.

Jesus' disciples are supposed to be history-makers and conquerors of the world with the gospel of Jesus, even if they had not imagined to do so. So Jesus wants to train them to be independent. It was a very painful thing. Jesus had taken them around for three years without missing a single night. The twelve disciples were happy, even though they did not eat regular meals, because Jesus was with them. But to depart from Jesus was a very distressing thing for his disciples. Jesus says, "you are filled with grief." So Jesus tells them in verse 7, "But I tell you the truth: 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." Jesus again promises that when he departs, the Holy Spirit will be present with them. Then Jesus tells them the basic work of the Holy Spirit. Look at verse 8. "When he comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment..." In this verse we learn two things: The Holy Spirit shows them the righteousness of God, and God's judgment. If the ungodly people are convicted by the righteousness of God and eternal judgment, they are convicted of their sins.

To the disciples' eyes, ungodly people looked very prosperous and very easy-going, and they seemed to have much fun. They had freedom from any moral standard. For example, they had many women if they wanted. But Jesus tells them that they are not free. They are not enjoying any fun; rather, they are convicted by the Holy Spirit of their guilt and sin. The Holy Spirit lets them know the righteousness of God and God's judgment upon them so that they are convicted of their sin and guilt. But they suppress the truth and keep on doing evil. Then they suffer from their guilty conscience. They are like a murderer sentenced to be hanged, waiting for the time to be executed.

Let's read verse 9. "...in regard to sin, because men do not believe in me..." People believe the kingdom of God when they want to believe and when they have to have a funeral ceremony. Yet nobody believes judgment and eternal condemnation. But as there is a Holy Spirit, there is an evil spirit; as there is the kingdom of God, there is also eternal condemnation and hell. This is our basic faith based on the Bible. Those who sin freely look very arrogant and cruel, and they do many evil things to Christians. But their punishment will be great. More than that, their punishment will be everlasting. Whether you believe it or not, you must remember that there is God's judgment and eternal condemnation (Rev 21:8). The main work of the Holy Spirit is to convict people of their sin and of God's righteousness and judgment. In other words, worldly people are not as strong as they pretend. They are very troubled and fearful, like a mountain dog chased by hunters. So we must rather have pity on them, for they are like a man with leprosy who is dying moment by moment. Why do they receive judgment? Because the prince of this world, Satan, now stands condemned (11). In other words, Jesus is ready to die on the cross for the sin of the world and rise again, defeating the power of sin and the devil--Satan. There are many evil people and evildoings. They should not be arrogant; they must know that they are now standing condemned.

Third, the Holy Spirit guides his disciples (12-16). Jesus has many things to say to his disciples--more than they can now bear. But he says to them that when the Holy Spirit comes, he will guide them into all truth. Look at verse 13. "But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come." The disciples had been in the bosom of Jesus until now. But they were suddenly becoming independent. They lacked experience, and may have been gripped with fear. They didn't know what to say. Maybe they would be speechless before the Jewish authorities. But when the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide them into all truth. The Holy Spirit gives them courage, divine wisdom and the power of God to overcome the world. In addition, the Holy Spirit gives the spirit of independence to each of Jesus' disciples.

Not only does the Holy Spirit give the spirit of independence, he shows them God's glory until they are overwhelmed by the glory of God instead of by their fears. Look at verses 14-15. "He will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it known to you. All that belongs to the Father is mine. That is why I said the Spirit will take from what is mine and make it known to you." These verses seem long, but the meaning is simple. Jesus' death and resurrection bring great glory to those who believe in him. Therefore, the disciples will not remain in fear and anxiety; they will see the great glory of our Risen Jesus Christ. It is because the Holy Spirit will make it known to them. Verse 16 says, "In a little while you will see me no more, and then after a little while you will see me." Jesus said many glorious things. But the disciples only heard, "In a little while you will see me no more, and then after a little while you will see me." So Jesus explains that his death and resurrection will be like childbirth.

Fourth, the disciples' grief will turn to joy (17-24). Some of the disciples said to one another, "What does he mean by saying, 'In a little while you will see me no more, and then after a little while you will see me,' and 'Because I am going to the Father'?" In verse 18, they kept asking, "What does he mean by 'a little while'? We don't understand what he is saying." They were really filled with sorrow and were full of grief and anxiety; they were puzzled and bewildered. Jesus knew that they did not understand that in a little while Jesus would die on the cross for the sin of the world and after three days he would rise again (19). So in verse 20 Jesus tells them, "I tell you the truth, you will weep and mourn while the world rejoices. You will grieve, but your grief will turn to joy." To the disciples, what Jesus said was all the more understandable and puzzling. So Jesus tells them a parable of a woman giving birth. Look at verse 21. "A woman giving birth to a child has pain because her time has come; but when her baby is born she forgets the anguish because of her joy that a child is born into the world." Jesus compares his death and their grief to birthpains, and childbirth, to his glorious resurrection. A baby comes out crying with a loud voice when a woman in labor feels that she has died. Probably all the women who have babies know what it means to have birthpains and the joy of childbirth. Jesus' departure to die on the cross and his resurrection seem to have been like birthpains. The disciples will experience great pain. But they will have great joy when Jesus rises again.

Look at verses 23-24. "In that day you will no longer ask me anything. I tell you the truth, my Father will give you whatever you ask in my name. Until now you have not asked for anything in my name. Ask and you will receive, and your joy will be complete." Even though they must go through great sorrow and pain, they will have great joy when Jesus rises again in glory. It is because God will give them the Holy Spirit, and whatever they ask in Jesus' name. In addition, they will see the glorious Risen Christ, and even the dark world will look to them as shining glory; the disciples' joy will be complete. Here we learn that the life of disciples is not full of grief and sorrow. It is to say that once we must go through pain and sorrow. But we will see a glorious day through his resurrection. Also, we will be independent by the help of the Holy Spirit. If we ask him, God will give us independent spirit and shining glory. Most importantly, our joy will be complete.

Fifth, "this makes us believe" (25-33). Jesus says in verse 25, "Though I have been speaking figuratively, a time is coming when I will no longer use this kind of language but will tell you plainly about my Father." Here Jesus means that speech is not enough to understand what he says. But after his resurrection, they will understand all the secrets of spiritual things. Look at verses 26-27. "In that day you will ask in my name. I am not saying that I will ask the Father on your behalf. No, the Father himself loves you because you have loved me and have believed that I came from God." Here, Jesus believes that the disciples have come to believe him--that he is the Son of God and that he came from God--through common life together with him. On the basis of their faith in Jesus, God will directly give them whatever they ask, especially spiritual enlightenment and shining glory. What Jesus says seems difficult to understand. But the Holy Spirit enables us to understand everything. John 14:17 says, "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."

His disciples finally understood what Jesus said. In verses 29-30 Jesus' disciples say, "Now you are speaking clearly and without figures of speech. Now we can see that you know all things and that you do not even need to have anyone ask you questions. This makes us believe that you came from God." When the disciples of Jesus only thought about Jesus' departure, they were sorrowful and they had separation anxiety. But when Jesus talked about independent faith in him and about the presence of the Holy Spirit again and again, his disciples remembered his repeated story that he came from God and was going back to God. Then their spiritual eyes widely opened. They said to Jesus, "Now you don't speak a very difficult language or in figures of speech. You are speaking plainly." Jesus spoke to them the same thing again and again. But they thought Jesus had been speaking too intellectually and in some figures of speech only. It is really interesting how they responded. Jesus tried to the end. Then they said to Jesus, "You don't speak a very hard language to us anymore, but you speak to us very simply." It was finally possible for the disciples to understand Jesus' death and resurrection when the Holy Spirit worked in their souls. It is amazing that finally they could understand the meaning of Jesus' death and resurrection, and that they could see shining glory through his death and resurrection. Now their separation anxiety and fear of the Jews all disappeared, and heavenly joy smeared into their souls. Mysteriously,

they felt they were not separating from Jesus, but were with Jesus through the work of the Holy Spirit. On the other hand, people of the world are full of sin and they stand condemned for judgment.

When we carefully review this passage, we learn that the disciples were full of grief. But they turned into men of glorious joy. Simply speaking, when we have the Holy Spirit, we are full of love and joy and peace and a glorious mission to conquer the world with the gospel of Jesus. But when we have an evil spirit, we are full of sins and a guilty conscience and a feeling of standing condemned through the judgment of God. People ignore the Holy Spirit even though there are so many Satan-worshippers. Satan-worshipping seems easy because they do many evil things freely. So there are many Satan-worshippers in this country. They see Christian faith relatively. But it is not relative. All other religions do not have the work of the Holy Spirit, but rather, people torturing themselves through vigorous religious activities and many rules. Such people are not among those who have the Holy Spirit in their souls. So they are very sorrowful people. These days American Christianity has become very relativistic. A world-famous university, which was built to teach the Bible, invited two prayer servants: One was a Muslim priest, the other, a Christian pastor. It shows that the university leaders see that all the religions are the same. But it is not true. Muslim people do not have the Holy Spirit. Therefore, they are full of evil spirits. Faith in Jesus is the only way to God, by the help of the Holy Spirit.

Today, when the disciples remembered that Jesus came from God and went back to God, they could understand the presence of the Holy Spirit. Then they were enlightened to see the glory of Jesus' death and resurrection and the glory of God through his Son Jesus Christ. Let's overcome Satan-worshipping by overcoming our relativistic ideas. Let's believe in the presence of the Holy Spirit dwelling in our souls, so that we may have complete joy.