

# I Believe in the Holy Spirit (John 16:5-15)

**Big Idea:** The Spirit lives within us and leads us into truth.

Why is it better that Jesus is no longer physically with us?

I get kind of jealous. In 1999 I traveled to Israel. We visited places where Jesus walked. One of my favorite places was the synagogue in Capernaum, Jesus' home base. The Bible records that Jesus taught and healed a man at the synagogue, and the ruins of a 4th century synagogue are still there, possibly built over the remains of the 1st century synagogue. You're walking in a place Jesus walked. It's amazing.

Imagine having Jesus as your mentor. Imagine being able to sit down one night and have a long talk with him, asking him questions and getting answers. Imagine asking him to help you with some of your problems. Imagine even being able to shake his hand. I get a bit jealous when I think that some people – his disciples – got to enjoy that privilege.

It would be cool to live with Jesus right beside us so that we could ask him questions. But surprisingly, Jesus says:

*Nevertheless, I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you. (John 16:7)*

According to Jesus, we are better off without his physical presence. You and I are in a better position than Jesus' disciples, who got to live and talk with Jesus for years in Israel. Why? Because he has sent us the Helper.

The word "Helper" that Jesus used is profound and actually a little hard to translate. Earlier Jesus called him "*another* Helper, to be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth" (John 14:16-17). Another means that he's not the first. Jesus was the first. He's carrying on the same work that Jesus did – strengthening and helping his disciples – except in some ways it's even better than having Jesus with us!

"The Spirit inside you is better than the Jesus beside you," to paraphrase [J.D. Greear](#).

We're looking at The Apostle's Creed, which is broken into four parts: God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit, and the church. Today we're covering part three: I believe in the Holy Spirit. Surprisingly, that's all the creed says about the Holy Spirit!

But it's very important that we think and learn about the Holy Spirit. Here's the reason why. According to John Owen, a theologian who lived in the 1600s, you can break all of history into three main divisions.

- The time when the work of God the Father was more prominent before Jesus came, in which the great testing truth was "the oneness of God's nature and his monarchy over all."
- Then, when Jesus was born, you have the period in which God the Son was more prominent, and the great testing truth is whether people who knew the Father would recognize in the incarnate Son.
- But now we are in the third division, the division in which Jesus has ascended into heaven, and in which the Holy Spirit is more prominent.

*Therefore, we live in a unique, climactic period of redemptive history, the days of the Spirit. Just as Israel of old had a special responsibility to know and honor God as Father in the oneness of his nature, and just as the people of Palestine had a special responsibility to know and honor Jesus as the Son of God in the days of his flesh, so now we have a special responsibility to know and honor the Holy Spirit.*

*O, how favored we are as a people to be living in the age of the Spirit. Spread out for us all to see and to marvel at is the history of revelation of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. How thankful we should be that we were born (owing to no virtue in us whatsoever!) in a day when the fullness of God's nature as three in one has been revealed and when the various ministries of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit have been displayed and offered for our experience. Surely everyone who loves God will be earnestly seeking to know and experience as much of God as possible—and in our day that means especially, as much of the Holy Spirit as possible. ([John Piper](#))*

What I want to do is to look at the Holy Spirit. Because there is so much we could say, I want to narrow it down to Jesus' own words about the Holy Spirit. In John 14 to 16, Jesus is preparing his disciples for his death. In the process he spends some time talking about the Holy Spirit. I want to look with you at just two of dozens of truths Jesus teaches us about the Holy Spirit, and why these truths matter to us today.

Here they are.

# First Truth: The Holy Spirit Dwells Inside Us

Jesus says:

*If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you. (John 14:15-17)*

I mentioned at the beginning of this sermon that I would love to have lived with Jesus. But living with Jesus would have drawbacks too. Jesus sometimes went away. He took time alone to pray. He needed to sleep. If you were in Galilee and he was in Judea, you'd have to wait until he came back again, or you would have to go find him. There were some times that Jesus just wasn't handy when you needed him.

But Jesus says that the Spirit is different. "You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you," Jesus says. God has always been very interested in being close to his people. In the Garden of Eden, he walked with Adam and Eve. Later on when he called Israel as his people, he commanded them to build a tabernacle so that he could live with them. Then Jesus came, and the Bible says he dwelt among us (John 1:14). But now God has taken the ultimate step. Through the Spirit, he's actually taken up residence within us.

The Holy Spirit has taken up residence within those of us who are followers of Jesus, and he promises never to leave. "In our darkest moment, he's as real as the breath in our lungs" (J.D. Greear).

God is so committed to us that he doesn't just reveal himself. He doesn't even just forgive us and save us. God is so committed to us that he has moved into us, taking up residence in our lives.

This is such an important truth that [J.I. Packer](#) suggests that it's the "essence, heart, and core of the Spirit's work today ... the central, focal element in his many-sided ministry." The Bible often said that God was *with* people – Joseph and Moses, for instance. But now God is with all those who have trusted in Jesus. He has made us into God's temple (1 Corinthians 6:19-20). Packer writes:

*The truth of the matter is this. The distinctive, constant, basic ministry of the Holy Spirit under the new covenant is so to mediate Christ's presence to believers—that is, to give them such knowledge of his presence with them as their Savior, Lord, and God—that three things keep happening.*

What are these three things?

- personal fellowship with Jesus, just as powerful as if Jesus was physically present
- personal transformation of character into Jesus's likeness
- the Spirit-given certainty of being loved, redeemed, and adopted through Christ into the Father's family

Friends, this is amazing news! God is with us. God the Spirit is more available to every believer than God the Son was when he walked this earth. God is so committed to you that he has moved into you. If you're a follower of Jesus, he's already given you new life. He's empowering you for service, purifying you, and more. God is so committed to you that he lives within you and will never let you go.

# Second Truth: The Holy Spirit Leads You Into Truth

This is amazing. Look at what Jesus says.

*And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth... (John 14:16-17)*

*But when the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness about me. (John 15:26)*

*When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. (John 16:13)*

Satan has one main tactic he uses: lies. He is not very creative. He uses one main tool over and over again, because it works. Lies are very powerful. If he can get us to believe the right lies, he can destroy our souls. That's why Jesus called Satan a liar and a murderer (John 8:44).

Side note: that is why truth is so important. Satan's main tool is lies; Jesus liberates us with the truth. But how can we find this truth?

One of the greatest dangers to us today is something called *feelism*. Feelism, according to [Paul Miller](#), is trying to determine the truth by asking, "How does it/you make me feel?" It uses our feelings and intuitions to make moral judgments about the world. We trust our feelings which are very unreliable guides. Again, Satan isn't very creative. It's just another way he's found to destroy us.

Thank God for his Spirit. Here's what the Spirit does. He guides us into all the truth. Here's what Jesus doesn't mean. He's not saying that we will give us new truths that we

will subjectively feel. He's saying that he will lead us into the truth of what's revealed in Scripture.

The Spirit takes us deeper and deeper into this book. We grow as he illumines the Scripture to us. We learn more and more about what God is like, and then we experience greater revelation, because the truth sets us free (John 8:36).

*...he would make the Word of God come alive in their hearts, applying that Word to their questions and doubts. The Spirit would lead them through the Word, and they would gain the ability to obey that Word by his power. (J.D. Greear)*

He begins by revealing to us our sin. If you've been convinced of your sin, that's a gift from the Holy Spirit. But then he draws us to Jesus. He shows us the truth and beauty of Jesus and causes us to put our faith in Jesus. If you sense that happening, then there's only one thing to do: trust Jesus and follow him today.

But then he continues to show us the truth about what he reveals in his Word. We begin to see the truth, and that truth begins to change us, and we start to obey what we now believe to be true.

Satan's greatest tactic to destroy your life is lies. He will lie to you about God, about sex, about the best way to live your life. But the Holy Spirit who lives within you will lead you into truth.

Don't believe Satan's lies. If you're a follower of Jesus, ask the Spirit to make his Word precious to you, and commit to following wherever it leads.

"I believe in the Holy Spirit." The Spirit lives within us and leads us into truth. That's just a small taste of all of things we could say about the Holy Spirit. What a privilege to live in the age of the Holy Spirit. Thank the Spirit for his presence, and ask him to continue to lead you into the truth about Jesus and this world.