



John 16:12-15

12 "I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now.

13 "However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come.

14 "He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you.

15 "All things that the Father has are Mine. Therefore I said that He will take of Mine and declare it to you.

To remind you of what is going on in these verses, Jesus has been preparing the Apostles for His departure. This is the evening of His betrayal, tomorrow He will go to the Cross and as the Good Shepherd, lay down His Life for His Sheep. He will be resurrected on the third day, and spend a final 40 days with them teaching and ministering, at the end of which He will leave them, ascending back into Heaven. But He had assured them that He would not leave them alone, Jesus has told them that He would send the Holy Spirit, that is the Spirit of Truth He speaks of here who would minister to them. We saw last week how He told the Disciples that the Holy Spirit would minister in the world convicting men of sin and bringing them to faith.

Now in the verses we have just read, Jesus is telling the Apostles how the Holy Spirit will minister in the church especially in continuing Christ's teaching ministry, because we remember that Jesus had been the teacher of His Apostles but after He ascends it will be the Spirit who becomes their teacher. As He had said to them in John 14:26: ***"But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you."***

I am so grateful for these verses because frankly there is so much misunderstanding of the work of the Holy Spirit these days, and particularly regarding His work in revelation. You can't have been a Christian for long without hearing someone say that the Holy Spirit gave them some new piece of revelation with no connection whatsoever to what the bible says. I'm sometimes astounded at the stories I hear. One young woman in our work based Bible Study related how while she was in College another Christian from the campus ministry she was part of knocked on her door and told her that the Holy Spirit had spoken to him and told him that she must marry him immediately. She said she panicked because she while she didn't want to disobey the Spirit but she didn't want to marry him. She did a wise thing incidentally, she asked her pastor what to do, and he told her to tell the young man that when the Holy Spirit told HER she should marry him, she would. She went on to relate that she found out later that he'd done exactly the same thing to a couple of other women in the group.

So how then will the Spirit teach work in the church? How will he teach them? Two Points -

1) **First, I want you to see that the teaching of the Holy Spirit was necessary and progressive.** Jesus said to His disciples that **“I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now.”** At this point in time the disciples were not ready for all He had to teach them. First He had to die and rise again, and then that great change that came after Pentecost had to take place. Before the Gospel could go out to the Gentiles, certain things had to be laid down first in their understanding, they had to understand that Christ was the culmination of the ceremonial law, that He was the great once for all sacrifice that all the other sacrifices had been foreshadowing, and thus that the ceremonies of the temple, for instance, were no longer necessary, and that the ceremonial dietary restrictions that had separated Jew and Gentile were also going away, but these things had to be laid down progressively or the Disciples would never have understood, there were teachings and revelations and prophecies to come that they weren't yet prepared for. The Spirit would tell them these things when they were ready.

And please understand this also means that it was always Christ's intention that He would teach many things to the Church through the ministry of the Apostles. Men throughout history have said things like *“Oh I wish we could get back to the ministry of Jesus before Paul came and messed everything up”* – There are people who, for instance ignore almost everything you find in the New Testament outside of the four gospels! So when you say to them, “wait a minute, but Paul writes in 1 Corinthians that”... and then they respond, **“oh, I don't listen to Paul, or Peter, or James, I listen to Jesus”** Friends please understand, it was always GOD'S PLAN that the Apostles would be the conduits of Gospel truth, via the ministry of the Spirit, and that the Spirit “would not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak” So if you do not listen to PAUL you are not listening to JESUS.

2) **Second in regards to what the Spirit would teach them, I want you to see that this would no radically new teaching.** Rather the ministry of the Spirit would not be to glorify Himself and certainly not glorify men but to glorify Jesus and constantly point the world to Him in everything He taught. **“He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you.”** It makes sense really in the Old Testament, the Spirit was pointing forwards to the coming of Christ as the promised Messiah. As Jesus himself told the Jews: **“You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me.”** (John 5:39)

The coming of Christ, was God's culminating disclosure, He is His final and most clear self-expression: ***Hebrews 1:1 God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets,***

2 has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds;

And so the revelation that was to come through the Apostles after the ascension of Christ would still be pointing back to the completed work of Christ, it wouldn't be adding anything radically different or new. “HE is not originating something radically new, but leading men in accordance with the teaching already given from the Father and the Son.” – Leon Morris

Admittedly the Spirit would reveal to them “things to come”, and that includes prophecies of the future, including the specific prophecies of future events we see in the book of Acts, the Apostasy of the Last Days we see warned of in the Epistles, and of course the visions of the Book of Revelation. But none of these things marked a radical departure from the things Christ had already taught. Even regarding the End Times. Christ said plenty to His apostles about that, and long before Paul warned of the coming Apostasy Christ had warned, Matthew 24:10 **“And then many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another.**

11 "Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many.

12 "And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold."

So the Spirit then goes back and merely builds on the sure word of Christ, and Calvin warned ***"as soon as the Spirit is separated from the word of Christ, the door is open to all kinds of craziness and impostures. A similar method of deceiving has been attempted, in the present age, by many fanatics."*** He could have been writing about the situation today.

One of the sure marks of false revelation is that it does present us with something radically new, and indeed we find that cults always add their own revelation to scripture: RCs have their oral tradition, Mormons have "the book of Mormon", seventh day Adventists had the Testimonies of Ellen G. White, and so on. And all of these testimonies tend to glorify not Christ, but men and women. The traditions of Catholicism which build up the power and authority of the Pope, the book of Mormon which gave authority and power to Joe Smith and the Latter day prophets of the Mormon Church. And of course these new revelations contradicted and added to the teaching of Christ. We see that also in movements like the Word of Faith movement with all the so-called new revelations channeled to us by men and women who style themselves as modern day Apostles.

So two tests you can apply to so called new revelation – First Is it in strict harmony with what has already been laid down by the Spirit in Scripture? **Isaiah 8:20 "To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, it is because there is no light in them."**

Secondly, does it give all the glory to Christ? As Spurgeon said ***"That is the distinctive mark of the Spirit of God. If any man says that he speaks by the Spirit, you can test him in this way, — does what he says glorify Christ? If not, away with him, for he is not speaking as the Holy Spirit speaks."***

Application:

1) We see How the Spirit He paces himself and gradually reveals himself and his will to His lambs. The doctrine in the bible is progressive. If God had revealed EVERYTHING all at once to the people at Sinai, they wouldn't have been able to comprehend or follow it. This is also applicable to the people of God today. God gradually builds us up in our understanding of the faith!

"There are some things which some of you young Christians not know; you could not bear them if you did know them. You shall know them when you can bear them. A man with a doctrine that he cannot handle is often like a child with a tough piece of meat which he cannot bite. Give the child milk, or the crumb of the loaf. Do not put crusts into his mouth till he has teeth to bite them; do not give him meat till he can digest it. See the gentle Savior's way of imparting instruction. He teaches us much, but not too much at a time."

Some people grow irritated that not everyone is able to progress at the same rate they do, show the same kind of mercy that Christ showed to his disciples!

2) The name of Gospel Preachers should be one with the aim of the The Holy Ghost, and that is to **MAGNIFY AND GLORIFY JESUS CHRIST.**

We should note also that in doing that like the Holy Ghost we should strive to be **"Repeater's of the Father's Message"** ***We have men nowadays straining to be original. Strain the other way, for listen,***

“He shall not speak of himself,” — not even the Holy Ghost, — “He shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak.” He is the Repeater of the Father’s message, not the inventor of his own. So let it be with us ministers. We are not to make up a gospel as we go along, as I have heard some say. We are not to shape it to the times in which we live, and suit it to the congregations to which we speak. God forbid! Let this be true of every one of us, “He shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak”

I have often said I want them to be able to say of me HE TAUGHT NOTHING NEW!

3) We can have all of this knowledge that the Holy Spirit has given us in the word and it will be profitless to us unless we have the Holy Spirit within us showing us the truth of the Scriptures and sending us to Christ.

“For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.” (2 Cor. 4:6)

Henri Abraham Cesar Malan – *“One evening, as they sat conversing, the servant of God turned the subject to our personal relation with God, and asked Charlotte Elliott if she knew herself to be really a Christian. She was in poor health and often harassed with severe pain, which tended to make her irritable. A severe illness had left her a permanent invalid. She resented the question thus pointedly put, and petulantly answered that religion was a matter she did not wish to discuss. Dr. Malan replied in his usual kind manner, that he would not pursue a subject that displeased her, but would pray that she might give her heart to Christ, and employ in His service the talents with which He had gifted her. It seems that the Holy Spirit used her abrupt and almost rude conduct towards God's servant to show her what depths of pride and alienation from God were in her heart. After several days of spiritual misery, she apologised for her unbecoming conduct, and confessed that his question had troubled her greatly. "I am miserable" she said, "I want to be saved. I want to come to Jesus; but I don't know how". "Why not come just as you are?", answered Malan. "You have only to come to Him just as you are". Little did Malan think that his simple reply would be repeated in song by the whole Christian world! Further conversation followed, and this good man was enabled to make perfectly clear to the once proud but now penitent young lady God's simple way of salvation through Christ; that on the ground of His shed blood for us, all who from their heart believe are accepted of God.”*