

Christ Glorified: the Holy Spirit and Growing in Christlikeness

DAVE BAST

On the night before his crucifixion, Jesus spent his last hours with his disciples in an upstairs room of a house in Jerusalem. The first three gospels focus on what he did there. He broke a piece of bread and poured a cup of wine, thus instituting the sacrament of communion. John's gospel focuses on what he said there; four full chapters devoted to Jesus' final words to his followers. We call it the upper room discourse, and we will look at it today on *Groundwork*.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Welcome to *Groundwork*, where we dig into scripture to lay the foundation for our lives. I am Scott Hoezee.

DAVE BAST

And I am Dave Bast. So, by now, Scott, we are more than halfway through this seven-part series covering the Gospel of John... Not really; we could spend seven years probably on the Gospel of John...

SCOTT HOEZEE

Yes, easily.

DAVE BAST

But, we are picking out the major structure and outline of the gospel: The prologue, the epilogue, the book of signs—Chapters 1 through 12—the book of glory, as it is called—Chapters 13 through 20.

SCOTT HOEZEE

And we entered that book of glory in the previous program, and now we are going to stay in this, and the next program, too, will still be part of the book of glory when we get to Jesus' arrest and death and resurrection; but again, as you said, Dave, there is this concentration of teaching...and we mentioned in the previous program, who knows if really Jesus said *all* of this on that night. It would have been like drinking from the proverbial fire hose...

DAVE BAST

Right.

SCOTT HOEZEE

It may have been that John has concentrated Jesus' teachings into this upper room, or maybe he really did say it all over the course of some hours. We don't know; but we have already looked at the beginning of John 14, and we noted that despite ample reason for having troubled hearts, Jesus says: Do not let your hearts be troubled. He does the famous: I am way, the truth, and the life. He tells Philip: If you have seen me, you have seen the Father; but then he goes on in John 14, Dave, to talk about the Holy Spirit.

DAVE BAST

That is the outstanding subject of two of these chapters, Chapter 14 and Chapter 16; and we will mention several things from those chapters about the ministry...the person and work of the Holy Spirit.

So we begin with this. Jesus says:

¹⁵“If you love me, you will keep my commandments. ¹⁶And I will ask the Father and he will give you another helper (or counselor) to be with you forever— ¹⁷even the Spirit of truth. ¹⁸I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. ¹⁹Yet a little while and the world will see me no more, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live. ²¹Whoever has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me; and he who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and manifest myself to him. ²³If anyone loves me, he will keep my Word, and my Father will love him and we will come to him and make our home with him.”

SCOTT HOEZEE

So, there is the promise: You are not going to be orphaned. Jesus keeps talking about going away...going away, going away, going away...which sounds like bad news to the disciples...

DAVE BAST

And coming again, coming again, coming again...yes.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Yes; but in the meanwhile, somebody else is going to come on his behalf—this counselor—this Holy Spirit. As the commentator Frederick Dale Bruner points out, John 16 is the longest passage in the entire Bible that speaks at length about the Holy Spirit. There is no other passage in the New Testament that concentrates on the Spirit as much as John 16, and these words here at the end of John 14 anticipate a lot of that, where the Holy Spirit is going to come, and the Spirit is going to do lots of things. You know, Jesus will say in John 16 that he is going to lead you into all truth; so the Spirit is going to be continually guiding the Church. There is also a passage there in John 16, Dave, where Jesus sums up sort of the three big things the Spirit is going to do after Jesus has gone away.

DAVE BAST

He is going to empower the disciples' witness. So, we would say the Spirit fuels the Church's ministry throughout the course of history, and specifically when it shares the gospel with the world, Jesus says that the Spirit will convict the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. You mentioned Dale Bruner...his marvelous commentary on the Gospel of John...Bruner summarizes those three things by saying Jesus is going to show everybody what is wrong (sin), what is right (righteousness—the righteousness he brings), and who is the real deal...who is the truth...he is.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Who won?

DAVE BAST

Who won? He did, yes.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Yes, and that is going to be the work of the Spirit; and of course, we know that...actually, I don't think we are going to be looking at it in this series, but there is sort of this mini Pentecost that will happen at the end of John 20. Jesus kind of huhhh...breathes on them; but of course, the big Pentecost will come in recorded in Acts Chapter 2, when the Spirit is poured out in public display of power; but you are right, the Spirit is going to be sort of the gas in the tank...

DAVE BAST

Yes.

SCOTT HOEZEE

for the Church from then on out. The words of the disciples, their sermons, baptism, celebrating the Lord's Supper, none of it would have any effect on the world if the Holy Spirit isn't in it...

DAVE BAST

Right.

SCOTT HOEZEE

That is what Jesus is saying; that is who is coming; and that is what this...we call it the third person of the Trinity now: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; that is going to be the Spirit's primary task.

DAVE BAST

But it is also, I think, fundamental...even more important than recognizing the Spirit's work, as great as that is...like you said, Scott; nothing happens without it...but it is of supreme importance to see that the Spirit is the way Jesus himself is with us. Jesus says in Chapter 14: I am not going to leave you like orphans. You are not going to be on your own. I will come to you; but the way he does that, he says, is by asking the Father to send another helper. The word is *paraclete*; literally the one who is called alongside, kind of like an advocate for you...a patient advocate in a hospital setting, for example. *The Message* of Eugene Peterson translates that word *friend*. Bruner says maybe *true* friend is the way we should understand it. That is who the Spirit is. He is not another god, but he is another friend...he is another Jesus.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Some while ago on *Groundwork*, Dave, we did a series on 2 Corinthians, and there is a very interesting passage in 2 Corinthians that says: ^{3:17a}Now, the Lord is the Spirit... And if you remember in the Nicene Creed there is a similar line where we say: And I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life. That has confused some people because Jesus has the title of Lord, and so some people have thought: Well, maybe we don't have a Trinity...maybe it is a binity...maybe Jesus and Spirit are the same thing; but no, the Church has determined that the Spirit is a third separate Person, but the Spirit is the effective presence of Jesus for us now; and as my teacher Neal Plantinga said in my systematic theology course many years ago at Calvin Seminary: There are a lot of different images the Church has used for this over the years, like the Spirit is the pipeline through which the waters of baptism flow; the Spirit is the wire that hooks into our brains to bring the electricity of Jesus into us...lots of different images, but the idea is, our personal connection to Jesus while he is at the right hand of the Father is the living presence of the Holy Spirit. So, the Lord is the Spirit in the sense that the Spirit is the effective presence of Jesus to us now.

DAVE BAST

Right; and most of the time we just speak about Christ being with us or Christ living in us...

SCOTT HOEZEE

Right.

DAVE BAST

The New Testament does that: Christ in you the hope of glory, says Paul; but as you just alluded to, Scott, Christ in a literal sense, in his risen body, which he still possesses...

SCOTT HOEZEE

Exactly, yes.

DAVE BAST

Yet, he is not a ghost. He is at the right hand of the Father. He is in the presence of God in heaven. So, the way he is here on earth with all of us all the time is through the Spirit; and it is important. This is not just a theological quibble, because it reminds us that we don't quite have everything yet. We do have him, but we are still waiting for him, too; and meanwhile, he is going to tell us more about what that means, to abide in

him, in our next chapter, which is John 15.

Segment 2

SCOTT HOEZEE

I am Scott Hoezee, along with Dave Bast, and you are listening to *Groundwork*, and this fifth program of our seven-part series on the Gospel of John, and we just finished looking at some words about the Holy Spirit from the end of John 14; and we jumped ahead a little bit to preview also what is in John 16. We won't be spending any more time there, but let's go to what comes in between...John 15.

DAVE BAST

So we have just noted that the Spirit is Jesus' presence with us as we live and go our way in the world; and in fact, in John 16, just one more little thing: Jesus says to his disciples, it is actually better for you if I leave and come back to you through the Spirit. We presume because then he is with us always and he is inside us, not just outside; but meanwhile, he wants to hammer home this close connection that, not only is he in us, but we need to be in him...we need to abide with him; and that is the point of a lovely image that he uses, the last of the I AM sayings in the sense of the sort of proverbial kinds of analogies that he uses. So, this is what he says in John 15:

"I am the true vine, and my Father is the vine dresser. ²Every branch of mine that does not bear fruit he takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit. ⁴Abide in me and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me. ⁵I am the vine, you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit; for apart from me, you can do nothing."

SCOTT HOEZEE

We haven't mentioned it, I don't think, so far, Dave, but this is a major theme in John's gospel...the idea of abiding. One of John's favorite Greek verbs is *men?n*, which means to remain—to abide; and John uses it and puts it in his gospel all over the place, including here; and here, to be grafted onto a vine, that is a very, very literal way of abiding. You get grafted in. You become part of the vine. The sap of the vine flows through you, that is what allows you to bear fruit. There are a lot of trees in the world that...and a lot of other sources of wood in the world where we can make something out of it...but unproductive grape vines aren't good for much.

DAVE BAST

No, right; you cannot make a beautiful piece of furniture or use it to build a house. If you have a gnarly, twisted grapevine that is dead...that is fruitless...all you can do is throw it on the burn pile. So, Jesus is saying in this very graphic way, the purpose of our belonging to him...of our life of discipleship...the purpose of the Christian life is to bear fruit. So then we ask, well, what does that mean? Some people have jumped right to the conclusion, well, that means you have to convert a bunch of people. The fruit is evangelism...the fruit is new people won for Jesus, and if you are not doing that, there is something wrong. Well, you know, I think it is great for people to come to Christ, but I don't think that is the primary meaning of the image of fruit bearing as we see it in Jesus and in the New Testament.

SCOTT HOEZEE

And soul winning is important, but I think one of the things the New Testament tells us is that one of the ways by which we are supposed to win people for Christ is by our example, by being Christlike ourselves, so that people are attracted to the Gospel. Unfortunately, Christians sometimes behave in such bad ways that people are repulsed by the Church and by the Gospel. Some people have left the Church because of how badly they see people in the Church behaving sometimes. That is the opposite of what Jesus wants; and if we wonder about what kind of fruit, Jesus doesn't spell it out here, but the Holy Spirit that we were just talking about...the Holy Spirit will get inside a man named Paul, who will eventually tell us what the fruit of the Spirit are. We have done a whole series of that—a nine-part series—here on *Groundwork*, on love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Those are the fruit of the Spirit Paul lists in Galatians 5.

DAVE BAST

So, that is the fruit that Jesus is talking about, and it is the fruit supremely of love. We mentioned in our last program, Jesus' new commandment...his *mandatum* on Maundy Thursday, that you love one another as I have loved you; and Jesus reiterates this here in Chapter 15: ¹²“This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. ¹³Greater love has no one than this, that someone lays down his life for his friends (which is what Jesus is just about to do, by the way; and then he goes on.) ¹⁴You are my friends if you do what I command you. ¹⁵No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you. ¹⁷These things I command you, so that you will love one another.”

SCOTT HOEZEE

And if you need more reasons for loving your neighbor, Jesus comes up with some other ones. ^{15:8}“By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be my disciples. (And here is something we picked up earlier on the previous program, at John 13.) ³⁵“By this you will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”

They will know we are Christians by our love, by our love, as the old song has it, and that is exactly right.

DAVE BAST

You know, back in the nineties, during the Clinton Administration, they used to talk about FOBs...I don't know if you remember that...we are old enough to maybe remember it...friends of Bill, and being a friend of Bill got you access and got you connections, but Jesus here is talking about FOJs...friends of Jesus; and how do you know that you are actually a friend of Jesus? Well, it is pretty simple. Do what he tells you to, and that means bear fruit, follow him, grow in likeness to him, and above all, love other people; love one another, certainly, as disciples in the Church; and if we did that, the world would be beating down our doors. We will talk about that in just a moment.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Yes; you know, what is interesting is, John will pick up on this. So, if you are familiar with 1 John—the first epistle of John—it is love all over the place; and John just basically says...he will say in his epistle: You cannot claim to love God if you hate your brother. Those two cannot go together. If you love God, you will love your brother, you will love your sister. Don't claim to be full of love for God, when in most of your life, you are full of hatred for people. It doesn't work that way, John will say, in his first letter.

DAVE BAST

Right; so, the necessity of abiding...of remaining...of digging and diving deeper into our relationship with Jesus; and you do that through prayer, you do that, certainly through studying the scriptures, you do that through imitating him—through doing what he did—and you do it, above all, by trying your best to love as he loved, because that is his primary command to us; but there is one more passage we want to look at here before we leave the upper room, and that is Jesus...what we call his high priestly prayer in John Chapter 17.
Segment 3

SCOTT HOEZEE

You are listening to *Groundwork*, where we are digging into scripture to lay the foundation for our lives. I am Scott Hoezee.

DAVE BAST

And I am Dave Bast. So, we are coming now to the end of the upper room discourse. We have had to skate through it rather quickly, but we are doing that all the way in this series on John; and we are coming to Chapter 17, which is Jesus' great high priestly prayer, as it is usually called, because Jesus now, adopting the posture of a priest. Shortly he will offer the ultimate sacrifice a priest will offer, namely himself...his own body...but a priest also is an intercessor...a go-between. In fact, Jesus, says the New Testament, is still

praying for us. That is a wonderful truth of what he does at the Father's right hand. He makes intercession for us...

SCOTT HOEZEE

Right.

DAVE BAST

And if you want to know what he is asking up there, we have a pretty good indication of what he asks for himself and for his disciples down here in this prayer.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Yes; some years ago a lot of people were wearing those WWJD bracelets...what would Jesus do...we could rearrange it to WDJW...what does Jesus want? He is going to make very clear here, what he wants is unity. Listen to this prayer. This is John 17:

When Jesus had spoken these words, he lifted his eyes up to heaven and said, "Father, the hour has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you. ²Since you have given him authority over all flesh to give eternal life to all whom you have given to him. ³And this is eternal life, that they know you are the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent. ⁴I glorified you on earth, having accomplished the work that you gave me to do. ⁵And now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory that I had with you before the world existed."

DAVE BAST

Wow! So, let's go all the way back, just for a moment, to the beginning of this upper room session. In John 13:1, it says: Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart out of this world. So he is facing his last hour, and he knows it, and he prays; and I could imagine myself doing that. If I knew that my hour had come, and I was going to die imminently, I would pray, too, but I would be scrambling around, asking God to get me out of this or heal me or help me or forgive me, and Jesus doesn't say any of that. Instead, he has this majestic prayer, where he asked: God, glorify yourself now.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Yes; and you know, in the previous program, at the beginning of program four of this series, we mentioned that, you know, when people know that the end is coming, they usually become more of who they actually have been all along. Death has a way of focusing the mind; and so, Jesus is getting down to the basics here. He wants to be glorified, he wants to glorify the Father and have the Father glorify him; but also, you know, he comes down to what he wants to happen also after he is gone. He is going to be taken out of the world; and so now, again revealing his heart, the same man who earlier had washed the feet of his disciples, now is concerned. He is not self-absorbed. His own death is coming, but he prays for the disciples:

^{11b} "Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name (while they are still in the world.) ¹⁵I do not ask that you take them out of the world but that you keep them from the evil one. ¹⁶They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world." (And then he will pray) ²¹"And may they be one, Holy Father, as we are one." That is his overriding concern.

DAVE BAST

He is not going to take us out of the world. Sometimes Christians have thought, well, we need to flee from the world. Let's get out of here; let's form our own little community off by ourselves so we are not contaminated by the world; but Jesus says no, no. I want you, the saying is, to be in the world but not of it. So, that is exactly what he is praying for the Father. The purpose of a ship is to go into the sea, but you don't want the sea to come into the ship; and so Jesus says: Father protect them, keep them as they are in the world, serving me...we should understand, we should add...obeying me, keeping my commandments, loving the world, meeting the needs of the world, showing our love to the world, but protect them; and by the way, may they be one as you and I are one. That is pretty breathtaking.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Yes; and then Jesus looks ahead, even beyond the disciples: ²⁰“I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, ²¹that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me and I in you. That they may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me.”

You know, Dave, these words often strike us in somewhat of a heartbreaking way because of how fragmented the Church is. It doesn't look one. We've got Roman Catholics, we've got Orthodox, we've got, you know, about three thousand varieties of Protestants. You know, it doesn't look one anymore. It was one for a while...for the first thousand years, but the last thousand years, you know, the Church has really splintered; and so, this might strike us as kind of a downer; like, well, we are not doing very well with this one; and yet, maybe there are ways we can look for signs of unity and celebrate our unity with sisters and brothers, even from different traditions in different parts of the world; and maybe that helps us get a little closer to the heart of Jesus in wanting to celebrate all that we share in common as Christians.

DAVE BAST

And frankly, Jesus said the reason he wishes we were one is so that the world would believe that you [the Father] have sent me [Jesus]. I mean, the world would believe in Jesus if they saw that he really and truly was a uniting, unifying factor in peoples' lives; but when they look at the Christian Church, and we tell them: Oh, you need to come to Christ and become part of his Church, it is easy enough to say: Which one; you know? You are all at each other's throats...at loggerheads.

Now, I think we should note the good news that we made progress; the differences that seem to divide churches and believers on a personal level, often sort of pale into less significance. C. S. Lewis had a wonderful analogy. He said: It is like the spokes of a wheel; the hub is Christ, the churches are different spokes, but the closer you are to the hub, the closer you are to people on the other spokes...

SCOTT HOEZEE

Right.

DAVE BAST

That is crucial and it is important; and I wonder if we really care enough...as much about this as Jesus cared?

SCOTT HOEZEE

We certainly should, to put it mildly. This is kind of the final prayer before he gets to Gethsemane and the cross. This is his final prayer with the disciples; and the fact that he sees his unity with the Father as the model for us tells us we need to do all that we can in all of our lives so that the world will believe that Jesus really has been sent by the Father; thanks be to God.

DAVE BAST

Amen. Well, thanks for listening and digging deeply into scripture with *Groundwork*. We are your hosts, Dave Bast with Scott Hoezee, and we hope you will join us again next time as we look at the final events of Jesus' earthly life as the Gospel of John describes them in Chapters 18 through 20.

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