



(1) Meet the Holy Spirit - John 16:5-15

Aim: Learning about the Holy Spirit and the Spirit's ministry

Opening up!

It can be awkward meeting new people. We don't always know what to say or how to relate. It's always easier to meet someone if we are introduced to each other by a mutual friend. The person who knows us both can help us overcome those difficult initial hurdles. In the passage we are going to look at we are introduced to the Holy Spirit by our mutual friend, Jesus. Jesus knows us both and stands between us to help us begin to build a new relationship.

What comes to your mind when you think about the Holy Spirit?

Listening in!

- 1 John chapters 13-17 contain Jesus' final instructions to his disciples.
Read John 16:5-15. What does the text reveal about the mood of the disciples as Jesus was speaking to them?
- 2 In verse 7 the Greek word translated Counsellor is *parakletos*. It is a difficult word to translate into a single English word: other versions use the words Comforter, Helper, Advocate, or Friend. Discuss why, in this setting, Jesus refers to the Spirit as the Counsellor?
In what ways do you think it was to the disciples' advantage that Jesus would go away and the Spirit of God would come?
- 3 In John 16:8-11 Jesus outlines the ministry of the Spirit to the world. The Spirit is at work whenever the message of Christ is proclaimed to convict or to convince those who hear of the truth of the message. The Spirit convinces those who hear that they have committed sin and that they are called to repent, that Jesus is the only righteous one, and that judgment will come upon those who refuse Christ's offer of salvation.
Have you seen the Spirit at work like this in your own or someone else's life? If so, share your experiences with one another. If not, reflect on how you might pray for the Spirit to shape your understanding of Christ.
- 4 Based on John 16:12-13, how would you describe the Spirit's ministry to Jesus' followers? What do you think 'truth' means here? Does Jesus mean a set of beliefs or is it something more than that?

- 5 John 16:14-15 gives us insights about the Spirit's relationship to Jesus and to the Father. Jesus speaks of the Counsellor as an equal to himself and the Father. This is indirect testimony to the Spirit's deity (divine nature). Jesus also speaks of the Spirit as a distinct person rather than simply a force or the expression of God's power.
What difference might it make for us to understand the Holy Spirit as a person rather than a force, or a power, or an 'it'?

Looking Out!

Having read the scripture ask yourselves: how has it shaped your understanding of the Holy Spirit? How has it shaped your understanding of what it means to be a disciple? In the light of your everyday life, do you need to take any specific actions to pursue a deeper relationship with the Spirit?

Now and Later!

Turn what you have learnt from Jesus about the Holy Spirit into prayer.
Pray for one another that you will each experience more of the Holy Spirit in the week to come.
End this time by using the words of either the hymn or song below as a prayer.

Come down, O love divine,
seek thou this soul of mine,
and visit it with thine own ardour glowing;
O Comforter, draw near,
within my heart appear,
and kindle it, thy holy flame bestowing.

O let it freely burn,
till earthly passions turn
to dust and ashes in its heat consuming;
and let thy glorious light
shine ever on my sight,
and clothe me round, the while my path illuming.

Let holy charity
mine outward vesture be,
and lowliness become mine inner clothing;
true lowliness of heart,
which takes the humbler part,
and o'er its own shortcomings weeps with loathing.

And so the yearning strong,
with which the soul will long,
shall far outpass the power of human telling;
for none can guess its grace,
till Love create a place
wherein the Holy Spirit makes a dwelling.

Don't let my love grow cold
I'm calling out
Light the fire again
Don't let my vision die
I'm calling out
Light the fire again

You know my heart, my deeds
I'm calling out
Light the fire again
I need your discipline
I'm calling out
Light the fire again

I am here to buy gold
Refined in the fire
Naked and poor
Wretched and blind I come
Clothe me in white
So I won't be ashamed
Lord, light the fire again