

“Communion with the Holy Spirit”
(John 16:7)

I. Introduction.

A. Orientation.

1. We’ve considered the communion we have with the Father in His love:
 - a. He loves us by giving us His Son, Jesus Christ, and then loving us in Him.
 - b. And through Jesus Christ, we love Him in return and He receives our love.

2. We’ve considered the communion we have with the Son, Jesus Christ.
 - a. In His personal graces: as a wife has communion in the love, care and possessions of her husband.
 - b. And in His purchased graces:
 - (i) In His obedience and atoning death that makes us acceptable to the Father.
 - (ii) In His Spirit who sanctifies us and prepares us for heaven.
 - (iii) And in our adoption through Christ into the family of God, where we are given all the rights and privileges of sons and daughters.

 - c. This morning, let’s break ground on our communion with the Holy Spirit.

B. Preview.

1. In our passage, Jesus was telling His disciples about the difficulties ahead, so they wouldn’t be surprised and fall away.
 - a. There were many who would be against them:
 - (i) They would be excommunicated from the synagogues (v. 2).
 - (ii) Some would be killed, and those who killed them would think they were doing God a service (v. 2).

 - b. Jesus wanted them to know these men were wrong, so their resolve to press forward wouldn’t be shaken:
 - (i) And so He assured them that these men were not doing the Father’s or His will (v. 3).
 - (ii) This is also why He was telling them ahead of time, so that when it happened it might confirm the truth in their hearts and minds (v. 4).

 - c. Jesus didn’t tell them about these things before, but now it was necessary because He was leaving to go to the Father (vv. 4-5).

2. At the same time, Jesus realized that His leaving would certainly dishearten them and tempt them to worry (v. 6).
 - a. And so now He encourages them: “But 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” (v. 7).
 - b. Let’s consider what Jesus was saying.

- (i) First, this was good news: Their hearts were filled with sorrow, but this should cheer them up.
 - (ii) Second, it was to their advantage that Jesus leave. This wasn't going to hurt them, but help them: "If I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you."
 - (iii) Third, this Helper would bring them the comfort they thought they were losing in Christ.
 - (a) The word Jesus uses to describe Him means advocate or comforter.
 - (b) Considering the context – the concern and sorrow the disciples were faced with – comforter is the better translation: "Sorrow has filled your hearts . . . but I will send you the Comforter."
 - (c) Who was this Comforter? Jesus had already told them in 15:26, "When the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, that is the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify about Me." He's referring here to the Holy Spirit.
 - (d) Jesus was leaving, but this would make way for the Comforter to come.
3. This is the point we need to see: Now that Jesus has completed His work, the Spirit's presence with believers is better than His continuing physical presence in this world.
- a. We've probably all thought at one time or another that it would have been great to live when Jesus walked the earth, or that it would be wonderful if He were here now.
 - b. Jesus tells us that it's better He's not here, but that the Spirit is.
4. Why is this the case? That's what we're going to consider as we examine our communion with the Holy Spirit.
- a. Let's begin this morning by considering the general work of the Holy Spirit.
 - b. Next week, we'll begin to look more particularly at how we have communion with Him.

II. Sermon.

- A. The Spirit's work is really in two main areas:
 - 1. In quickening and converting God's people.
 - 2. And in bringing them the blessings Christ died to purchase – particularly comfort. In our text, Jesus is speaking about the latter.
 - 3. These are the things in which we have communion with the Spirit:
 - a. He takes what is Christ's and gives them to us.
 - b. This is what we'll see over the next few weeks.
- B. This morning, let's consider a few things about the Spirit's work in general:
 - 1. First, that He is sent.
 - a. The Bible says He is sent both by the Father and the Son.
 - (i) He says 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 that I said to you."

- (ii) And He tells us in our passage, “But 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” (16:7).
- b. After Jesus ascended into heaven, He received the Spirit from the Father – as we’ve already seen – and sent the Spirit to His people.
 - (i) The fact that He’s sent doesn’t mean He’s in any way inferior to the Father and the Son.
 - (a) In the work of Redemption, He took a subordinate role.
 - (b) The Son took the role of a Redeemer, the Spirit of Sanctifier and Comforter.
 - (ii) And so when was sent, He didn’t come against His will, but according to His will – the same will as the Father and the Son.
 - (iii) He is said to be sent from the Father because it is the Father’s love that is the fountain of the whole work of Redemption.
2. Second, let’s consider how the Spirit is given to God’s people:
- a. He is given freely:
 - (i) We don’t need to work to receive Him – Christ gives Him freely; we need only to receive Him.
 - (ii) He is a gift of grace, and He is sanctifying grace.
 - (iii) He is not only given freely, He freely works in our hearts.
 - b. He comes under the authority of the Father and the Son.
 - (i) Though He comes freely, He comes in obedience to Father and the Son, as He agreed to do in the Covenant of Redemption.
 - (ii) This is why we must pray to the Father and the Son for the Spirit: “If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him?” (Luke 11:13).
 - c. When the Father and Son give the Spirit, they are said to pour Him out:
 - (i) Paul writes, “He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior” (Titus 3:5-6).
 - (ii) This is how the Spirit’s being given was often represented in the OT: “For I will pour out water on the thirsty land and streams on the dry ground; I will pour out My Spirit on your offspring and My blessing on your descendants; and they will spring up among the grass like poplars by streams of water” (Isa. 44:3-4).
 - (iii) The Spirit is often represented by water and as water in the Bible – we see why in the next point.
3. Third, we receive Him as a container receives water: He is poured into us.

- a. He is not only represented as water, but also as wind.
 - (i) He is the wind that breathes on Ezekiel's dead bones and fills them with life.
 - (ii) He is the wind that blows where it wills and gives life to whom He will, as Jesus said to Nicodemus.
 - (iii) This is His sovereign work of quickening and converting.

- b. When He comes, He not only converts, but also comforts, as we've seen: "I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper/Comforter, that He may be with you forever" (John 14:16).
 - (i) When He comes to quicken, He comes sovereignly.
 - (ii) When He comes to comfort, He comes in answer to prayer: This is what is meant by Jesus when He tells us we must ask the Father for the Holy Spirit and know that He will give Him to us (Luke 11:13).

- 4. Fourth, He abides or dwells in us.
 - a. He takes up residence in our souls. We become His temple: "Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body" (1 Cor. 6:19-20).
 - b. Once He takes up residence in our souls, He will dwell there forever, "I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever" (John 14:16).
 - c. Christ would be with His disciples on earth only for a short time; but He would send His Spirit who would live in them forever.
 - d. This is the same Spirit who now dwells in us and will be with us forever, if we are trusting in Jesus Christ and show that we are by turning from our sins.

- 5. Finally, the Spirit works in us.
 - a. He works in us to quicken us to life: we were spiritually dead, but now He has made us alive.
 - b. He works in us to sanctify us – He makes us more like Christ; fits us for heaven.
 - c. He works in us to bestow and energize spiritual gifts – as we've seen in our Bible Studies.
 - d. He works in us to comfort us – daily and most powerfully during difficult times.

- 6. This is the Spirit's work in general – He is freely poured out by the Father and Son into our souls, forever to reside there, working Christ's image into our souls. Next week, we'll begin to look at these things in a little more detail.
- 7. But now, let's prepare to come to the Table to receive more of the Spirit's presence, both to sanctify us and comfort us.