

Teachings on the Holy Spirit from the Upper Room

I am not leaving you comfortless: I will come to you.
— **John 14:18**

On that last night when Jesus was in the Upper Room with His disciples, He knew that He was leaving the world and that these moments were actually His *last* opportunity to teach them. There was a myriad of subjects Jesus could have taught His disciples that night, but He knew that in His absence, they would need a powerful, ongoing relationship with the Holy Spirit. Consequently, Jesus devoted His last opportunity to teach them about the ministry of the Holy Spirit. In John chapters 14, 15, and 16, we find teachings by Jesus that are devoted primarily to the Person, power, and work of the Holy Spirit. We don't know the amount of time it took for Jesus to teach His disciples about the Holy Spirit during His last night on earth with them, but it's clear from these three chapters that He dedicated a significant amount of time.

That evening Jesus told the disciples that He would soon be departing the world. By reading John 14, it is clear that the disciples were tempted to despair when they heard this heavy news. They were tempted to feel abandoned, so Jesus told them, "I am not leaving you comfortless: I will come to you" (John 14:18).

Let's begin by looking at the word "comfortless" used in this verse. The word "comfortless" is a translation of the Greek word *orphanos*, and it is where we get the word *orphan*. A literal translation would be, "I will not leave you as orphans..." But in the time of the New Testament, this word had a wider range of meaning, for it was also used to describe students who felt abandoned by their teacher. However, whether this Greek word was used to describe orphans who had lost their parents or students who felt abandoned by a teacher, it always conveyed the idea of a person who felt deserted by someone whom they trusted and to whom they looked for guidance.

Jesus promised that although He was leaving this earth, He was not abandoning His disciples. He would come to them through the ministry of the Holy Spirit, who would exactly represent Him to the disciples in every way. By sending the Holy Spirit, Jesus was sending a personal replacement to take His place among the disciples — One who would be with each of them all the time. This would be far better than when Jesus was on the earth and could only physically be in one place at a time. In fact, Jesus later said that the coming of the Holy Spirit would be far better for them (*see* John 16:7) because it would herald the unlimited presence of Christ in the earth. Through the work of the Holy Spirit, Christ could reside with every believer in every place on the earth simultaneously.

Once Jesus was exalted at the right hand of the Father, He took on the role of our Intercessor for all eternity (*see* Hebrews 7:25). Once seated, He poured out the gift of the Holy Spirit upon the Church (*see* Acts 2:33). Today the Holy Spirit is that Member of the Godhead who

operates in the world. Christ is Lord *over* the Church, and the Holy Spirit carries out His Lordship *inside* the Church. We live in the age when the *Holy Spirit* operates in the world.

In Ephesians 1:13, the apostle Paul taught that the moment you receive your salvation, the Holy Spirit enters into you and serves as God's covenant seal on your life in Him. Therefore, if you have surrendered to the Lordship of Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit has come to take up residency inside of you. Hear me clearly — the Holy Spirit *is* a Resident in the life of every person who has surrendered to the Lordship of Jesus Christ. In fact, Romans 8:9 says it is impossible to personally know God unless you have the Holy Spirit residing inside you. So rest assured, if you have come to that moment when you gave your life to Christ — that is, you surrendered to His Lordship — then the Holy Spirit has sealed you and has permanently moved into your heart. This means your heart is not just a hotel where He occasionally visits. *Your heart is His home.*

As glorious as it is that the Holy Spirit lives inside those who believe, this does not guarantee that they experience fellowship with Him. What kind of *fellowship* do we have with the Holy Spirit? Is He a neglected Resident in our lives, or do we actually experience regular, intimate fellowship with Him?

That night in the Upper Room, Jesus promised His disciples (and us) that when He ascended to Heaven, He would not abandon us like orphans or like students who had been deserted by their teacher. He promised that He would come to us through the ministry of the Holy Spirit, and Jesus kept His word! But just as any person must be recognized to be experienced, we must *on purpose* recognize the presence of the Holy Spirit if we are going to experience fellowship with Him in our lives.

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