

Eternity Daily Bible Study No. 301

THE PASSION SERIES – THE GOSPEL OF JOHN CHAPTERS 12-21

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John 16:12-15 ISV "I still have a lot to say to you, but you cannot bear it now. (13) Yet when the Spirit of Truth comes, he will guide you into all truth. For he will not speak on his own accord, but will speak whatever he hears and will declare to you the things that are to come. (14) He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you. (15) All that the Father has is mine. That is why I said, 'He will take what is mine and declare it to you.'

"I still have a lot to say to you.." but no more time to say it - and they could not bear to hear it if He did - because their hearts were filled with sorrow. So when was Jesus going to say it? After the resurrection - during those mysterious forty days, and later through His Spirit whom He would send upon them. Jesus continues to speak to His disciples and His Church and has much to say to us.

The One who speaks what Jesus wants to say to us is the Holy Spirit. "he will guide you into all truth. For he will not speak on his own accord, but will speak whatever he hears and will declare to you the things that are to come. (14) He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you."

The Holy Spirit speaks to us in ways we can understand and declares to us "the things that are to come" that is the truths that would be revealed after Jesus' resurrection such as the nature of the Church, the role of Jewish diet and practices, the salvation of the Gentiles, salvation by faith alone, the baptism of the Holy Spirit, and many other truths that only fully unfolded after Jesus had ascended into Heaven. The seeds of these truths can sometimes be found in the Old Testament or the teachings of Jesus, but their full unveiling was due to the Holy Spirit.

The Spirit does not only instruct us in matters of doctrine but also in matters of ministry:  
Act 8:29 The Spirit said to Philip, "Go to that chariot and stay close to it."  
Acts 10:19-20 ISV Peter was still thinking about the vision when the Spirit said to him, "Look! Three men are looking for you. (20) Get up, go downstairs, and don't hesitate to go with them, for I have sent them."  
Act 13:2 While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set Barnabas and Saul apart for me to do the work for which I called them."

Thus part of the ministry of the Holy Spirit is to continue Jesus' conversation with us so that Ananias could say:

Acts 9:10-12,17 ISV Now in Damascus there was a disciple named Ananias. The Lord

said to him in a vision, "Ananias!" He answered, "Here I am, Lord." (11) The Lord said to him, "Get up, go to the street called Straight, and in the home of Judas look for a man from Tarsus named Saul. At this very moment he is praying. (12) He has seen in a vision a man named Ananias come in and lay his hands on him so he would see again." ..... So Ananias left and went to that house. He laid his hands on Saul and said, "Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you were traveling, has sent me so that you may see again and be filled with the Holy Spirit."

Ananias receives explicit instructions for ministry in a vision of Jesus and later acknowledges to Saul that Jesus had sent him - and why. The conversation with Jesus continues via spiritual means!

Thus, from time to time, we are to expect to hear clearly, personally and directly from God the Holy Spirit to clarify doctrine or to instruct us in the work of God. The Holy Spirit speaks to us that which Jesus would say to us if He were sitting beside us.

When the Holy Spirit speaks it is clear to the person concerned and not in riddles. To Peter He says "Look! Three men are looking for you. (20) Get up, go downstairs, and don't hesitate to go with them, for I have sent them." A quiet ordinary instruction in a "plain English" (or Aramaic) sentence. To Phillip it was just as plain "Go up to the chariot" or to Ananias "go to the street called Straight". These are directions - in some cases street directions about where to go and what to do at that moment in time.

In none of these cases did the person concerned wonder whether or not it was God that was speaking. They simply knew in their own spirit that this was the Lord. The Holy Spirit can give us straightforward guidance about the work of God and instruct us in all things - even which house to visit and how to get there!

Some quick guidelines: The Holy Spirit is holy and will never give an unrighteous, untrue or immoral suggestion. All "guidance" that is plainly contrary to God's moral law is misguidance. Secondly the Holy Spirit gives us room to use our minds. We do not need guidance about which shoe to put on first and most ordinary daily decisions can be properly made by sanctified common sense. Thirdly the guidance of the Holy Spirit is often very plain and straightforward. While it may involve a vision the actual instruction itself "Go up to the chariot etc" is never bafflingly mystical. Fourthly the instruction is nearly always a matter of immediate concern about things directly at hand - and rarely concern distant future events. The instructions are for that place and time "Set apart for me Paul and Silas for the work to which I have called them." Thus the true voice of the Holy Spirit is plain, clear, straightforward, timely and absolutely righteous.

Does this apply today? Let us answer a question with a question - Does God still speak to His household? Does Jesus still have things to say to His church? Does the Great Commission still need specific instructions at key moments? Yes it does! It is the common testimony of thousands of Christian pastors and missionaries that from time to time Jesus still has "much more to say to you" and does so via the Holy Spirit. This may be in a healing and comforting word, a specific revelation, or an instruction that leads to a missionary breakthrough.

Jesus wants to reveal to us all the Father's goodness: "All that the Father has is mine. That is why I said, 'He will take what is mine and declare it to you.'" This is not revealed in a single bible study but by a lifetime of listening to God.

If you want to know more about how the Holy Spirit can speak to you just pray a prayer like this twice a day for a short while (say a week): "Lord Jesus, please continue your conversation with me and speak to me, clearly and unequivocally through the Holy Spirit."

Blessings,

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