

*Have We Left Him Any Room? Part 4*  
*The Holy Spirit, Our Interpreter and Reminder*  
John 14:15-18, 25-27

Have you ever heard of an EMP (Electro-magnetic pulse)? Any electronic devices that are not shielded from this specific type of attack are lost. Communications equipment, radios, computers would be wiped out. It would effectively disconnect people. It is especially effective when it cuts off an enemy from communications with their leader. Military advantage: Isolation ... and Confusion.

EMPs not only take out communications; they wipe out information. They fry computers (hard drives, memory sticks, custom-recorded CDs.). Victims of an EMP will lose the information that they have stored electronically. Imagine all of your emails gone! If you keep your finances and tax information on your computer, what a loss!

As Jesus was about to leave his disciples, he didn't want them to worry about forgetting any of his lessons: "All this I have spoken while still with you. But the Advocate (Paraclete), the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you." I would like to explore this work of the Holy Spirit – this charge to help us remember what is important – to remember from the past vital truths to help us live well today. [Pause]

Jesus tells us a lot about the Spirit in the Gospel of John – especially chap. 14-16 – that He is our Comforter, Counselor, Advocate ... Today, let's focus on the Spirit's work as Interpreter & Reminder – clarifying for us what Jesus has said, and helping us to recall it. Why is that so important? The experience of the disciples themselves shows us.

It is repeatedly stated in the Gospels that the disciples failed to understand much that Jesus said and did during his earthly ministry. But here, they are told, and we are told, that when the Spirit comes, He will enable them to recall and understand what Jesus taught – in other words, He will serve them as their reminder and interpreter.

I remember being invited to preach a couple times in Colombia with the Open Arms Foundation. Well, I know probably less than 50 words in Spanish, so they graciously offered an interpreter (Michael Perrow). They told me how to speak so the interpreter could have the time to express it in a way that the congregation could understand. So there I was, looking out on dozens of expectant faces, and I was so thankful there was an interpreter, and I'm sure they were too ... At first, some of the faces were blank or uncertain, but as I continued, and the translator continued, it was wonderful to see their faces change to ones of recognition and understanding ...

I imagine what the Holy Spirit does is similar. A lot of what Jesus said to the disciples may have sounded like English in Colombian ears, even though spoken clearly; but the Spirit would come and translate, making it not only understandable, but powerful.

The Holy Spirit can help us in the same way. *The Spirit and the Word work together to give us correct meanings for what Jesus did in history & correct applications as to what we should believe and do today.* As we study the Bible, we can trust the Spirit to *implant* the truth in our heart and mind, *convince* us of God's will, and *remind* us when we stray from it. Alexander MacLaren said, *"He who has the Holy Spirit in his heart and the Scripture in his hands has all he needs."*

It's the Holy Spirit's work and ministry to enable you to understand what Jesus wants you to understand ... to know what God wants you to know when He wants you to know it ... He will bring to your remembrance all things that Jesus has said. Of course, you first have to listen to all the things Jesus has said, and what he wants to say to you each day. *Not only will the Spirit teach you, but He will apply that spiritual truth to your life when you need it.* [Pause]

I'd like to share another response to the question ... "Who is the Holy Spirit?" One person said, "The fire and wind of God that came at Pentecost." True, right? ... That statement is focused on the past though ... And it focuses on the spectacular: the sound of wind, tongues of flame, the miraculous activity that happened that day ... But do we see any of those things in this promise of Jesus to his disciples in John? ... What were the imperative tasks of the Holy Spirit, for which the Father and the Son were sending him?

*"But the Paraclete will **teach** you all things and will **remind** you of everything I have said to you."* TEACHING & REMINDING you of EVERYTHING. That's the essential work of the Spirit! It happens to be the same work that He is still doing today. It's what he is doing right now! Sure it would be impressive if every sermon began with the sound of rushing wind and a flame floating over my head to assure you that the Holy Spirit is present and speaking to you. But that isn't what Christ promised.

Christ promised a Teacher and a Reminder. If we want to experience the power and the presence of the Holy Spirit, we must then be students and listeners ... If we aren't, can we claim to have a living faith? ... As a pastor, I hear it all of the time: "I have faith. I don't need to go to church. I pray." I suggest they visit the valley of bones in

Ezekiel 37: “The hand of the LORD was on me, and he brought me out by the Spirit of the LORD and set me in the middle of a valley; it was full of bones. He led me back and forth among them, and I saw a great many bones on the floor of the valley, bones that were very dry. He asked me, ‘‘Son of man, can these bones live?’’ I said, ‘‘Sovereign LORD, you alone know.’’ Then he said to me, ‘‘Prophecy to these bones and say to them, ‘Dry bones, hear the word of the LORD! This is what the Sovereign LORD says to these bones: I will make breath enter you, and you will come to life.’’’ (Ez. 37:1-5)

What brought them back to life? [Pause] The Holy Spirit. How did God send the Holy Spirit? [P] He told his prophet, ‘‘Prophecy!’’ Without the work of the Holy Spirit, and without God’s Word, we are nothing but dry bones. What good is a Counselor, if we aren’t seeking His counsel, listening to what He has to say? [P]

It seems as if people treat the Holy Spirit as if He was a magician... ‘‘Wave your wand, Holy Spirit, and create faith in me... teach me... keep me faithful... but do it instantaneously, so I don’t have to commit time to Bible study groups ... Work your magic, so that I don’t have to read my meditations... intercede for me, so I don’t have to devote time to prayer. Kindle the fire in my heart... and guide my life, but do it without those deep inner struggles, where I have to seek your counsel and wrestle with your Word to find the right, faith-led decision.’’ The Holy Spirit is not our autopilot.

That’s not what Christ promised ... ‘‘The Holy Spirit ... will teach you **all things** and will remind you of **everything** I have said to you.’’ A lot of people focus on selected teachings of Jesus, but we can’t jump past the ‘‘all things’’ and ‘‘everything’’ of this

promise of Christ. This is why we cannot overstate the importance of being instructed by God's Word and being connected with the Holy Spirit!

Jesus promises the Paraclete, so that the disciples won't be afraid that they'll be on their own once Jesus returns to the Father. Though Jesus was leaving them in body, he was leaving a precious gift behind: "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives." As they face this world, their courage and confidence are bolstered by remembering what Jesus has done ... Who did they have to thank? H.S.

Have you ever gone to a park/beach with a little child? ... Do you notice their excitement as they run off to play? No worries! No fears or concerns! If we could have that? ... Yet, even when we take vacation, we have a hard time letting go of the stress of work, or other worries. When we lie down to sleep, how often are we so troubled that even our rest is disturbed by thoughts revealing our inner turmoil.

Christ gives us the Holy Spirit so that we can enjoy peace NOW. So that he can take our burdens: "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest" (Mat. 11:28). The world with all of its self-help books, its excuses and escapes ... do not provide lasting peace. They don't give the peace that Christ gives to us. How precious it is to know that this is indeed Christ's desire for us: "Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid." That's not a saying from a fortune cookie! It's Christ's will for you. He establishes that peace in our hearts by giving us the Holy Spirit, the One who reminds us of our Lord's promises, power, provision, and very presence within us!

What good is it, if we don't make use of our Counselor? Imagine a family counselor who sets up an office on Main Street. He puts a big sign in front of his place of

practice. And everyone in town is so glad that they finally have a counselor in town, because there are so many broken homes in that community. The counselor sits out on a bench every day so that people can see that he is available. Most everybody passes by and tells him, “We are so glad that you are here. This town really needs you.” Eventually he leaves that town, but he doesn’t take down the sign, because it seems that is all that the people wanted... a sign that he was there ... Is that the way we treat the Holy Spirit? We would love a sign that he is there. We appreciate the promises that Jesus gives... but we don’t actually make use of our Helper! Maybe that’s the problem. Seeking the Counselor – praying, studying God’s Word, slowing down and being still – means that we have to actually admit that we are poor & weak w/o him – that we really do need him ... & often!

Oswald Sanders cautions, “A great deal of our ineffectiveness can be attributed to ignoring the Holy Spirit.” Trying to do God’s work without the Spirit is like trying to chop down a tree with a bare ax handle--no blade. When we rely on the Spirit and His reminding work, it will make all the difference in our lives.

Let me end by coming back to where I started – with the EMP ... There’s not much protection for the average guy against the attack of an E-bomb. They will stop pacemakers. They will wipe out most of the equipment at a hospital. A person won’t even be able to contact 911 for help. The electric ignition of ambulances will be fried rendering them immobile... Sin and temptation are just as insidious, wiping out spiritual life, reducing our peace, faith & hope to fear, doubt & despair... Our Lord will not have it! He gives us the Holy Spirit through the simple means of grace. Nothing can immobilize the Holy Spirit or render the Holy Spirit ineffective.

So let's *not* ignore Him but rejoice in the promise of Christ that He will not leave us as orphans! He has given us the Spirit of the Living God, so that we are constantly reminded of the cross, the grave, the resurrection, and our inheritance to come. All things and everything in Christ, guaranteed through the Spirit living in us! [Pray]