

Series: *TIME FOR TRUTH—June 25, 2006*

HOLY SPIRIT—CHANGER OF LIVES
John 16:5-15

I. INTRO

- A. Every once in a while you buy something--and you find out that you bought a white elephant--or a lemon. But sometimes you buy something that turns out to be one of the best investments you've ever made.

-That's how I feel about this cordless drill. When Lori and I put the addition on our house, they had these on sale at Canadian Tire, and I thought, "Hmmm. That might come in handy." What an understatement! Because it has an independent power source, a battery pack, it is extremely versatile. I've used it to screw down floors, put cabinets together, put outlets in electrical boxes—I've even used it to mash potatoes and mix cookie dough! I think it's probably one of man's greatest inventions—undoubtedly right up there with the TV, the light bulb and the computer.

1. But I want to tell you something about this drill. As versatile, powerful and useful as it is--it ain't *nuthin'* without the battery. I'll show you. Pretty useless, isn't it? Battery in—action! Battery out—paper weight. Boat anchor.
2. When I broke the clips on the battery pack, I took it back to Canadian Tire and said, "This is a Mastercraft. I think this has a lifetime warranty." *I love this country!* I *love* lifetime guarantees!

- B. This morning, I want to talk to you about the Holy Spirit. So. What does a *drill* have to do with the Holy Spirit? Well, it's funny you should ask.

1. If you were to look up all the references to the Holy Spirit in the Bible, there is a word almost always connected to what happens in the account recorded. Can anyone guess what it is? The word is *power*. When the Holy Spirit begins to mix it up with human beings and the circumstances of their lives, believe me, things happen.
-But the Holy Spirit doesn't do all the work while the people sit in the bleachers, eat popcorn and drink Coke. He uses drab, dirty little human hands, eyes, feet, and lips. Get it? Drill...battery pack.
2. Something else. When you mention the Holy Spirit, it sometimes weirds people out. They think of Him and some kind of ethereal, spooky, non-practical realm. And that is a *huge* misconception.
3. In his book, *Theology for Ordinary People*, Bruce Shelley calls the Holy Spirit the *Blue Collar Deity*, God with work gloves--side by side with us in the dirt and mess and hassle of every day life. Just like the battery pack on this drill, the Holy Spirit is the One who *makes life work—whatever we have to do*. If you want to really accomplish anything significant in this life, if you ever want to become the person you have always dreamed of being, if you want to even make it to Heaven--you *cannot* do it without the Holy Spirit. No way.

4. Every once in a while you make a great investment in something or Someone that changes your life forever.

-When I'm done this morning, you will have to make a decision. That decision will be whether or not you will truly **believe** in the Holy Spirit and invest--bank your life on the power, the amazing life, the significance, and the comfort He longs to give you. Will He truly find His home in your heart?

II. WHO IS THE HOLY SPIRIT?

- A. In our culture, there is a huge amount of fuzziness and weirdness that surround people's notions of exactly who the Holy Spirit is. From what I've heard and seen, I think a lot of people see Him as...**the Force**. "May **the force** be with you!" Sometimes I've heard people call the Holy Spirit, "it"--which reinforces some of these strange notions. So, let's get clear on who the Holy Spirit is.

1. The Bible says that the Holy Spirit is a person. He has a personality, a will, emotions--intellect. If you were to even just read through the New Testament, you would find out that He speaks, encourages, intercedes, commands, guides and appoints. And because He's a person, He can be lied to; and He can be insulted, grieved, marginalized, and rejected.
2. But let me tell you the **most** important thing about the Holy Spirit for you to understand. He is **God**. Big "G". He is not the **power** of God or the **influence** of God or the **Presence** of God. He **is** God--in the same way that the Father is God and that Jesus Christ is God.

-Let me tell you how I know that. First of all, He is given all the characteristics of God. The Bible says that He's eternal, all powerful, all-knowing, and everywhere present. He is also clearly called God. A story in Acts 5 makes that very clear.

3. When Jesus spoke about the coming of the Holy Spirit, He made it clear how intertwined the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are. Listen to this:

When the *Counselor* comes, whom I will send to you from the *Father*, the *Spirit of truth* who goes out from the *Father*, he will testify about me (John 15:26 NIV).

-After His resurrection, Jesus told his followers to go everywhere, make disciples, and then baptize these people in the Name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. One God, three Persons.

4. Let me say something else **extremely** important to understand. This Being, this Person, this third member of the Trinity is **The HOLY Spirit**. Let me tell you why I'm saying that. There is a huge emphasis on spirituality in our culture--from Oprah Winfrey to Deepak Chopra to New Age crystals to whales to psychic hotlines.
 - a. The usual teaching along this line is that all humans have a kind of **piece** of the Spirit inside them--a spark of the divine. The inference is that if you just

connect into **any** spirit, you can get a little extra guidance, a spiritual boost, a sense of serenity.

- b. The truth is that we do have a soul—but our soul is our individual soul, **created** by God—not a “piece” of the Holy Spirit. And our connection to the Holy Spirit is through our relationship with Jesus Christ. You **cannot** do an end run around Jesus Christ to get to the Holy Spirit.

-There is a spiritual realm made up of angels—messengers of God, and we do not access them on our own; they are **God’s** messengers. The only other alternative in the spirit realm are evil spirits—fallen angels—and they are extremely dangerous to mess with.

- B. Let me just give you a kind of brief history of the Holy Spirit's work as it's recorded in the Bible.

- 1. Whenever the Holy Spirit appears in the Old Testament you notice several things.
 - a. First, He appears to uniquely be the bringer of life. The word for *spirit* is the same word for *breath* in both the OT and NT.

-Genesis 1:26 records God as saying--and note the language--**Let US make man in OUR image.** Genesis 2:7 says, **The Lord God formed the man from the dust and breathed into this nostrils the BREATH--same word for Spirit--of life, and man became a living being (Gen. 2:7 NIV).**

The souls the Spirit of God breathed into us are eternal.

- b. Another word I've already mentioned above always associated with the Holy Spirit is **Power**--amazing, supernatural power.
 - This is the pattern; God wants to get something done, so He takes ordinary, unspectacular, weak human beings, gives His Spirit to them—and what happens through them is amazing.
- c. The Old Testament prophecies that in the last days, **everyone** will be able to have the Spirit poured out on them.
 - I will pour out my Spirit on ALL PEOPLE....Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days (Joel 2:28 NIV).***
 - This was astounding because up until that time God only sent His Spirit on very special occasions—and usually on a few people at most. We now live in **that era!**

- 2. The New Testament tells the story of how God prepared the way for that to happen. Christ was the One who made that possible.

- a. The New Testament starts with an announcement by God that He's going to send His only Son to this planet. Guess how that happens? The angel Gabriel says to Mary that the **Holy Spirit** will cause a girl, Mary—a virgin—to conceive and give birth to the Son of God.
- b. The Bible says that when Jesus was baptized, the Spirit descended on Him—and the Father affirmed him from Heaven: **“You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased (Matt. 3:17 NIV).”**

-Before the coming of the Spirit, there is no record of Jesus ever performing a miracle or preaching a message. Even though He was the Son of God, He was dependent on the power of the Spirit.

-And that's consistent with what He told the disciples--that they would continue His ministry because He would send the Holy Spirit to dwell in them!

C. When Jesus is coming down to the last hours of his life, He makes it clear that things are about to change drastically; the Spirit will come and start a new era; the era of the Church; the era of the Spirit who will bring great glory to Jesus Christ.

1. Then Jesus says something remarkable—shocking, really—to his disciples. If you have Bible, turn to John 16:5—page 740.

Because I have said these things you are filled with grief. But I tell you the truth: It is FOR YOUR GOOD that I am going away (John 16:6-7a, NIV).

-Anyone here ever fantasized about what it would be like to spend a single **day** with Jesus? These guys had staked their **lives** on Him--loved Him, served Him--saw Him as the Messiah, Hope of the World. Imagine their shock when He said, "It's a **good thing** that I'm going away!"

-Why would Jesus say that? He explains why: ***Unless I go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you (John 16:7b NIV).***

Somehow this next era of the Spirit is going to be even better, even more profound than being with Jesus 24/7. Let's read on, vss. 8-15:

When he comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment: in regard to sin, because men do not believe in me; in regard to righteousness, because I am going to the Father, where you can see me no longer; and in regard to judgment, because the prince of this world now stands condemned.

"I have much more to say to you, more than you can now bear. But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. He will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it known to you. All that belongs to the Father is mine. That is why I said the Spirit will take from what is mine and make it known to you (John 16:8-15 NIV).

2. To put it simply, the Holy Spirit is going to continue Jesus' mission of **seeking and saving the lost**.

a. Notice vs. 8. ***When he comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment (John 16:8 NIV).***

-It becomes a little clearer if you substitute the phrase *people far from God* for world. The Holy Spirit's role is a personal one. He is the one who makes people uncomfortable with their sin.

-How many of you became interested in Jesus Christ because an emptiness inside and sinful patterns in your life you were couldn't break. You wanted to be different! Anyone? That's the Holy Spirit's work.

-Some of you may be feeling that right now. It's like an itch inside you can't scratch. An emptiness you can't fill. You're drawn to truth that both intrigues you and irritates you. Well, that's the Spirit doing His work.

- b. But the Spirit doesn't stop there. Acts 2 tells us that on the Day of Pentecost, the Spirit of God started the Church. The Spirit baptized and filled a little group of 120 people--and there was such power in that group that in time they turned the Roman Empire on its ear.
3. In a future message, I'm going to get much more specific about the work of the Spirit in our lives; but I just want to say this. Imagine the amazing potential of this combination. The Spirit of God, working in **every single human heart on this planet**--speaking to people about their sin; telling people that they can live on higher ground; and convincing people that there is accountability before an ultimate judge.

-And **then**, that same all powerful Spirit of God who empowered Moses, David, Elijah, and Jesus **living and working in millions upon millions of people who respond to Him**. That's why Jesus would say, **It is for YOUR GOOD that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Counselor will not come**. That's why when Jesus' disciples were about to start a world-changing ministry, He said, **"Don't you dare start anything until He comes. Just sit and wait!"**

III. WHO IS THE HOLY SPIRIT...TO ME?

For a few minutes in closing this morning, I want to get much more personal with you about the Holy Spirit and what He means to you--what He will do for you if you'll let Him.

- A. I want to just focus in on some things I believe the Spirit of God wants to do in our lives. And I want you first of all to notice what Jesus' favorite word for the Holy Spirit is. **Counselor**.
 1. This title literally means, **called to someone's side to help them**. It can also mean a comforter, an encourager or advocate or defense attorney.
 2. Jesus, in His clearest teaching on the Holy Spirit says that his death will not leave his disciples here as orphans--stuck on their own in a confusing world. He would send the **Counselor** to live **within** them. I want you to think this morning for what it means for the Holy Spirit to be your **Counselor**.
 - a. Anyone here besides me ever make a really dumb decision--or a dumb move? How about people problems? Any of those? I saw a cartoon on a friend's refrigerator where this wild looking woman, frazzled hair, bags under her eyes says, "This morning I woke up with only **one nerve left**--and now you're getting on it!"
 - b. Ever have regrets about the things you've done? Worried yourself sick--even though you knew it really didn't help? Well, you **need** this Counselor. So, I want you to turn to the person next to you this morning and say to them, **"You need to get some counseling!"** Go ahead!
 3. To understand how the Holy Spirit works, a good question might be, "What **does** a good counselor do?"

- a. Well, first, they look you in the eye and **listen** to you. In fact, counselors are trained to listen well and communicate interest and concern for what you're going through. When the truth gets messy—a good counselor never says, "You **what?** What were you thinking! You idiot!" No, they help you understand why you do the things you do and feel the way you feel.
- b. But there's something else good counselors do. They tell the truth. A good counselor would not help you fool yourself into thinking everything's okay when it's destroying you emotionally or spiritually. And the Holy Spirit, like Jesus, is full of grace **and** truth. He's gentle. He will never back the truth truck up...**beep! Beep! Beep!...**and unload the whole thing. He gives you as much truth as you can handle—bite-size pieces.
- c. Wouldn't it be cool if a counselor could stay with you all the time? Go to work with you and come home with you at night. Lori and I get in a heated disagreement, I turn to my counselor and say, "Go ahead. You're so smart--I mean, you always have the right answers in the office--**you** talk to her!"
- d. Well, this passage is saying that you can have the **greatest Counselor in the world** with you **all the time**. So will let the Holy Spirit do that for you? But I've got to be honest with you. For Him to do His job, for Him to really help you and give you power, **He has to have free reign in your life!** He will not be one of your paid consultants where you ask his opinion to see if He agrees with you—and if you feel like doing what He says.

-Will you let Him tell you the truth about yourself and about life? Instead of carrying your burdens all by yourself, will you let Him help you? Will you say, "Holy Spirit, I want to be relentlessly obedient to whatever you ask? I'm not doing that yet, but that's where I want to be?"

B. Let's talk for a few moments in closing about three things the Holy Spirit will do in his role as Counselor in your life.

1. The first thing He does is give expert, flawless direction. Guidance. I brought my **Perly's directory** to illustrate that. All the maps here have quadrant lines marked by letters and numbers. If you look up a street here, it will tell you which map it's on, and specifically where that street is on that map.

-The truth about you and me is that we tend to be directionally challenged people. And sometimes even when we **do** have a sense of where to go--we are clueless about the obstacles between us and our destination.

- a. Jesus said: **But when He, the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come (John 16:13 NIV).**
-This Counselor has already given us the **Perly's** for life. Anyone know what it is? The Spirit guided the entire writing of the Bible—and he also helped the Disciples write down Jesus' words. Jesus said in John 14:26 that the Holy Spirit would teach them all things **and** remind them of everything He had taught them.
- b. Let me say this. God will **never, EVER** lead you in a direction that contradicts the map He's already drawn.

- c. But it's not just enough to know the Bible. You need to be in a counseling relationship with the One who wrote it. There are some issues where He wants to give you specific insight and wisdom.
- d. So, how about you? Do you need wisdom this week? Is there a relational struggle you're trying to resolve? Some decision you have to make? Do you need guidance in knowing how to balance your life in a healthy way? Do you need help in knowing what your calling from God is all about? If so, **will you ask?** The most amazing brilliant Counselor in the world is waiting for you to **ask**—and for you to **do** what He tells you.
2. Something else this greatest Counselor in the world will do when He comes to live at the core of your life. He will give you power. Amazing power. Remember the illustration at the beginning--about that battery and the drill? You need to know that, spiritually speaking, without the power of the Spirit of God, you are like this drill with the battery pack removed.
- Sometimes counselor's tell counselees to do really scary things; confront abusive parents; put boundaries up to keep toxic people at a distance; tell someone the truth they don't want to hear. What if you had a counselor that doesn't just **tell** you that you need to do something scary—but also gives you **power to do it!**
 - You see Holy Spirit power all through the story of the early church in Acts. Remember Jesus' words? He didn't say, "Go start the church." He said, "Wait for **power** from the Holy Spirit." This tiny church had the government and all the religious officials in the country against it. What did they do? They **prayed**. They said, "Oh God, give us courage to be your witnesses--even if it costs us our life." And what happened? Well, The Spirit of God shook the whole place--and **they** got courage. Power.
- a. Truth is--God **loves** to give His power to weak people. Power to do **amazing** things--things we never thought we could do.
- Now, is there anyone here who, when you walk around, feel kinda like you're a mixture of Jesus, Sampson, Moses, Elijah, and the Apostle Paul? Anyone? I don't.
 - One time when Paul was feeling exceptionally weak and small, Jesus said, **My grace is SUFFICIENT for you, for my power is made perfect in WEAKNESS (2 Cor.12:9 NIV)**. Paul says, **But we have this treasure in JARS OF CLAY to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us (2 Cor. 4:7 NIV)**.
- b. So, how do we access this supernatural strength? I heard something years ago that has **really** helped me understand how it works. You could call the principle, **power along the way**. You'll find over and over again as you read the Bible that it's when people **step up to the plate** that God's power pours into their situation.
- Joshua, successor to Moses in leading the Israelites, found this out when they were about to cross the Jordan River. By now, this entire generation had been raised in the desert. Think they had swimming lessons there?

Oh, yeah—the Jordon was at flood stage. Millions were watching, the river looked muddy and scary. Nothing changed until the leaders carrying the ark **stepped out into the water**. And then God's power made a way through the water and they crossed on dry ground. The specific issue is **faith**.

-There are two reasons why we don't experience the power of God. Sometimes it's because we believe the lies of Satan--and not the Spirit of Truth. I know there are some of you here this morning who **feel** very small and weak and drained of power. Satan whispers to you, "You can't do that? You'll never overcome that sin? You'll always be a second-class, low-voltage Christ-follower!" Some of you are overwhelmed with your lives.

You need strength. The Spirit of Truth says, **I can to ALL THINGS through Christ who gives me strength**. Who are you going to believe?

-There's another issue. Look at this battery. See the contacts? You can have the most powerful battery in the world, but if the contacts are corroded, junked up--or absent--the power won't get through. Our contact point with the Holy Spirit can get junked up with deliberate disobedience and pride we **refuse** to deal with. Folks, understand this; the Holy Spirit will only give us power to **obey** God--not do our own thing.

- c. I want to ask you a very important question this morning. What are you now doing that requires the mighty power of the Holy Spirit to accomplish?
- 3. Let's talk about one final thing that the Holy Spirit does in our lives as this infinite counselor. He offers us unconditional acceptance. For eternity.
 - a. Paul says, **Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession--to the praise of His glory (Eph. 1:13-14 NIV)**.
 - I've brought this college ring and candle as an illustration of that. In Paul's day when a king or governor sent out an official decree they would drip some wax on the outside of the scroll or document and press their signet ring into the wax. Remember Pilate putting the Roman seal on Jesus' tomb? What that seal said is, "If you tamper with this, you are messing with the most powerful government in the world. And there are serious consequences for doing so!
 - God's seal has been place on your life. And that seal is the presence of His Spirit in your heart. The Spirit, this passage says, is your guarantee that you are indeed God's child and that you are forever accepted. And the Spirit is there to guarantee the rest of your trip on this planet under protection of God's love and Christ's righteousness. And nobody...**nobody** has the right to mess with you!
 - b. Now, what does that mean for you? It means that when you get anxious, you do dumb things that make you groan at the core of your life ...or you feel overwhelmed by life, ...or you choose to be sexually pure--and you fall, ...or you decide to be patient with your children, and you catch yourself screaming at them, ...or you feel like an absolute failure...Where do you go?

-Well--you go to the greatest counselor in the world. The one who brings you **immediately** into His presence. He has time for you.

- c. And you know what the Spirit does? Rom. 8:26 says:
In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express (Rom. 8:26 NIV).
 -Anyone here who's ever struggled with prayer? Being consistent—and knowing what to pray for? Show of hands?
 -Well, that's perfect--because that makes you an ideal candidate for the prayer ministry of the Holy Spirit. He knows **exactly** what you need--He knows your heart, and He knows God's heart. And when words don't fit the situation, the Holy Spirit **groans** for you and edits your prayers!
- d. The Holy Spirit is our guarantee that we will **always** be God's child; that He will **always** strive and intercede on our behalf--and He has guaranteed that in the process of this life, He will love us enough to keep us on course, tell us the truth, work for our good in every circumstance we find ourselves in. And **then** He'll walk hand in hand with us through the river of death--right into the Father's home. It's not just a lifetime guarantee--like this drill--it's an eternal guarantee. Know what I think? I think you **need** Him!

IV. CLOSING THOUGHTS

You and I are living in the most amazing era of human history--the era of the Spirit. It's an era where the Spirit of God is just as amazingly present with the children of God as Jesus was with His disciples. Speaking, teaching, counseling, guiding, working, doing amazing things.

-The **huge** question is--what are you and I going to do about it? What are you going to do about this amazing, all-powerful Being--this Counselor who **longs** to do amazing things through your life?

-Will you cooperate? Will you let Him be your Counselor? This isn't theology--this is your one and only life. Will you open your heart to Him? Would you do that right now?