

The Spirit of God Promised

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[0:00] Well, it is good to be here.

It will be in John 15. I believe we finished that up tonight. 15th chapter. I actually have two to go. 17 will be pretty involved. The high priestly prayer.

On the night before his death, the Lord spent a lot of time with his disciples trying to reassure them. Put yourselves in their shoes. He's trying to reassure them. And I don't think living this far removed, you know, 21st century, we can really capture the depth of the sorrow and the fear that his followers must have felt.

Now remember, they had what I would call the Jewish view of the Messiah. Messiah comes, overthrows whoever is in power at the time, whether the Assyrians, the Babylonians, the Romans, whoever, and establishes his kingdom on earth, his millennial kingdom.

[1:24] That's still yet future. Still hasn't happened. And now all of a sudden, he's telling them, I'm going to die. I'm going away. And this does not fit with their concept of the Messiah.

Clearly, though, their love for him was intense. Some believed that they would rather die with him than to try to go on without him.

When the Lord revealed to Peter that he would deny him that night, of course, Peter had said, I'll die for you and with you before I would ever deny you.

And the Scriptures indicate that all of the disciples felt that way. Well, Jesus knew all things, of course. He's God. He was very much aware of how the disciples felt.

So he spends his last few hours on earth reassuring them of his love and promising them that they would not lack for the resources to carry on after he returned to the Father.

[2:42] They were going to have the resources to carry on. Now, this won't come as a shock to anyone in here, but if we were out at a big assembly of various denominations, it would.

The Lord never promised anyone, including the disciples, a life of health and wealth and prosperity. He never made that promise. Pray that you never live in a time when someone claiming to be a follower of Christ makes such an aberrant claim that Jesus wants you healthy, wealthy, and prosperous, and if you aren't, you're in disobedience to Him.

Just pray that you never hear of anybody like that, right? Don't turn on your TVs to the Christian channel, so-called, or you'll see that. Christ's disciples, His followers, both then and now, have suffered the hatred of the world, and that was a promise of the Lord.

The world's going to hate you because it hates me. So they suffered the hatred of the world, persecution, and death by means of disease, accident, and crime just like the rest of the world.

[4:09] Christ's disciples suffer. They've suffered then, they suffer now. We do not have any special immunity from those things.

I remember the lady that joined here one Sunday and that night she got robbed. Next morning, she was in the pastor's office. She said, what's going on here? I became a Christian yesterday and now I've been robbed?

How do you explain that? He said, you're not in heaven. You're on the earth. We never saw her again. She's the only thing to do it. Truth is, Christians die every day.

They die poor. They die sick. They die with their kids saying, I wonder if they left me anything. I've always said the only people at my funeral will be being in law enforcement will be my kids wondering if they got anything and everyone else making sure I'm dead.

All the people I've had to deal with. But we do have one fantastic promise from the Lord and that supersedes all of life's problems and pains.

[5:16] The Lord Jesus told His followers and through them, through those disciples, He tells us that we would not have to face this world of opposition in our own strength.

Now, if you've got to face it in my strength, you are most to be pitied. We don't face it in our own strength. And that is vitally important to understand. Let me put it another way. True believers are never alone in a world that hates us and really would like to see us gone. Like to see us out of here. This is what the Lord says in John chapter 15 verse 26 and 27. When the Helper comes, by the way, that word helper is capitalized. When the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father. Now, what do we see there, guys?

[6:24] That's the Trinity, right? 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 and you will testify also because you have been with Me from the beginning.

Giant verses of Scripture. Tremendous verses of Scripture. Here the Lord Jesus reiterates the fact that He will send the Holy Spirit to be in and with the true followers of Christ. He had previously said He would send the Spirit of God to be with them. And the Spirit would in fact indwell them and empower them for service.

And by the way, that is unique to the New Testament. That's unique to the church. In the Old Testament, the Spirit of God came upon men, moved them to do certain things, and then departed. So it wasn't the same in the sense of the church. Never leave us, never forsake us. And they were empowered for service. Sending the Spirit of God to minister to believers guaranteed that every promise Jesus made to the church would be fulfilled.

[7:55] He sent the Spirit as verification of that. Any promise He's given the church, members of His church will be fulfilled. Now, our belief in the return of Christ is a settled hope because the Spirit of God speaks to our hearts that Jesus is coming back for His own.

He's coming back for His own. By His promise, the Spirit says, look up for the time of our departure draws near. Look up.

Two Sundays ago, I was in Texas bringing a message to my mother-in-law's church. And, you know, we kind of live in a time where we're all talking kind of about signs, you know, things are going on.

And the church has been talking about that for a lot of years, more than we've been alive. But I said, you know, I'm starting to get more and more convinced that the big sign is the following away, the apostasy in the church.

And I gave them a message on apostasy. But the Spirit says, look up for the time of our departure draws near. The Holy Spirit is a pledge.

[9:13] Very important concept to grab hold of. He is a pledge. Let me give you another word. He is a deposit.

And probably all of us in here have made deposits on certain things. I'll give you another word. He is the guarantee. You know, you go out and buy an appliance, you get a guarantee, right?

And then you find them the rest of the life of that appliance trying to get them to... But He's the guarantee that every promise Jesus made will be fulfilled.

Every one of them. Listen to Paul in Ephesians. In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation, having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise who is given as a pledge, there's that word, of our inheritance.

He said, you're going to inherit something and I'll make a pledge to you by giving you the Holy Spirit with a view to the redemption of God's own possession to the praise of His glory.

[10:39] Wow, what a promise. Now, our youngest son got married in September of 2010. and they had their first baby two years ago.

I went over to Branson and I figured it out and Diane didn't. But at dinner they said, you're going to be a grandparent again. We're all excited.

I'm going to be a grandpa again. And I, of course, pledged to give my daughter all the knowledge I have about that process and it wouldn't take very long. and the Lord, He presented to His betrothed a beautiful engagement ring.

I have a picture on my cell phone of Rob doing that. That was his pledge that he intends to follow through with the promise of marriage that he gave her.

He's going to follow through. She's got a ring and a nice ring. The King James version of the Bible refers to the pledge as the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession.

[11:50] We don't use this word earnest much anymore unless it's earnest even there. Earnest as much as we used to. Instead, we use the word escrow. And you all have heard that I assume.

When we buy a house, we put down a significant amount of money called the escrow account. And by that, we're guaranteeing that we're going to go through with the purchase.

Sometimes people don't and they lose their escrow. The Holy Spirit was sent to individual believers as the escrow.

His presence with us here on this earth is God's guarantee that one day we will be with Christ in glory. He's our escrow.

Now, the Spirit was also given among many reasons that we might be able to pray effectively.

Jesus promised that we would have anything we want if certain conditions were met.

[12:55] Don't ever pray to win the lottery. I don't think it's going to happen. But there are certain conditions and here's what the Lord says in Romans 8.26 talking about prayer.

Paul, writing of course by inspiration, said that we don't know how to pray. Wow, Paul, don't shade it. Just tell it like it is. We don't know how to pray so the Spirit of God prays for us.

You know, I'd rather have him doing that work than me. The Spirit of God prays for us with groanings too deep for words. And whatever that means, that's deep.

We've gone deep there. The great legacy that the Lord gave for His church on earth was her ability to evangelize the world.

Jesus even said greater works you will do than I did. on her. Jesus only went about 200 miles from this place of birth. We've gone throughout the whole world, right?

[14:06] He would have a brother that attended this class going to one of the stands. Great day. Even as he departed this world, the Lord told the church that we would be His witnesses.

We would be His witnesses in Jerusalem, in Judea, Samaria, and the uttermost parts of the world. Kind of these circles until we go global.

I've said this to you before. Everywhere I've gone in my travels, the gospel is there. There's a believer there. Maybe they even have a Bible, but they believe.

The gospel is so powerful, it will find a way to penetrate the darkest areas. It will find a way. So the two verses we're covering here have to do with the empowering of Christians to witness in a lost, Christ-denying, hostile world.

Absent this power, we cannot succeed. With this power, we're talking about the Holy Spirit, we cannot fail. Because the success will be His.

[15:25] The success will be His. So the first thing we learn is that Christian witness is from the Father. When the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, that is the Spirit of Truth who proceeds from the Father.

We have that beautiful picture of the Trinity at work. The ultimate witness to Jesus Christ on this earth is God the Father. And remember, He testified of His Son even at the moment of His baptism. Remember that? John the Baptist out there? And He testified concerning Christ since the dawn of mankind. M.R.

DeHaan used to say Jesus is in every verse in the Old Testament, sometimes out front, sometimes in the shadows. But until you found Him, you haven't figured out what that verse means. He also set out to write a book one time, Jesus in the Old Testament.

It was just overwhelming, so he narrowed it down to Jesus in the Pentateuch, the first five books of the Old Testament. And he was so overwhelmed, he wrote a book called Jesus in Genesis.

[16:37] The Christ of Genesis. Then he died. He was an elderly man. So we have this ultimate witness as God the Father. He has testified concerning His Son since the dawn of mankind.

The Father testifies about Jesus through the Hebrew Scriptures. When there was only the Old Testament, Jesus told His hearers, you search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life.

It is these that testify about me. When there was no New Testament, He told those guys, read the Old Testament, that's talking about me.

And He told them that. The Father also testifies to the Son through the divine works that Christ did while on earth. He came to do works in the Father's name.

And the works He did were verification as to who He was and why He came. And it offends me in the modern era in our extreme charismatic brothers that are trying to make trees walk and ducks talk or whatever, that they treat that like He was a circus performer.

[18:00] come get your felt need here. Whatever you need. What do you need? A thousand dollars? We get that. You need a New Royals Royce?

I've got four of them. I heard a minister say that on television. I've got four of them. You have no faith if you don't have one. I was screaming at the TV about that time.

Those little women, they bought that for you. All four of them. You know, by turning over all their money. So, the very words, so the Father testifies through the divine works and they are verification as to who Christ is and what He had come to accomplish.

The very words of the Father testified as to the reality of the Son. The Father spoke audibly at the baptism of Jesus and on the Mount of Transfiguration.

you remember that. He was on the Mount of Transfiguration and the Father testifies to the truth concerning Christ Jesus His Son by sending the Helper.

[19:11] Sort of the third leg of this. At the baptism, at the Mount, and in sending the Holy Spirit. John would later write when he wrote the epistle of 1 John chapter 5 verse 6, it is the Spirit who testifies about Jesus Christ and then if you want to inject a question of why, he answers because he says because the Spirit is truth.

And God cannot lie. We all know that, right? He is the Spirit of truth and he testifies about the Lord Jesus Christ. So our witness is actually the Father's witness concerning the Son.

Christian witness ought to be about the Son. The Spirit of God came to reveal the Son. I watched a service 35 years ago out of Virginia and never once did they mention Jesus Christ.

Not one time. They mentioned the Holy Spirit a whole bunch. they never mention. And you know, that grieves the Lord. That grieves the Spirit. He came to testify to Christ.

And in John 15, Jesus said, He, that's the Holy Spirit, He will testify about me. Jesus said, He's going to tell you about me.

[20:39] The primary ministry of the Holy Spirit to a lost world is to testify of about Jesus. And that is why the primary message of the church is not political activism, not social reform, not psychological self-fulfillment, which we heard for a number of years from Robert Shuler.

The primary message of the church is Jesus Christ and Him crucified. That's what we talk about. That's what we focus on.

And this is why I'm so fond of what I would consider the giants in the Christian era. And I'm going to have these out of order from birth, death, birth, again, life, whatever.

I'm fond of MacArthur. The giants. MacArthur, Piper, Sproul, Beggs, Tozer, Spurgeon, Whitefield, Calvin, Luther, Knox, Augustine, Coleman, these giants in my life and a lot of the other Puritan and reform writers.

I've got a whole library of them. Go to Barstow Books, come on out. If you don't return them, we'll laugh when we get to glory. Why were these guys so good, including Don Coleman?

[22:06] Because they focus on Jesus. Sit your head yesterday. You may disagree with everything else I've said in that last paragraph, but they focus on Jesus.

Peter stood boldly before the very tribunal that could have ordered his death and declared, the God of our fathers raised up Jesus.

And then listen to Peter say, whom you had put to death by hanging him on a cross, he is the one whom God exalted to his right hand as a prince and a savior to grant repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins.

And we are witnesses of these things and so is the Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey him. We had to put in that obey words.

Paul wrote that he didn't want to know anything except Jesus Christ and him crucified. And there's your message. I mean, you could preach on that the rest of your life. God's and the list really could go on and on of those who literally gave their lives for the evangelistic testimony of Jesus.

[23:31] It's because he is to be the focus of all evangelistic work. Read the great biography someday of some of the whole missionaries. John J. Patterson and Adoniram Judson and Hudson Taylor.

The list is inexhaustible. It is sad that we live in a day where much of modern evangelism is off track spiritually.

It's off track. There is in our day across our land in what I would call the West, which is Western Europe, which is essentially the lights have gone out, Canada, America, Australia, New Zealand, that's the West.

Tremendous downplaying of the glory and honor due the Lord Jesus Christ. He is to be honored for both his person and the work he has accomplished and still accomplishes through his true vessels. He is to be honored and glorified in his person and in his work. Much of modern evangelism focuses on a person's felt needs.

[24 : 54] Are you sick? Come to Jesus and he'll heal you. If you're not healed, you don't have enough faith. Pretty simple, isn't it? Are you poor? Give our minister your money and it will grow like a seed into an uncountable amount of money.

And so the list goes. We can go all night. Listen to the words of one of the greatest preachers, perhaps the greatest, who ever lived and walked upon this earth and then think of his words that I'm going to read to you compared with what's being passed off in our day as modern evangelism.

1 Corinthians chapter 2 verse 1 to 5. Paul. And when I came to you brethren, I did not come with superiority of speech or of wisdom, proclaiming to you the testimony of God.

For I determined that nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. I was with you in weakness. Paul is describing himself. In weakness, in fear, in much trembling, and my message and my preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power so that your faith would not rest on the wisdom of men, but on the power of God.

Wow. That sets us apart. We're not a religion. Religions, man's efforts to reach God, they always fail. We're not a religion.

[26 : 46] The preaching of Christ and the cross is the power of God for salvation. No one gets saved apart from it. At the very heart of the salvation message is repentance.

Kind of a missing jewel around the world in our day. Jesus came not to call the righteous, if he ever found any, but sinners to himself.

You know what? We're 21st century, aren't we? 2017. And you know what? He still saves sinners. It's amazing. Still goes on. And you know, if you are a sinner, he could save you if you're not yet saved. I presume all of you are, why would you put up with me?

But he's still in the business of saving people. This repentance is to be proclaimed to all the nations of the world according to Luke 24 and 47.

[27 : 52] That's why I think our gospel death is so vitally important to our church. So vitally important. The message of the early church was repentance.

The message has not changed over the interviewees years because God has not changed. Christ has not changed. So the message hasn't changed. the Christian witness is through the followers of Christ.

Verse 27 And you will testify also because you have been with me from the beginning. We are a link and maybe the final link in a chain of witnesses.

We don't know when the Lord's coming back. The Spirit testifies and so are believers to testify. We are in separately link to the Spirit of God.

In fact, when we witness, we're to do that in the power of the Spirit of God. That is what Paul did when he fully preached the gospel of Christ. And we all know he went into some hostile areas, didn't we?

[29 : 04] Got beat up and stoned and kicked out of town. Now the apostles were well qualified to witness for and about Christ.

They had been with him from the very beginning of his earthly ministry. We have been with him through his word.

We point people to the truth contained in his word, the Holy Bible. We are also called to demonstrate the reality of the resurrection in the way we live our lives.

Our call is to reach out to the elect of God who don't even know they're the elect of God. They're not yet saved. And we give them the message of the cross and let the Spirit of God do his work.

Since we don't know who they are, we preach to every creature. We just don't manipulate them. Say, if you'll say these words, you're in. There's nothing in Scripture that says that.

[30 : 06] Nowhere in Scripture does it say that. I love what Spurgeon said. He said, I've witnessed every creature. When one of them gets saved, I go back to my study and say, wow, that guy was one of the elect.

He got saved. When one of them gets saved, we can say with assurance that was one of God's children if they're truly saved. Faith comes by hearing, hearing by the words of Christ.

That's where it comes from. Hearings by, I think, in the little Greek speeches from Christ. Thank you.