

# Essentials – The Holy Spirit

## John 16:5-15

(Expanded Sermon Notes)



As we have seen, our Christian faith is anchored in history. Reflecting the Apostles' Creed, our Statement declares that Jesus was crucified "under Pontius Pilate" (Article 4). The mention of a first-century Roman governor may seem out of place in a broad statement of Christian truth, but it situates the gospel at a particular place in the chronicle of human events. A Jewish baby named Jesus was born in a village called Bethlehem some 2000 years ago. This baby grew to be a man, who lived and taught in the regions of Galilee and Judea. He was crucified by the Romans on a real wooden cross, and he rose bodily from the grave—his tomb was actually empty. As Luke tells us, this took place during the reign of Roman Emperor Tiberius Caesar, when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, Herod was tetrarch of Galilee, Herod's brother Philip was tetrarch of Iturea and Traconitis, and Lysanias was tetrarch of Abilene, during the priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas (Luke 3:1-2). This is actual history. In fact, the life, death and resurrection of Jesus is the center of history—the most important moment of all. But the question arises: How does all of this relate to us? How could something so far away in space and time affect our lives here and now? This is far different from the kind of effect that, say, Alexander the Great had through the natural course of human events, for Christians claim that Jesus' death and resurrection accomplished God's saving purpose. Jesus Christ now brings new life to all who trust in him and leads them into an eternal relationship with God. How could what happened in the particularity of this one man in that one historical moment have a significance that transcends space and time? Jesus himself anticipated that question in his final words with his disciples on the night before he died (see John 14-16). He was departing from them, and in one sense, he would no longer be with them. But he assured them that they would see him again (John 14:19), that he would continue to love them and that they would know that love (John 14:21). Furthermore, because he lived, they, too, would live (14:19). Those who love him will be loved by the Father, he said, and he and the Father will come to them and make their home with them (John 14:23). Jesus even said to them, "you are in me, and I am in you" (John 14:20).<sup>1</sup> How will this happen? Through the third person of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit.

**EFCA Article #6** - We believe that the Holy Spirit, in all that He does, glorifies the Lord Jesus Christ. He convicts the world of its guilt. He regenerates sinners, and in Him they are baptized into union with Christ and adopted as heirs in the family of God. He also indwells, illuminates, guides, equips and empowers believers for Christ-like living and service.

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<sup>1</sup> EFCA. Evangelical Convictions, 2nd Edition (pp. 167-168). Free Church Publications. Kindle Edition

# 1. A word on unity.

## a. Unity is not the same thing as uniformity.

- i. As we have walked through this series, we have talked about what are the “essential” doctrinal commitments of our church and, ultimately, historical Christianity.
  1. When we talk about essentials in theology and doctrine, we are talking about the things that are core to the character and nature of God and to right belief about the things of God.
  2. **That is, fundamental beliefs that hold to what is revealed about God in the Scriptures and thus do not confuse or conflate him with any other god.**
- ii. Setting forth our central doctrinal convictions is difficult, but it is necessary. **Each generation has the responsibility not only to receive what has been passed on but to own it for ourselves before delivering it to our children.** As one writer has put it, “The doctrinal heritage of the past is thus both a gift and a task, an inheritance and a responsibility. What our forebears in the Christian faith passed down to us must be appropriated, in order that we may wrestle with it within our own situation, before passing it on to those whose day has yet to dawn.”<sup>2</sup>
  1. **Essentials matter because they help us stay unified.** → We will not be a healthy church that is faithful with the gospel, working for the common good of our neighbors, and committed to the mission God gave us as a local church if we are arguing over matters of conscience (secondary matters) and preference (tertiary matters).
- iii. We also need to recognize that often when the word unity is said, what is actually meant is uniformity.
  1. **Unity and uniformity are not the same thing. We must remember that and be willing to offer the grace and good faith understanding that is required for unity to actually be achieved.**
    - a. **Good faith is when we give another person the benefit of the doubt until we are proven wrong.**

## b. Uniformity demands.

- i. Uniformity literally means there is no room for difference.
- ii. Now, if we are honest, this is something we can often feel in church. Part of it is because we tend to assume that others think like me, or that my way of thinking is the only way to think about something.
  1. There are a few things that this is the case when it comes to Christianity.
  2. That is partly why we are doing this series. – There are essentials that when you change them or think differently about them, it changes the whole thing substantively that it becomes a completely new thing.
- iii. I get the unique position to have conversations with lots of different people in this body, and I can promise you we don’t all think alike.
  1. That means there is diversity here theologically, politically, anthropologically (i.e., family and cultural experiences), and economically.

## c. Unity seeks to understand.

- i. When we hold the essentials in common and in precision (i.e., we define our terms), it allows us to be unified through charity on the other matters of discussion.

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<sup>2</sup> EFCA. Evangelical Convictions, 2nd Edition (pp. 29-30). Free Church Publications. Kindle Edition.

- ii. **Unity seeks to understand** – That means we can be unified while disagreeing on non-essential or secondary issues.
- iii. Understanding comes from conversation, question asking, and listening. → A word of caution – We live in a modern moment where we equate concepts like listening and agreement or understanding and affirmation.
  - 1. It is possible to listen and understand someone and not agree with them.
  - 2. It is possible to acknowledge the validity of another perspective without affirming it personally.
- iv. What understanding fosters is patience, concern, and care for one another. → When I humanize another position or perspective I am far less likely to construct rash and overly simplistic or unfair characterizations of the person and their position.

## 2. Holy Spirit Dependence

- a. Jesus modeled for us in his early life and ministry a dependence on the Holy Spirit.
  - i. In John 16, Jesus tells the disciples that it is to their advantage that he would leave so that the Holy Spirit would come upon them. (cf. Acts 1:8)
  - ii. This section in the gospel of John is often called the *Farewell Discourse*. That is, this is the part of Jesus' final words and instructions to his disciples before his crucifixion, resurrection, and ultimately, ascension.
    - 1. I.e., Jesus is preparing them for life after the cross.
    - 2. **Here Jesus is assuring his disciples that though he will be leaving them physically, he will be forever with them spiritually through the personal presence of the Holy Spirit.** The Spirit, this other Counselor, unites us with Jesus the Son and so draws us into a personal relationship with God as our Father. In this way the barriers of space and time are overcome, and the life of the one man, Jesus, touches our lives today. God's gospel is applied by the power of the Holy Spirit.<sup>3</sup>
  - iii. **16:1** – Jesus explains why he is telling them these things → “That you won't fall away...”
    - 1. The greatest danger the disciples will confront from the opposition of the world is not death but apostasy. The reason Jesus has said *All this (i.e. 15:18–27)* is *so that you will not go astray (skandalisthēte; cf. note on this verb in 6:61; cf. Mk. 14:27–31)*. The danger was real when John wrote these words, though elsewhere he develops a theology to account for defection while maintaining the security of the believer (1 Jn. 2:19).<sup>4</sup>
  - iv. **16:4** – Jesus has not earlier spelled out the full dangers of persecution because he was still with them, and could largely protect them by absorbing all opposition himself, thus deflecting it from them. Indeed, his arrest proves to be the last time he serves them in this way (18:8, 9). At the same time, the words *because I was with you* bring up again Jesus' imminent departure (a dominant theme in ch. 14), and thus prepare the way for what follows.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>3</sup> EFCA. *Evangelical Convictions*, 2nd Edition (pp. 168-169). Free Church Publications. Kindle Edition.

<sup>4</sup> D. A. Carson, *The Gospel according to John*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Leicester, England; Grand Rapids, MI: Inter-Varsity Press; W.B. Eerdmans, 1991), 530.

<sup>5</sup> D. A. Carson, *The Gospel according to John*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Leicester, England; Grand Rapids, MI: Inter-Varsity Press; W.B. Eerdmans, 1991), 532.

- b. **We're not playing with a "B-League" Holy Spirit.** → We have the same Spirit in us as Jesus had in him & guiding him.
- i. Joe Dimaggio vs. Mickey Morandini
    1. Joe D: 1736 Games / 1537 RBI / .325 BA
    2. Mickey M: 1298 Games / 351 RBI / .268 BA
  - ii. We can extend this example to any area of life and interest.
    1. Consider someone who is exceptional and generationally known and someone who is really good. (art, music, culinary, theology, business, etc.)
  - iii. **The same spirit is in us: Consider Jesus' words -**
    1. **John 14:25-26**
      - a. <sup>25</sup> "These things I have spoken to you while I am still with you. <sup>26</sup> **But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.**
- c. **How do we see Jesus' dependence on the Holy Spirit?**
- i. Matthew, Mark, & Luke all indicate that Jesus was **lead** by the Spirit into the desert.
    1. Luke is unique and adds, "He was full of the Spirit..."
      - a. Authorial detail & personality shining through.
        - i. Writing to a Greek / Gentile audience.
      - b. This "filled / led" flows through the passage.
        - i. Who brings the Truth of Scripture to Jesus' mind at temptation?
        - ii. Who was his source of physical, emotional, and spiritual strength?
          1. Have you ever tried fasting?
          2. You need something other than your profound strength!
      - iii. Consider Jesus' later words: **Acts 1:8**
        1. **"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."**
    - iv. **The same Spirit that led, strengthened, filled and prepared Jesus in the desert, is the same one that leads, strengthens, fills, and prepares us to be witnesses.**
  - ii. **Jesus' humanity on display in the desert:**
    1. Heb. 2:17-18 <sup>17</sup> "Therefore he had to be **made like his brothers** in **every respect**, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. <sup>18</sup> For because **he himself has suffered when tempted**, he is able to help those who are being tempted."
    2. Heb 4:15 – <sup>15</sup> "For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who **in every respect has been tempted as we are**, yet without sin."
    3. Phil. 2:6-8 - <sup>6</sup> "... who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, <sup>7</sup> but **emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant**, being born in the likeness of men. <sup>8</sup> And **being found in human form**, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross."
- d. **Dependence on the Holy Spirit is to be connected to the very power of God.**
- i. Again, Jesus' own words to the disciples that the Holy Spirit will help them endure.

1. How do we endure? → We resist the empty promises of this age and we follow Jesus in a life-defining way.
  - a. This is something that we heard over and over again in the Revelation teaching series. Jesus' command to each of the seven churches (Cf. Rev. 2-3) was to endure. They were to hold to the faith and all that Jesus had taught.
  - b. Here Jesus teaches the disciples and us that we are not to endure on our own power or strength. We are filled with the Holy Spirit and in that, we are to endure by his power.

**ii. The power of the Holy Spirit is clear through Scripture:**

1. **OT:** Frequently, we read in the Old Testament of the Spirit of the Lord coming upon a person in power, enabling the fulfillment of some God-given task.<sup>247</sup> The Spirit was active in creation (Gen. 1:2), in the revelation of God's word to the prophets (Ezek. 2:2; cf. 8:3; 11:1,24), and in the empowering for craftsmanship and administration in Israel (Exod. 31:3-5; Zech. 4:6; Num. 11:25; Deut. 34:9). The Old Testament prophets also looked forward to a future age when the ministry of the Spirit would be more complete. That age would be led by one anointed by the Spirit (Isa. 11:1-5; Isa. 42:1-4; Isa. 61:1-3) who would usher in a new covenant in which the Spirit would be poured out on all God's people (Ezek. 36:25-27 [cf. Jer. 31:31-34]; Joel 2:28-32).<sup>6</sup>
2. **NT:** This emphasis on the power of the Holy Spirit continues in the New Testament. Jesus' conception in the womb of a virgin is attributed to the Spirit's power (Luke 1:35), and at Jesus' baptism by John, the Spirit visibly descended upon him, empowering him in his ministry (Luke 4:14; Acts 10:38). Jesus announced himself as one anointed by the Spirit (Luke 4:17-21, citing Isa. 61:1-2). It was "by the Spirit of God" that Jesus drove out demons (Matt. 12:28). In a final act, the Spirit's power raised him from the dead (Rom. 1:4). Before his ascension to the Father, Jesus promised his disciples, "you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses" (Acts 1:8). On the Day of Pentecost the Spirit did come in power, and the apostles performed many miraculous deeds. All believers were promised the Spirit's power at work within them (Eph. 3:16; Rom. 8:11; Rom. 15:13).<sup>7</sup>

**iii. The even more beautiful thing is that not only is there power available for the believer, but that power is accessible at all times through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.**

1. I.e., God not only commands that we are to live differently as his children, but he indwells and imparts himself into the believer through his Spirit.

### 3. Holy Spirit Indwelling

- a. Could God not have indwelt the Holy Spirit even while Jesus was with them? → Yes, but what is happening is that God is indicating something new is about to happen and there is a sequence to God's plan.
  - i. The many biblical promises that the Spirit will characterize the age of the kingdom of God (e.g. Is. 11:1-10; 32:14-18; 42:1-4; 44:1-5; Ezk. 11:17-20; 36:24-27; 37:1-14; Joel

<sup>6</sup> EFCA. Evangelical Convictions, 2nd Edition (p. 169). Free Church Publications. Kindle Edition.

<sup>7</sup> EFCA. Evangelical Convictions, 2nd Edition (pp. 169-170). Free Church Publications. Kindle Edition.

2:28–32; cf. notes on Jn. 3:5; 7:37–39) breed anticipation. **But this saving reign of God cannot be fully inaugurated until Jesus has died, risen from the dead, and been exalted to this Father’s right hand, returned to the glory he enjoyed with the Father before the world began.**<sup>8</sup>

- ii. On the night before his death as he prepared his disciples for his imminent departure, Jesus said, “[Y]ou are filled with grief because I have said these things. But very truly I tell you, it is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Advocate will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you.” (John 16:6-7). Jesus must go so that the Spirit may come. This is not to suggest that it was impossible for Jesus and the Holy Spirit to be with the disciples at the same time—as is the case, say, with Clark Kent and Superman. The progression has to do with God’s plan of salvation. **Jesus’ going away inaugurates a new stage in God’s saving work.**<sup>9</sup>

**b. What does it mean that the Holy Spirit is indwelt in believers?**

- i. Here is what Paul tells the church in Corinth.
  - 1. **<sup>16</sup> Do you not know that you are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit dwells in you? <sup>17</sup> If anyone destroys God’s temple, God will destroy him. For God’s temple is holy, and you are that temple. – 1 Cor. 3:16-17**
- ii. Paul teaches us that the Holy Spirit lives in, resides in, or has made a home in the believer. In this way, the Spirit is not some abstract universal force that is somewhere out there that the believer must search for or conjure up to access. Instead, the Spirit is in and is active in the life of the believer.
  - 1. Paul gives a picture of the Temple here: The Temple was the place the God physical dwelled on earth. Now, Paul says God dwells in the believer through the Holy Spirit. What God once did through a building he now does in the believer.
- iii. The Spirit is the power of the coming age (Heb. 6:4-5), a source of divine life, the animating force in Jesus’ own resurrection glory. **“And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies because of his Spirit, who lives in you” (Rom. 8:11). By the indwelling Spirit the believer enters into a new life, one that will come to fulfillment when Christ returns. In this sense, through the Holy Spirit, God has “set his seal of ownership on us, and put his Spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come” (2 Cor. 1:22; cf. Eph. 1:13; Eph. 4:30).**<sup>10</sup>
- iv. **Caution – What does indwelling not mean?**
  - 1. **It must be emphasized that our union with Christ does not mean that we somehow become God—that we are joined to the divine being in the sense that we are divinized by absorption into the Godhead such that Creator and the created are indistinguishable.** It is a spiritual union that is the work of the Holy Spirit— “we were all baptized by [or “in”] one Spirit so as to form one body” (1 Cor. 12:13).<sup>263</sup> In this “Spirit-baptism”<sup>264</sup> the Holy Spirit bridges the chasm of space and time. He takes what happened then—the life, death and resurrection of Jesus—and brings its saving power into our lives now, by uniting us in a spiritual way with Christ.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> D. A. Carson, *The Gospel according to John*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Leicester, England; Grand Rapids, MI: Inter-Varsity Press; W.B. Eerdmans, 1991), 533–534.

<sup>9</sup> EFCA. *Evangelical Convictions*, 2nd Edition (p. 171). Free Church Publications. Kindle Edition.

<sup>10</sup> EFCA. *Evangelical Convictions*, 2nd Edition (pp. 185-186). Free Church Publications. Kindle Edition.

<sup>11</sup> EFCA. *Evangelical Convictions*, 2nd Edition (pp. 182-183). Free Church Publications. Kindle Edition.

- v. Since we now know that the Holy Spirit is indwelt in the life of a believer, what does he do?
- c. What does Jesus tell us about the work of the Holy Spirit?
  - i. **Convict:** (v.8) – The world of their (our) sin, Christ’s righteousness, and the coming judgment.
    - 1. A general description of the Counsellor’s role *vis-à-vis* the world is given in 16:8: *When he comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment.* The word the NIV translates as ‘convict of guilt’ (*elenchō*), was used by Greek moralists in relation to the conscience, and in the LXX with forensic overtones, as it has here. When the Counsellor proves the world wrong ‘in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment’ it could lead either to repentance and salvation or hardening of heart and condemnation, depending upon the response of those proved wrong. The Spirit’s conviction would be effected through the ministry of the disciples (cf. 1 Cor. 14:24–25).
    - 2. When the Counsellor proves the world wrong ‘in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment’ it could lead either to repentance and salvation or hardening of heart and condemnation, depending upon the response of those proved wrong. The Spirit’s conviction would be effected through the ministry of the disciples (cf. 1 Cor. 14:24–25).<sup>12</sup>
  - ii. **Guide:** (v. 13) – Believers into truth.
    - 1. What they could not bear then, they would need to understand afterwards. Therefore, Jesus promised, *But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. The Spirit is here referred to with the masculine pronoun ‘he’ (ekeinos), underlining again (cf. 15:26) the personhood of the Spirit—he is not just a force.*<sup>13</sup>
    - 2. His role is to testify to Jesus: *He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come.* As Jesus did not speak independently of the Father, so the Counsellor will not speak independently of Jesus. What he hears from the Son he will tell the disciples: the significance of the things ‘yet to come’, i.e. the significance of the events soon to befall Jesus, and perhaps his return at the end of the age.<sup>14</sup>
  - iii. **Declare:** (vv. 13, 14, 15) – I.e., He will make it known to you...
    - 1. This is repeated by John and that is something that we should not miss.
      - a. The Holy Spirit does not act on his own accord. He operates as a member of the Trinity. And as such he has the same heart, will, and intention as the Father and Son. In fact, it is not that the Father, Son, and Spirit all happen to agree on heart, will, and intention, it is that they inseparably have the same heart, will, and intention.
      - b. This means that the holy Spirit will never ask you to do something that violates the Word of God or the will of God that is made clear in the Scriptures. Nor will the Holy Spirit ask you to do something that would not bring glory to Jesus.

<sup>12</sup> Colin G. Kruse, *John: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 4, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003), 325.

<sup>13</sup> Colin G. Kruse, *John: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 4, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003), 327.

<sup>14</sup> Colin G. Kruse, *John: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 4, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003), 327.

2. Underlining that the Counsellor does not act independently, Jesus said, *He will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it known to you*. Just as Jesus' purpose was to bring glory to the Father, so the Counsellor's role is to bring glory to Jesus. This he will do by taking what belongs to Jesus and making it known to his disciples. Jesus then explained, *All that belongs to the Father is mine*. In several other places it is made clear that all that belongs to the Father belongs to Jesus (3:35; 13:3; 17:7, 10). However, here the emphasis is upon the knowledge the Father has, for Jesus went on to say, *That is why I said the Spirit will take from what is mine and make it known to you*. The knowledge the Father has also belongs to Jesus (cf. 15:15), and the Counsellor will take that knowledge and make it known to the disciples. Once again, this is not an absolute statement, meaning everything God knows will be revealed to the disciples. It relates to the significance of the great saving events that were about to unfold in the death and resurrection of Jesus.<sup>15</sup>
- iv. **Glorify:** (v. 14) – He works to make sure that Jesus is seen correctly.
  1. Just as Jesus' purpose was to bring glory to the Father, so the Counsellor's role is to bring glory to Jesus. This he will do by taking what belongs to Jesus and making it known to his disciples.<sup>16</sup>
  2. We glorify God by participating in his righteousness and in right worship.
    - a. If the life of the Father is made available through the Son and imparted through the Spirit, am I living in a way that demonstrates that I am a new creation?
    - b. This is why we ask the question:
  3. **Life-defining Question: Is the Spirit flowing through me?**
    - a. **A disciple is...**
      - i. **Character: Dependent upon the Holy Spirit**
      - ii. **Competency: Actively trusting and obeying**
    - b. **Demonstrated by:**
      - i. I depend on the Holy Spirit, versus my own efforts, to make it through each day.
      - ii. I am joyful and at peace, despite my circumstances.
      - iii. I act and decide with wisdom, rather than impulsively and out of my own desires.
      - iv. All areas of my life are surrendered to the Lordship of Jesus Christ, to do with them as He chooses (friends, career, job, health, loved ones, entertainment, recreation, etc.).

<sup>15</sup> Colin G. Kruse, *John: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 4, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003), 327.

<sup>16</sup> Colin G. Kruse, *John: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 4, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003), 327.