

# “John 16:7-15 “Father, Son and....?”

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## **Christ Presbyterian Church**

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Good morning once again. If you are just joining us at the beginning of this new year, it's good for you to know that it's our normal practice, we'll be heading back into the book of Romans soon enough, that's our normal practice that when we gather, typically what we do is we open up a book of the Bible and we go systematically verse by verse through that book. Sometimes it takes us two, three, four months. But as we break between Advent and the beginning of a new year, we have some opportunities to preach one-off sermons. Hobie asked Jimmy to do that last week and for me today. And so it's exciting if you're a pastor to get that opportunity to be able to take a time and a season where you think about something that sometimes you don't often have the time and space to think about. And for me and in this entire year, it's been one about the Holy Spirit.

Don just prayed for us that we would be humble in our theology. And as a Presbyterian for almost three decades now, I can be the first to admit we're not always so humble about our theology. In fact, just for kicks and giggles this week, and you can do this as well if you want to, I typed into Google just the word Calvinism, just the word. You might be shocked to find there's a lot of people in the world that don't like Calvinists. Wasn't super flattering information on there. There was, of course, some of the basic theology, right? There's lots of talk about the sovereignty of God and that boogeyman predestination. But one thing that was absent again and again and again, as I read through it, there was almost no mention at any place at any time about the Holy Spirit. We have the unfortunate nickname sometimes of being the frozen chosen, and it's well earned. So I wanted to spend a little bit of time, can't do everything obviously in 30 minutes, but I do want to at least begin a conversation. One that will actually continue as we get into Sunday school this season. Myself and Brian Neal and Alan Foster will be teaching on the Trinity. And so if this piques your interest, we'll be spending a whole lot more time on it. So don't expect to have all your questions answered today, but I do at least want us to have an introduction to it.

And it's fitting. It's actually fitting because while we might say that Calvinists, by and large, are people who don't give proper time and attention all the time to the Spirit, that was not true of our movement's namesake, John Calvin. B.B. Warfield, he was at one time the principal of Princeton, back when Princeton was a solid evangelical reform school. And before his entire

faculty and students one year, at the opening of the semester, he reminded them of this. He says, above everything else, it is the sense of the sovereign working of salvation by the almighty power of the Holy Spirit, which characterizes all of John Calvin's thoughts on God. He goes on to say, and above everything else, he deserves, therefore, the great name of the theologian of the Holy Spirit. John Calvin, theologian of the Holy Spirit. Have you ever heard that before? John Calvin, theologian of the Holy Spirit. And it's true, if you look through his magnum opus, the institutions, you can't get page by page by page, much further than a paragraph, before you begin to bump in to the person and work of the Holy Spirit. It's throughout his entire theology.

So I think this is probably fair to say, of the three members of the Trinity, the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit, we struggle as a people, I struggle myself to focus any time and attention on the Holy Spirit, because let's be honest, it is the most elusive loop. It is the most, it is the least understood. It is the most mysterious. And so in the next 30 minutes or so, I'll not be able to give you everything you need to know about the Holy Spirit, but I do believe that it'll be a healthy start. And so we're going to look at a passage today. You can open with me, John chapter 16, verses 7 to 15. Just having celebrated Christ coming at the advent, we're now going to look at his departure. This is a conversation he's having with his disciples, just after his resurrection, prior to his ascension. And he comes to them to tell them that a gift is on its way. So read with me this morning.

*John 16 7-15. Nevertheless, I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the helper will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you. And when he comes, he will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment. Concerning sin because they do not believe in me. Concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father and you will see me no longer. Concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged. I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all truth, for he will not speak on his own authority. But whatever he hears, he will speak and he will declare to you the things that are to come. He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you. All that the Father has is mine. Therefore, I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you.*

This is the word of the Lord. Thanks be to God. Let's pray together.

*Father, we confess that as a people, we oftentimes just worship the Father or just worship the Son. And yet again and again throughout your word, you make it abundantly clear. Even as we read through the prophets today, Lord, that we are not to be a people who attempt to live apart from the great Holy Spirit. And so I pray for that Spirit to come to this very place today, Lord, that as it resides in me, that is the power that raised Jesus Christ from the dead, Lord, resides in us today, would you open our ears? Would you quicken our hearts, Lord? Would you enable us to have a personal encounter with the living God today? Would you bring life to these words, Lord? Would you protect the people that if anything I say today is false, Lord, that it would just fall away. But what is true, Lord, you say right here, you're going to send the helper who will guide us into all truth. Father, we pray that that would be true today, that your Spirit would come. He would be the one that would guide us into all truth. And that truth would remain, Father, not*

*theology for theology's sake, Lord, but living, active, breathing faith that has hands, that has feet, that moves out of this place as a people transformed, eager to share this good news with others, Lord, that ultimately we would be a people by the Spirit's work on us today through the preaching of your word, who would look more like Jesus than when we first walked in. You have your way with us today, Lord God, in Jesus' name, amen.*

It's pretty frequent that many of you will suggest to me or to Hobie, to Jimmy, any of the pastors here, a book, a podcast, an article. And we try to do our best to get through all of those and to interact with you. But one of you suggested a podcast to me a couple months ago called Heaven Bent. And it took a deep dive into something, I don't even know how to categorize it, but a revival of sorts, right? A period of church history that I lived through, it happened during my senior year, it was called the Toronto Blessing. Some of you may be familiar with that. And so I was living in New England, I was not that far from Toronto. I knew of it, but it was not in my denomination. It wasn't in my particular brand of evangelical faith at that time. And so it was sort of this distant memory and it was great. I took a better part of a month to listen slowly through this podcast. It was a person who had experienced some of what had happened there, just as by way to just try to figure out like what happened, what actually happened there. And more importantly, I think part of the podcast was trying to show the expanse, how this affected the church in our day and age. So if you know nothing about it, it really was. It was a revival that took place, a small little church at the end of a runway at the Toronto airport. And as you might imagine, things got kind of weird, okay? So this revival went on for most experts would say about six years. It crossed the pond, ended up affecting churches all around the world. And it began with just a simple sermon. There wasn't anything particularly unique about the speaker who was there that day, but for whatever reason, those that were there said that the spirit just fell and it began to manifest itself in unique ways. So there was laughing, just constant laughing that could not be stopped. There was weeping. There was people with uncontrollable shaking going on. There was people being laying in the spirit, like falling down, being laid down on the floor. And this went on and on and on. And people began to come from all around the world. In some ways, it became like a tourist attraction. People just needed to get to the blessing. They just needed to get to the blessing. But as it went on, things got particularly bizarre. And even the people who were part of it at that time would say, yeah, things got a little strange. You started to see people who would come and they would begin running around the building and they'd be barking, or people would be standing on chairs and they were roaring like lions. People began to bring in inflatable pools and do spontaneous baptisms for anybody who wanted one. It just got chaotic. And at its height, really near the end, one of the tipping points is that people began to say that God was supernaturally changing the teeth in their mouths into silver and gold spontaneously.

So let me share that story by way of saying, I get it. That why many times and in many ways, we are a little reluctant to just open up conversations about the spirit because there are many of you who have experienced abuse. You've been in places where the spirit was used as a manipulative tool. And perhaps because it is so mysterious, because it is so metaphysical, the spirit gets put forth with the authority on so many different things.

There is a reason why the old Pentecostal televangelist is such a stereotype. It's not for no reason that we have been burned many times as a culture by the person standing at the pulpit asking for your money and promising things that are never delivered and turning out to be a fraud or sexually immoral. It happens all the time. And so we have come to be suspicious of anybody who wants to put their platform forward as a person who's anointed and the work of the spirit, right, that this elusive spirit can go and it can do and it can touch and it sort of gives license to whatever we want to happen, my own personal agenda, to come to fruition, all I have to do is put God's stamp of approval on it by way of the spirit and you can't challenge it.

So I get it. I get our reluctance. But we can't allow those abuses to cause our own spiritual malnutrition. I can't possibly cover everything we need to know about the spirit, but I do think it's vitally important to at least start with the basics. Because our God is a Trinity, three persons.

To ignore a member of our divine God is to dismiss all of the benefits that Christ has promised to us as the people of God.

And I would say this, that in my own life, in the last year, what has drawn me more to an in-depth study of this spirit is my own spiritual dryness, right? And yes, it happens, even to pastors. There are times and seasons of our life in which, for whatever reason, your prayers seem like you're just banging up against a wall, that the experience of God's love is not as real and as vital as it is. We all go through seasons like that. It's time for our roots to go down deeper, but maybe that's you today.

Maybe you're saying, look, I've been traveling with God through this many years, this many decades even, and I don't know why this sin is lingering. I don't know why I can't push past this thing. I don't know why I am not nearly as sanctified as I want to be.

And so because of that, I want us to talk about the spirit, because I do believe that it can be, in many instances for us, something that we have ignored for so long, that we really are cutting off ourselves from the power of genuine transformation that God wants to bring to our life.

I mean, this is why, this is why for us it is a temptation all the time to remain in the lane of just head knowledge alone, right? That's safe, that's secure. And especially as Presbyterians, we put a lot of stock in it, that you would know your theology. And I think that is important, and it is true, and we will continue to preach it. But I also think there is a reason why Jesus says at the beginning of our passage, it is to your advantage that I go away. It is to your advantage that I go away. He says, because when I do, I'm going to leave you the Holy Spirit. We need to listen to that. We need to hear that. We need to take that seriously from Jesus, that in some way, shape, or form, His very presence with us is the resurrected Christ. It's better for Him, He says, to go away, because I'm going to send you the Spirit. We don't want to miss that.

When Jesus walked the earth, He could be in one place at one time, friends. And when the Spirit comes, God's presence is omnipresent. It is all places. It is all times. This means that in a very

paradoxical way, what Jesus is saying to us at the very beginning here is the only true way that Jesus can promise us that He will be with us always is for Him to leave us.

The only way for Him to fulfill His promise that I will be with you always is for Him to leave us. And it is by the Spirit that we then are invited to be joined together in the relationship with the Father, Son, and Spirit that they have known with each other for eternity.

So that's a lot, right? But in order for that to be any kind of good news for us, or it to be anything more than just theoretical mumbo jumbo, we need to get to know the Holy Spirit more. And so we're going to look at just three aspects. Again, this is all we can touch on today. There will be more. You will definitely end with questions. And Hobie said, just email him all the questions you have. So three aspects. We're going to look at His identity. Who He is. His mission. What is His role within redemptive history? And then His ministry. What difference does it make to us? What is His ministry to us today? So first, His identity, who He is. Then His mission and His ministry.

So first, His identity. Point number one.

Who is the Spirit? When we talk about the Holy Spirit, who are we talking about? We answered part of it today in the Heidelberg Catechism, but to press in a little bit deeper, we're going to take a look for just a few moments at the Nicene Creed, okay? We used this just a couple of weeks ago, right before Christmas. And I had mentioned even in that time that there was, believe it or not, a time in church history where there were no denominations. There wasn't any kind of division. There wasn't even Catholic and Eastern Orthodox. There was just one church way, way back in the beginning, okay? And so as early as 325 years after Jesus's death, this one church gathers together and they said, we've got to get some clarity, right? Because as the gospel has spread in these last few centuries, things have gotten a little bit wonky and there's heresies coming in, and people are preaching a gospel that's not the gospel, and they're not explaining the Trinity in the way that it should be explained. And so they got together at this great council, one church together and said, we're going to come up with a document that every person who is an actual Christian should be able to sign on to. And it is a document that even today, despite all the splits, all the things that have happened in church history, it is still the one document that Eastern Orthodox, Catholics and Protestants of every stripe, right? Whether you're Anglican, Lutheran, Methodist, Presbyterian, Baptist, you all sign onto this one Creed. So it's important, okay? It's important. I'm not here to reinvent the wheel. So we're going to go back and we're going to look at how has the Holy Spirit been defined from the very beginning. Okay, so first we say, and you don't have this in your bulletin, but just take it on my word, okay? This is what it says.

*I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God. Born of the Father before all ages.*

So we're going to focus on that word, begotten. The Son is begotten of the Father. Then a little bit later on in the Creed, we say,

*we believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and giver of life who proceeds from the Father and the Son,*

So we're trying again, understand. What is the relationship within this Trinity, okay? And again, I'm going to bring this all the way down, okay? But we do need to start here because we got to have the right idea about what we're even talking about here. Because if there's one thing that's true about the Trinity, you can get into heresy quicker than any other subject. If you want to talk about the Trinity, right? And so I'm trying to be very, very careful who I don't want to lead anybody astray. So those two words, the Son is begotten of the Father. The Spirit proceeds from the Father and Son, okay?

So that's kind of what we're wrestling with. What does that mean? What does that mean? And so it's super helpful, a little bit funny, if you go all the way back and you look at the writings of the leaders of the church of that day who were at this council, chief among them is St. Gregory the theologian, okay? If you go back in church history, one of the most leading figures of the time, they didn't have a Pope back then, but if they had one, he would have been it, right? And he says this when they were debating that. He says, you ask, what is the procession of the Holy Spirit? What does that even mean? He said, first tell me what is the unbegottenness of the Father and I will then explain to you the physiology of the generation of the Son and the procession of the Spirit. And we shall both of us be stricken with madness for prying into the mystery of God.

He's saying, listen, we don't know. We really don't. It is impossible for a finite human being to understand in any kind of rational, logical way to put together the pieces in such a way that you and I can stand at this and say, okay, we get it. We absolutely get the Trinity. The three in one, an eternal God, right, I got it. And here's the thing that we are living now, so many years ahead, there are so many cultures to this day and including the Eastern Church during this time to have no problem with that. No problem with paradox. No problem with mystery. In fact, revel in it to say, this is exactly what distinguishes God from us. We can't possibly understand him. But for us Westerners who are children of the enlightenment, we want clarity. That's what we want. We demand scientific evidence. We want to know with logical certainty. And St. Gregory says, well, then go ahead. Go ahead, keep going down that line and look as deep as you want and you'll be struck mad for prying into the mysteries of God. Fair enough.

So if we accept our limits of knowledge here, let's at least explore the relationship among the Trinity, which we actually do have a great bit of knowledge about because God tells us in his word. And again and again, this is what is revealed about the relationship between the Father, Son and the Spirit.

That the Father is the beginning of action, always, right? Creation of the world, creation of us, salvation, history, that Father is the beginning of action. Some say the fountain, he's the source, right?

And then the Son, the Son is the wisdom, the counsel, the arrangement of those actions. It is through the Son that God accomplishes those things.

And that the Spirit is the power. Some would say the efficacy. This is how it happens, right?

And so here's the analogy that theologians usually give us, right? That our minds figure out what we want to say. I know what I want to say. And then the words that come out of my mouth, right? Are the second part of it. But beyond all of that, I need breath in order to give volume to those words.

He's saying that that's similar to the way that we see the Trinity interacting with each other. And so we see it in creation that the Father desires to create, that he does so through his word and it's by the power of the Spirit who animates, brings life.

So all things are accomplished by the Father through the Son by the power of the Spirit.

That's in its simplest form. But more intimately than what they accomplish, I want us to think about how they relate to one another because this I think is one of the most important things for us to take away today.

From all eternity, the Father is pouring out his love for his Son. And the Son in return is pouring out his love for the Father. All eternity. And the way that theologians have described it is that the Spirit is the catalyst. It is the instigator of the love between them. So Michael Reeves says this;

*the Spirit stirs up the delight of the Father and the Son, and the delight of the Son and the Father, inflaming their love and so binding them together in the fellowship of the Holy Spirit.*

And again, at some point when you're talking about the Trinity, all metaphors, all analogies are going to break down. But here is the one that at least in part kind of captures this a little bit, right? We just prayed today for the birth of these beautiful new children. I have three kids of my own and I remember if any of you are parents as well, there is something unique that happens when you bring a baby into the world, right? I remember being in that hospital room with my wife and not only did I love my wife, not only did I love my son, but there was something unique about that son being born into the world that somehow, some way made my love for my wife even greater, right? There was something about that, right? Like my child being born, us creating together this child not only inflamed my love for that child, but also in some very profound way changed my relationship with my wife, right? That's something of what we're trying to get at that in the relationship of the Trinity that is all love, it is love overpowering and overflowing into the world that God has created.

And in lesser ways, we've all experienced that in part even in our normal relationships every single day. If you think about two of you, you and a friend, you and a peer that are watching a sunset, the sun is not you, you are not the sun, you are not your friend, but somehow the

experience together, the sun becomes a catalyst for a shared experience, right? And we wouldn't say that the sun is the same thing as me or I'm the same thing as the sun, but us together watching that sunset does something fundamentally different to our relationship and so it is in the Trinity.

And maybe that's even more confusing. I don't know, I'm not trying to do that to you today. That may sound like a bunch of dry, boring theology, right? But we're going to get to the end here about what difference that makes to our life and I do think that you'll begin to see just how unbelievable of a gift that is to us, God's people. So that's a bit of his identity, as murky as that is. I'm not willing to like tread on any ground further than that. That's what we know, that's what the scriptures declare, okay?

But let's move on to his mission. So with greater clarity now, we can say, why is the spirit at work today and in what way, right?

What role does the spirit have within redemptive history?

We have some idea of his role within the Trinity. What about his role within history? What's his mission? And Christ tells us explicitly in this passage, *he says, when the spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all truth, he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears, he will speak and he will declare to you the things that are to come.* And then in verse 14, Jesus says as bluntly as possible, *he will glorify me.*

That's what the spirit's job is. That's what the spirit does at all times, in all seasons. He glorifies the son constantly. And to glorify God, it is a holistic act for us as it is. It's not just honoring God with our words and giving him praise, but also in our actions, it's the very way that we live our lives constantly is an honoring to God and the spirit enables that. Not just in our theology, not just in our minds, but the spirit is in work even in our wills and in our very being that we might conform to the image of Christ and in so doing so, we glorify him. That's what the spirit longs to do. The spirit's great mission is to glorify Jesus. And this is the nature of the Trinity.

In the very next chapter of John, if we were to read on, Jesus prays to the father and says, Father, the hour has come, glorify your son that the son may glorify you. Lots of glorification going on in the Trinity. Everybody glorifying everybody, right?

The father glorifies his son as the savior of the world. In his submission on the cross, the son glorifies the father as the one whose plan it was to save his people.

The son glorifies the spirit when he tells us, as he did at the beginning of this, it's to your advantage. It's good that I'm leaving because the counselor's going to come. I'm going to send you the spirit.

And when the spirit comes, it glorifies the son who made a way to be reconciled to the father. The one who will lead us into all truth, Jesus says, which is Christ himself, the way, the truth and the life.

And so very practically then, how does the spirit do that?

And Jesus goes on, he tells us, when he comes, he will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment. That's the business of the spirit right now, to glorify Christ by convicting the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment. So in every respect, we'll break each one of these down, it is the spirit's work to glorify the son.

Concerning sin, Jesus says, because they do not believe in me. That through the spirit and only through the spirit, we would say, can anyone come to recognize their sin? It is not possible that that is the great work of the spirit to convict, to illuminate our hearts, to shed light where there is darkness, to expose us, right? And Jesus is saying, he's going to come. And the only way that you are going to know that you are a sinner is if the spirit is alive in your life. Otherwise, you will be a dead person walking around in the dark, totally unaware that you're sinning and the epitome of our sin, we are told in the scripture, is the refusal to recognize that Jesus Christ is Lord. That's our chief sin, that's our chief problem. In fact, that John later on in one of his letters, he says, the spirit of antichrist is those who say Jesus Christ is not Lord. That's the very spirit of antichrist. If Christ is King of Kings and Lord of Lords, it means quite simply, nothing and no one else is and the spirit comes and brings that news to my heart and to yours, you are not Jesus and you are desperately in need of his rescue.

He goes on, he says, not only concerning our sin, but concerning righteousness. He tells us what is righteousness. He gets to declare it to us, he gets to reveal it to us. He says, cause I go to the father and you'll see me no longer. What does that have to do with Jesus? And what he's telling us here is that through the spirit, we recognize Jesus's resurrection and ascension. It's the final vindication of the father of him. He says, I've accepted this sacrifice and I've accepted it precisely because Jesus is who he says he is because this is the final sacrifice. This is the perfect sacrifice. This is my son who was totally innocent, totally blameless and I accept his sacrifice and so Jesus says concerning righteousness cause I go to the father and you see me no more. You're going to see me resurrected and ascend to the right hand of the father and when that happens, the spirit will come and will help you understand Jesus is who he said he is. He really is the definition of righteousness, that he's the only one who is righteous. It's the crucified king and when he is resurrected and ascends to the right hand of the father, we now through faith by the spirit have his righteousness applied to our lives.

Finally, he says concerning judgment because the ruler of this world is judged. Finally, Christ's ministry on the cross reveals to the world that judgment is real. It's real. The judgment is also coming and we know that it's true because on the cross, Satan, the ruler of this world, Jesus says, did you catch that? He refers to him as the ruler of this world is finally judged once and for all. He is condemned, he is defeated and the spirit guides us into all truth and that truth is Jesus is the one who has done it. Jesus is the one who has secured our rescue and so it's through the

spirit that we worship Christ. It's through the spirit that we exalt Christ. It is through the spirit that we conform to the image of Christ. Cast aside anything that is not of Christ and so it is right and it is good for Christ to be at the center of our worship. That's one of the quotes in your reflection on the front of your bulletin this morning. It says,

*in churches where the teaching is utterly Christ-centered and Christ-honoring, we know that we are in the presence of the divinely given Holy Spirit of truth.*

And that's part of the secretive nature sometimes of the spirit who is always deflecting, always saying, not me, not me, not me, look at Christ. Look at Christ. So as much as people might want to say like, hey, listen, the Presbyterian church, man, all they do is talk about Jesus, right? They never talk about the spirit. The spirit himself would say, that's absolutely right. I'm here to glorify Jesus. That Jesus is the center, right? And yes, it is through the power of the spirit and we recognize the spirit's work in our life. But ultimately we are people who the Bible says are to conform to the image, not of the father, not of the spirit, but of Jesus Christ himself. That that is God's design. And so I'll ask you this.

If you want to know whether or not the spirit has taken up residence in your life, consider what you make of Jesus.

That's the key question, right? If you really want to understand like to what extent is the spirit at work in my life, consider what it is that you make of Jesus.

Finally, let's talk as practically as we can. What about his ministry? What does all of that mean for us today? So I'm going to ask you to do a homework assignment because I'm a teacher, I can't cover it all in one session. So write down and remember this. This week, your homework assignment, Romans chapter eight. We spent time in Romans chapter eight. We did it piece by piece. But with this idea of the spirit on your mind, I want you to go back and slowly and deliberately throughout the course of this week, I want you to read chapter eight of Romans. And I just simply want you to highlight every time Paul mentions the spirit. Because I can't possibly go through all of that right now. We can't talk about all of the ways that the spirit is interacting with us and all of the benefits and all of the blessings, but that'll at least begin to give you a snapshot of how pervasive the spirit's work is in the Christian life and how central it is to us conforming to Jesus's image. Let me just give it to you in a paragraph form.

Now, as we look at Romans eight, and this is friends, just one chapter of one book in the entire Bible, Paul tells us that in Christ, there's no condemnation because the law of *the spirit* of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death.

That we now walk not according to the flesh, but according to the spirit.

We have our minds set on the things of the spirit that we are not in the flesh, but in the spirit.

And if anyone does not have the spirit of Christ, he does not belong to him.

The very spirit who raised Christ from the dead now lives in us and gives life to our mortal bodies.

By the spirit, we put to death the deeds of the body. By him, we have become sons and can call God our Abba, father.

The spirit confirms this status in our hearts, assuring us of eternal inheritance.

Furthermore, as we wait for future glory, the spirit helps us in our weakness interceding for us.

One chapter, just one chapter. And if you can just wrap your minds around that and just continue to just sit in it, to think about maybe the places of spiritual dryness in your own life, that like the absence of an understanding of the spirit at work in your life and the true benefits that Christ gives us in the spirit and to what degree we've even begun to take advantage of those things. I could spend the next six months talking about all the ways that the spirit ministers to us. As one commentator put it,

there is not one dimension of the Christian life that is not enabled by the work of the spirit.

Quite simply, without the spirit, there is no spiritual life.

Without the spirit, there is no spiritual life. But I know that today you're not going to remember a running list, right? As preachers, we're glad when you remember one or two of our points. So I want to focus on what I consider to be the most essential ministry, that if we grasp it, the most essential ministry of the Holy Spirit, what this means for us today, that it can fundamentally change our relationship with God. So at the end of our verse today, Jesus says, all that the Father has is mine.

*All that the Father has is mine. Therefore I said that he, the Spirit, will take what is mine and declare it to you.*

All that the Father have is mine. And when the Spirit comes, he's going to take everything I have and declare it to you. Jesus takes our sin and gives us in its place, his perfection, right? You've heard that before.

Jesus is resurrected and we will be resurrected.

Jesus is God's beloved son. And in him, we become God's beloved son.

Jesus has triumphed over sin, death, and the devil, and in Christ, we have and we will too.

But do you know what else Jesus shares with us?

He is sharing with us at this very moment, the eternal relational joy of life within the Trinity.

What does that mean? I'm going to read a passage here. In the very next chapter of John, it's called the High Priestly Prayer. And this phrase, perhaps for me, has been one of the passages I've spent more time than any other passage of scripture because it just seems too good to be true.

Jesus says in John 17, he says, *my prayer is not for them alone*, meaning for his disciples that are standing with him as he's praying to the Father. He says, *I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, us, today. He says that all of them may be one. Father, just as you are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us.*

Now, friends, that sounds like some New Age woo-woo stuff, right? Father, as I am in you and you are in me, my prayer is that everybody who receives this gospel might also be in us. That that is Jesus' prayer for us. Not that just we believe the right things or not that he says that they would accept the gospel, not that they would live a certain way, but his ultimate prayer before the Father when he's talking to the Father is he says, my prayer is that all of them, disciples, this point forward will be in us, Father, that they will know the relationship and be a part of the relationship that I've had with you and you've had with me for all eternity. That's what he's praying.

And so everything that we've talked about up to this point is in order to prepare us to grasp the weight of what Jesus is saying. That this mysterious eternal divine relationship between the Father and the Son, this incredible unending love for one another bound together by the Holy Spirit is now being extended to us, to us. That when Jesus is getting ready to leave, this is why he says, it's to your advantage. It's to your advantage, friends, because I'm going to send the same spirit that has bound my Father and me together into your heart that you might join us in this eternal divine relationship.

Friend, I know that that sounds like just metaphysics, that might just sound like theology, but friends, that is the divine mystery that every single one of us needs to press into. That is some deep, incredible stuff. That is the kind of stuff where if you just feel like we're coming in here once a week on a Sunday to just hear a good sermon and go home and live my life, that you are living on this very casual plane, that God himself is saying, I have created you for so much more, for you to be caught up, that this is more than just mere religion, right?

That this isn't just some cultural act, that the God of the universe has come and is saying that the very relationship I have had with the Son for all of eternity, I am wrapping you up into that, and you are going to experience it, and that you can right now, that you can right now.

And that we are caught up every single day in the minutia of our lives, worrying about things like money and relationships and our kids, and God has said, I have offered to you an opportunity to have the same kind of relationship with me as Jesus Christ himself has had for all of eternity, higher up, deeper in.

So friends, I said this all throughout the time that we were talking about evangelism in Sunday school class, our forgiveness, our salvation is a means to an end. I say that unapologetically, it is a means to an end. What God desired at the very beginning of creation was an eternal relationship with us, to be with his people, to be united to him. And that was what was destroyed. We rejected, we rebelled, and then Christ comes, and he comes on this divine rescue mission. Yes, to save us. Yes, to cover our sins. Yes, to make a way for ultimately for us to be reconciled again to the Father. And friends, if you get that, then you will understand why it's such a big deal that when Paul tells us the book of Romans, that when the Spirit comes, you and I are finally going to be able to say it again, Abba, Father.

That's God's design for his people.

That a people that were created by the Father for relationship with him for all eternity, broke that off, ran away from him. And when the Spirit comes because of the work of Christ, we are finally reconciled with our dad, that we can finally go home. That's the deepest longing of our heart. And Christ says, that's what the Spirit makes possible. That it's a stamp of approval, that he is the guarantee, that the Father who loved you and made you is radically, radically for you and that he's coming back for you. And you will join him and me for all of eternity together. That in the Spirit, we now have access to the same relationship with God the Father, that Christ is known for eternity.

I pray that is not dry and meaningless and boring theology, honestly. I pray that it's much more like a paradigm shift that lifts up our heads. So we're not walking around in a dry list life of merely thinking the right theological thoughts or justifying everything in my life as the next opportunity to secure my own happiness and fulfillment in this life alone.

You are created by God to know God, experience God, live in communion with God, be wrapped up in the eternal cosmic relationship of the Father and the Son and the Spirit and you. You are not alone. You are not an orphan. You are not powerless. You are not a shame-riddled failure.

Friends, this Spirit, the great Paraclete, the comforter, the advocate, our fearless advocate who Jesus says will lead us into all truth, the truth about God, the truth about yourself, the truth about the past, the present, the future.

What does that look like?

What are we hoping for even as we say those words?

Thousands of examples, hundreds even in this room of what it looks like when the power of the Spirit finally comes upon you, but I'll just tell one story to end us today. A man named Blaise Pascal, some of you know him. French mathematician, an actual genius born in the 1600s who for 30 years of his life and counting was running from God, hated God, was an absolute atheist. And then one November night in 1654, he was confronted by the Holy Spirit and an experience that still to this day is referred to as his night of fire. After he died, it was discovered that he had

sewn a sheet of paper inside the pocket of one of his favorite jackets so that he would never forget this night. And the note read in part, *year of grace 1654, from about half past 10 at night until half past midnight, fire, God of Abraham, God of Isaac, God of Jacob, not of the philosophers and the learned, certitude, certitude, feeling, joy, peace, God of Jesus Christ, my God and your God, your God will be my God, forgetfulness of the world and everything except God. This is eternal life that they know you, the one true God and the one that you sent, Jesus Christ, Jesus Christ, Jesus Christ. I left him, I fled him, renounced, crucified. Let me never be separated from him. Complete submission to Jesus Christ, my director.*

Friends, the same spirit that raised Jesus Christ from the dead is a promised gift for those who fall at the feet of Jesus Christ and surrender to him. Surrender to the truth of who he is and what he has said that he has accomplished, what he said, what he has accomplished. It is a gift too precious to ignore, friends. We worship a God who is a Trinity. Let us worship him rightly in the name of the Father, and the Son and the Holy Spirit, amen.

*Gracious Father, these truths push us right to the end of our very abilities as a finite human being to understand even part of what it means to worship a God so great, so glorious, Father, that if there'd be one truth that you would settle into our hearts, Lord, it is this undeniable invitation that you are calling us by the power of the Spirit to be united to the Son and the Father in a whole new radical way, Lord, that Jesus prayed, Father, that they might know the kind of fellowship I have with you. Father, for so many of us here, including myself, Lord, we pray, we long for that. We long for that, Father. Even through the experience of meeting you at this table today, might we begin to get a glimpse of what it means that we are no longer slaves, that we're your sons, we are your daughters. The Spirit inside of us enables us now to cry out without fear, without shame, but in absolute delight, Abba, Father, we pray in your name, amen.*