

LESSON 11 *March 6-12

The Spirit “Replaces” Jesus



SABBATH AFTERNOON

Read for This Week’s Study: *John 13:31–16:33.*

Memory Text: “‘But I tell you the truth: It is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you’” (*John 16:7, NIV*).

Key Thought: Life without a sense of Jesus’ presence is empty. When He left earth, Jesus sent the Holy Spirit to fill the place that He had held in the lives of His disciples. As hard as it was for His disciples to grasp, this arrangement was better for them than His physical presence had been.

The Spirit was sent to continue and enhance Jesus’ work on earth. After the foot washing, the shadow of the Cross began to hang over the room where Jesus and His disciples were reclining. Christ’s last moments with them had come. They began to realize that Jesus was about to leave them. In John 13 to 16 Jesus delivers a farewell speech to His disciples in which He teaches them how to live without His physical presence, just as the second generation of Christians would have to live without the physical presence of the disciples.

How important for us, many generations removed from the time of Christ, to realize that the physical absence of Jesus is no handicap to us or to our walk with Him. We can be all He wants us to be, here and now, even while He is not among us as He was among the disciples. Through the presence of the Holy Spirit, Jesus’ word is still as good as His touch.

**Study this week’s lesson to prepare for Sabbath, March 13.*

SUNDAY March 7

Going Away (*John 13:31–14:31*).

Jesus waited until the departure of Judas (*John 13:28-30*) to begin His farewell speech to His disciples. What followed was spoken for their encouragement—and ours.

What problems are Jesus and His disciples facing at this time? *John 13:33, 36.*

What impact does Jesus sense this would have on His disciples? *John 14:18.*

Jesus is going away, and the disciples are feeling abandoned. How can they possibly continue without Him? But Jesus makes it clear that His going away to the Father will benefit them.

What is one way in which the disciples are better off when Jesus goes to the Father? *See John 14:12-14.* **What is Jesus saying here?**

A key to understanding how the departure of Jesus would benefit the disciples is found in the statement that the disciples would do greater works than Jesus did (*John 14:12*). At first glance this statement seems preposterous. How could anyone do greater works than Jesus did? Yet, the earthly Jesus was subject to human limitations. He could be only in one place at a time. When He was with the disciples, the Father could be seen only in His person (*vs. 9*). But when He went to the Father, those specific limitations were left behind. Through the Spirit (*vss. 16, 17*), His disciples could represent the character of God throughout the world.

Because Jesus went to the Father and sent the Spirit, millions of disciples have extended Jesus' work. And through the works and the writings of the disciples, Jesus has become real to millions around the globe. In a sense, the disciples of Jesus took His place in the world. The words and actions of believers may be the only picture of Jesus some people will ever see.

Think of those with whom you have been in personal contact in the past 24 hours. Was your influence on them such that they would have been more interested in knowing the God whom you profess to serve, or would you have turned them off? Be honest with yourself.

TEACHERS COMMENTS

Key Text: *John 16:7*

Teachers Aims:

1. To realize that, even though He is not physically here, Jesus is no less present in the world today; He may, in fact, be more so.
2. To appreciate the nature of the Holy Spirit in relation to Jesus.
3. To grasp how the Holy Spirit performs His function in the world.

Lesson Outline:

I. In His Presence (*John 15:26, 27*).

- A. In His final words to His disciples, Jesus taught them how to live in His physical absence.
- B. Jesus, as a human being, was limited in ways the Holy Spirit is not.
- C. In the absence of Jesus the Man, the disciples and succeeding generations became His representatives.

II. Another Counselor (*John 16:13*).

- A. The Holy Spirit is intimately connected to Jesus but is not Jesus.
- B. The Holy Spirit is a Person.
- C. The Holy Spirit is primarily defined by His interaction with other beings, such as Jesus or believers.

III. The Paraclete (*John 16:7*).

- A. The Holy Spirit comforts believers with the continued promise of Jesus' presence.
- B. The Holy Spirit brings people to correct knowledge of Jesus' person and message.
- C. The Holy Spirit gives the church the means to spread the message of Jesus.

Summary: The Holy Spirit is not merely a force or a catalyst for mysterious supernatural phenomena. The Holy Spirit, like the Father and the Son, is God. He exists for the purpose of comforting believers and aiding the church in spreading the good news.

COMMENTARY.

Because the disciples were worried that Jesus would be leaving them, they were anxious for the future. So He assures them that He is returning to the Father (*John 16:6, 22*) and that He will return to take them home (*John 14:3, 16:22*). What will happen in the meantime? Jesus' answer in John 14–16 presents the Christian life in four parts: (1) its core, (2) its inheritance, (3) its perils, and (4) its empowerment.

I. The Christian Life: Its Core.

The parable in John 15:1-8 provides the central dynamic of the Christian life. By accepting Christ as their Savior, Christians link

MONDAY *March 8*

Remaining Connected to Jesus (*John 15:1–16:33*).

In John 15:1-8, Jesus gives the beautiful analogy of the vine and the branches. How does one “remain in the vine”? *John 15:6, 7, 9, 10.*

The relationship of Jesus with the Father is the model for the disciples’ relationship with Jesus. Jesus loves the disciples the way the Father loves Him (*John 15:9*). On the other hand, the disciples are to obey His commands just as He obeys the commands of His Father (*vs. 10*).

How are the disciples to cope with the loss of Jesus’ personal presence? *John 15:26, 27; 16:7.*

The relationship of Jesus with the world is paralleled in the relationship of the disciples with unbelievers (*John 15:18*). The world’s hatred of the disciples is rooted in its hatred of Jesus (*vss. 22-25*). The values of the world are often the opposite of God’s values; at times, they are in direct conflict. Thus, the disciples need to be ready to face the hostility of the world.

For the disciples, the negative experience of hatred and persecution (*vss. 18-25, 16:1-4*) is counterbalanced by the benefits that will come because Jesus has gone to the Father and has sent His Spirit (*John 15:26, 27; 16:7-15*).

Why was it better that Jesus was going away? (1) He would send the Holy Spirit, who would not be subject to human limitations. (2) Through the efforts of the disciples, the work of Jesus would be spread throughout the world and would impact every people and place. (3) The love they would have through the Spirit (*John 15:12-15*) would have convincing power in the world (*John 13:34, 35*). (4) Coping with the absence of Jesus would enable the disciples to provide a solid foundation for those who followed their generation (*John 15:1-8*).

Read John 14:21, 23 and 15:10-14. What link does the Lord show between love and the commandments? In your own experience, how have you seen the inseparable link between love and the commandments? How are these linked with “remaining in the vine”?

TEACHERS COMMENTS

themselves with the Father and the Son. The Father is the husbandman, Christ is the vine, and the Christian is the branch. The sap of God's grace and love flows into the Christian as long as she or he is attached to the vine. "Abide in me, and I in you. . . . He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit" (*vss. 4, 5*). When that abiding is continuous, the Christian receives a promise in addition to bearing fruit: "'My [Christ's] Father will love him [the Christian], and we will come to him and make our home with him'" (*John 14:23, NIV*). (*Compare Rev. 21:3.*)

II. The Christian Life: Its Inheritance.

Meanwhile, Jesus gives His disciples a rich legacy. This includes Christian imperatives that have impacted the course of human history and have assured victory in the great controversy. Some examples of that inheritance are: the new commandment of love (*John 13:34*); a home in heavenly mansions (*John 14:2*); Jesus as "the way, the truth, and the life" (*vs. 6*) so we can walk without stumbling, know without doubt, and live without fear; the ability to expect great things from God and to do great things for Him (*vs. 12*); the assurance of answered prayer (*vss. 13, 14; 16:23, 24*); the empowering of the Holy Spirit (*John 14:16, 17*); peace, love, and enduring joy (*vs. 27; 15:9-11; 16:33*); divine friendship (*John 15:14*); and victory over the world (*John 16:33*).

III. The Christian Life: Its Perils.

The Christian life is not without peril, but we are assured that Jesus has obtained victory (*vs. 33*) and that by abiding in Him, we can claim that victory to be our own. The "prince of this world" will come with his weapons (*John 14:30*), but he cannot really hurt Christ's friends (*John 15:14*). Discipleship will call sin by its right name and command the evil one to flee.

Perils to faith also may come in the form of hatred and persecution (*John 15:18-21; 16:1-4, 33*). But Christian courage will turn hostility into an opportunity for partaking in Christ's suffering (*2 Tim. 1:8*). "Of all the gifts that heaven can bestow upon men, fellowship with Christ in His sufferings is the most weighty trust and the highest honor."—Ellen G. White, *The Ministry of Healing*, p. 478.

IV. The Christian Life: Its Empowerment.

The most wonderful promise in the New Testament is that of the Holy Spirit. "I will not leave you comfortless," says the Savior (*John 14:18*). "I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever—the Spirit of truth" (*vss. 16, 17, NIV*).

The word *counselor* translates the Greek "paraclete," which also can be rendered as "someone called to help, to plead," such as an advocate in a court of law. In John 14–16, six passages speak of the Paraclete and identify His work as related to what Christ did. The

TUESDAY *March 9*

Seeds of the Spirit (*John 1:32, 33; 3:5-8; 4:23, 24; 6:63; 7:37-39*).

There are eleven passages in the Gospel of John that refer either directly or indirectly to the nature and work of the Holy Spirit. Five of these passages are located in the narrative section of the first half of the book. These passages mention the Spirit only in passing. It is as though John were using these passages to plant seeds in the reader's mind that would sprout only in the fertile soil of Jesus' farewell speech (*John 13-16*).

What can we learn about the work of the Spirit from **John 1:32, 33; 3:5-8; 4:23, 24; and 7:37-39?**

Although the Spirit makes several appearances in the first half of this Gospel, there is little information about Him. The Spirit makes it possible for the Baptist to identify Jesus at the Jordan (*John 1:32, 33*). He is an essential part of human participation in the kingdom of God (*John 3:5, 6*). Although His work cannot be controlled by human beings, His effect on people can be seen (*vs. 8*). Worship is no longer tied down to specific locations or temples, nor is it limited to any particular people (*John 4:23, 24*). He is available in every place and to anyone of any background through the words of Jesus (*John 6:63*).

The exact nature of the Spirit's work would become manifest only in the context of the Cross (*John 7:39*). So, *John 7:37-39* is a transitional passage, preparing the reader for the clearer, more-detailed information about the Spirit's work that comes in the farewell discourse of *John 13-16*. *John 20:22* ("And . . . he breathed on them and said, 'Receive the Holy Spirit'" [*NIV*]) shows that the promise of *John 7:39* in fact began to be fulfilled right after Jesus' "glorification" on the cross.

In *John 14-16*, the title given to the Spirit is a Greek noun that can be translated as "Comforter" or "Counselor." The root meaning of *paraclete* is a person who is called alongside to help someone. So the word can be used in the legal sense of a defense attorney at a trial who appeals in behalf of another or as one who comes to comfort someone who is overwhelmed with grief at a time of loss. Both meanings fit well into the context of *John 14-16*.

TEACHERS COMMENTS

Counselor is given in order that Jesus may abide with us forever (*vs. 16*). As the Spirit of truth, the Paraclete dwells in us, empowering us to do God's will (*vs. 17*). The second passage (*vss. 25, 26*) provides us the assurance that the Spirit will teach us all things, and will enable us to reflect on Jesus' teachings. The third saying (*John 15:26, 27*) presents the Spirit of truth as the One who testifies to the

Inductive Bible Study

Texts for Discovery: *Matthew 5:11, 12; John 14:7, 25-28; 1 Corinthians 12:3; Revelation 19:10*

- ① Many Christian groups and denominations today attribute a variety of spectacular activities to the Holy Spirit. According to the New Testament, however, what is the true mission of this entity?
- ② Are all activities of the Holy Spirit conspicuously supernatural or miraculous? Explain. How might He manifest Himself in everyday reality? Is it always possible for us to identify the influence of the Holy Spirit? Explain.
- ③ Does the interdependent relationship among the Members of the Godhead parallel the relationship that should exist among members of the church? If so, how will such a relationship work on the church level?
- ④ Jesus implies that being hated and misunderstood is a likely result of following Him. What is the attitude we should take toward this, and why? Also, why might it be possible to see hatred and persecution where none exists?
- ⑤ Some believe that Jesus became the Holy Spirit after His death. This theory is called modalism. How can we prove by the Bible that modalism is not true?
- ⑥ In John 15:1-17, we find one of the Bible's greatest metaphors. List and discuss ways in which Jesus is like a vine. Also, list and discuss ways in which our relationship with Christ is like the relationship of the branch to a vine.
- ⑦ What fruit do we bear when we remain connected to the True Vine? *John 15:7, 11, 12; Galatians 5:22-24; 2 Peter 1:5-8*. Discuss specific examples of how we see this fruit growing in the Christian community today. Which fruit might need a bit more cultivating?

WEDNESDAY *March 10*

Just Like Jesus *(John 14:16, 17, 26, 27).*

Read carefully John 14:15-21, focusing specifically on verses 15 and 21. What are they saying? How do they relate the Spirit to the commandments? Why would these two truths be so closely connected? What does one have to do with the other?

Jesus calls the Holy Spirit “ ‘another Counselor’ ” (*John 14:16, NIV*). This means the Holy Spirit is not the only Counselor (or Comforter); He is another Counselor. The original language emphasizes the similarity between Jesus and the Spirit. The Spirit is another Counselor just as Jesus is. Jesus is also the Counselor.

The disciples are feeling depressed. Jesus has said that He is going away, and they are distressed (*John 13:33, 36; 14:2-5*). So, Jesus assures them they will not be left as “orphans” (*John 14:18, NIV*). Through the Spirit, He will continue to be with them. The Spirit will do for them the same things Jesus did when He was physically on earth. The ultimate targets of this message, of course, are those who have come after, those who have come to believe through the words of the written Gospels, not through physical contact with Jesus or with anyone who knew Jesus in the flesh.

“Cumbered with humanity, Christ could not be in every place personally. Therefore it was for their interest that He should go to the Father, and send the Spirit to be His successor on earth. No one could then have any advantage because of his location or his personal contact with Christ. By the Spirit the Saviour would be accessible to all. In this sense He would be nearer to them than if He had not ascended on high.”—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 669.

Jesus also calls the Holy Spirit the “Spirit of truth” (*John 14:17*). The person and work of the Spirit are authentic and real; they can be trusted. The Spirit will not guide us contrary to the truth about Jesus nor about ourselves. Truth can be painful to hear but is necessary to spiritual growth. Only those who are committed to truth, as manifested in obedience to the truth they already know, will receive the Spirit (*vss. 15, 16, 21*). And how can we understand obedience apart from the commandments?

Look again at John 14:21. Jesus says that those who keep His commandments are those who love Him and that to these He will manifest Himself. How have you experienced this manifestation of Christ in your own life?

TEACHERS COMMENTS

authenticity of the Person and mission of Christ. “Sin could be resisted and overcome only through the mighty agency of the Third Person of the Godhead, who would come with no modified energy, but in the fullness of divine power. It is the Spirit that makes effectual what has been wrought out by the world’s Redeemer. It is by the Spirit that the heart is made pure. Through the Spirit the believer becomes a partaker of the divine nature.”—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 671.

John 16:5-15 also speaks of the Spirit’s function as convicting the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment, within the context of Christ’s revelation. Only the Holy Spirit can accomplish such a mission on a global scale. Hence, Jesus told the disciples, “ ‘It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you’ ” (*John 16:7, 8*).

John 14–16 presents a mosaic of redemptive mission, with the entire Godhead; one in thought, action, and purpose (*vs. 13*). Contradiction is absent in divine function. Hence, how careful we ought to be if someone speaks in the name of the Spirit contrary to what is in God’s Word.

Witnessing

Distance learning has become a prominent tool for continuing education. Many people throughout the world obtain degrees by using this tool. Such educational programs allow teachers and students to interact with each other through computers, television broadcasts, satellites, videos, telephones, and email. Thus, limited academic resources can reach larger numbers of students.

While on earth, Christ’s human nature limited His ability to reach people. Before returning to heaven, Jesus said to His disciples, “ ‘As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you’ ” (*John 20:21*). Then “he breathed on them” saying, “ ‘Receive ye the Holy Ghost’ ” (*John 20:22*). Just as He breathed physical life into Adam, the Lord gave spiritual life to His disciples. He gave them power to receive His Spirit, enabling them to reach more people than He could through His physical nature.

The Bible compares the Spirit of God to the wind. We cannot see the wind, but we can see its effects. The wind also can be felt all over the world. In Acts 2:3, the Holy Spirit is represented by tongues of fire. In the same way that fire spreads rapidly, the gospel spreads rapidly by word of mouth (tongues) and other means of communication. The Lord says to His disciples today, “ ‘As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you’ ” (*John 20:21*). We can open our hearts to receive the Holy Spirit, so that we, too, can have the power to win souls to Christ.

THURSDAY *March 11*

The Ultimate Guide *(John 15:26, 27; 16:7-15).*

What task of the Spirit is recorded in John 15:26?

In what three areas does the Holy Spirit bring conviction? *John 16:8-11.* **What two features of the Spirit's work are highlighted in John 16:13? Also, how do the commandments, as seen in the text for yesterday, fit in here? How are they all related?**

Jesus does not need the Holy Spirit to glorify Him in His person; the Father did that when He exalted Jesus to His right hand at the Ascension. The role of the Spirit is rather to exalt and glorify Jesus in the estimation of humanity here on earth. There are no revelations from the Spirit except those that exalt and glorify Jesus. As valuable as the work of the Spirit is, therefore, attention to the Spirit is not healthful if it directs our attention away from Jesus.

The Spirit is Christ's Successor and Representative with the disciples and to the world. It is in this sense that the Holy Spirit can be said to "replace" Jesus. The Spirit extends the presence of Jesus to the new generation that never knew His physical touch. The instruction that Jesus no longer could give in the flesh, the Spirit would do everywhere in His behalf. The witness that He would no longer bear, the Spirit would bear in His behalf. Through the Spirit, Jesus would continue to be glorified.

On the other hand, as Jesus brought judgment and conviction to all who were exposed to His light, so the Holy Spirit has a ministry also to the world, to bring conviction of sin, the offer of righteousness, and a warning of judgment to come. The world rejected Jesus and still does so today. But in spite of the world's continued rejection, the Spirit continues to convict, and people hear Jesus' voice through the voice of the Spirit.

Above all else, therefore, it is through the Spirit that the presence of Jesus is made real in our lives, even though we cannot see Him or touch Him. Although others may not share our experience, the Spirit changes the lives of those who enter into relationship with Jesus and yield themselves to the guidance and comfort of the Holy Spirit.

If someone were to ask you how the Holy Spirit has touched your life, what would you answer? What does your answer say to you about the state of your walk with the Lord? What changes might you need to make?

TEACHERS COMMENTS

Life-Application Approach

Icebreaker: “The word that John uses of the work of the Spirit is the word *elegchein*, translated convince by the Revised Standard Version. The trouble is that no one word can translate it adequately. It is used for the cross-examination of a witness, or a man on trial, or an opponent in an argument. . . . It is, for instance, sometimes used by the Greeks for the action of conscience on a man’s mind and heart. Clearly such cross-examination can do two things—it can convict a man of the crime he has committed or the wrong that he has done; or it can convince a man of the weakness of his own case and the strength of the case which he has opposed.”—William Barclay, *The Daily Study Bible: John 2*, p. 192.

Thought Questions:

- 1 Part of the Holy Spirit’s job description is both to convict and convince. What does the Holy Spirit convict us of? What does He convince us of? How did the Holy Spirit replace the presence of Jesus in the lives of the disciples? Is it the same or is it different for us today? Explain.
- 2 Compare Judas and Peter. Both betrayed the Master. The difference in the betrayals lies in the deliberate nature by which one betrayal was committed. Compare and contrast the heart of Judas with that of Peter. How was the response of each man to the Holy Spirit connected to his feelings for Jesus?

Application Questions:

- 1 Spiritual awareness is not always a lightning bolt that strikes us full of comprehension and understanding; it is usually a progressive process. Complete understanding comes with time. In your spiritual life, what are the barriers to the progressive understanding that the Holy Spirit brings to you? What are the elements that aid this process?
- 2 Jesus’ analogy of the vine and the branches draws our attention to two types of branches—one that bears fruit and one that does not. Compare Peter and Judas to the vine and the branches. Next, compare the vine to the church. What types of pruning need to be done to preserve the life of the church? What is the role of the Holy Spirit in pruning?

FRIDAY *March 12*

Further Study: “As the works of God are studied, the Holy Spirit flashes conviction into the mind. It is not the conviction that logical reasoning produces; but unless the mind has become too dark to know God, the eye too dim to see Him, the ear too dull to hear His voice, a deeper meaning is grasped, and the sublime, spiritual truths of the written word are impressed on the heart.”—Ellen G. White, *Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 24.

“It is one thing to assent in a general way to the agency of the Holy Spirit, and another thing to accept His work as a reprover calling to repentance. Many feel a sense of estrangement from God, a realization of their bondage to self and sin; they make efforts for reform; but they do not crucify self. They do not give themselves entirely into the hands of Christ, seeking for divine power to do His will. They are not willing to be molded after the divine similitude. In a general way they acknowledge their imperfections, but they do not give up their particular sins. With each wrong act the old selfish nature is gaining strength.”—Page 48.

Discussion Questions:

① When Jesus said “‘I will do whatever you ask in my name’ ” (*John 14:13, NIV*), how do you think He defined “whatever”? How would you interpret *John 15:7* in this regard?

② What happens to Christians when they lose a major spiritual leader or mentor? What can one do to find new sources of spiritual strength? How much weight should we put upon anyone, no matter how much of a spiritual encouragement he or she has been?

Summary: In *John 13* to *16* Jesus taught His disciples how to live without His physical presence, just as the second generation of Christians would have to live without the physical presence of the disciples. As followers of Jesus manifest their desire for the truth through prayerful obedience to Jesus’ commands, the Spirit of truth comes to them. That Spirit reminds us of Jesus’ words and teachings (*John 14:26*), guides us into all truth, tells us what we need to know about the future (*John 16:13*), and glorifies Jesus on this earth (*vss. 15*). But to those who have rejected or ignored Jesus’ commands, the Spirit brings conviction of sin, righteousness, and judgment (*vss. 8-11*).