

John 14:15-17

- Christ with us, the Spirit of Truth -

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Introduction

- ❖ It is amazing! Jesus promised the Spirit to his disciples to be with them forever, and with the church. God communicates himself to us, he will remain with his believers and will even be in them.
- ❖ To make them children of God and to create a new community, the community of God.
- ❖ To give faith and life.
- ❖ And because God has a case in the trial of truth with this world, the Spirit is called the Spirit of Truth.
 - This is of particular importance due to all claims of truth in this world, and the denial of truth.

- ❖ The context, form and structure, theological, technical and hermeneutical notes given in this sermon outline overlap with other sermon outlines taken from the Gospel of John. This makes it possible to use this sermon outline as a “stand-alone”. You can also fit this outline into a series of sermons.

Context

- ❖ An overview of John 13-20:

John 13:1-30	The Last Supper
John 13:31-14:31	Final discourse – part I

John 15:1-16:33	Final discourse – part II
John 17:1-26	The “Last Prayer” of Jesus
John 18:1-19:42	The arrest, trial, crucifixion, and death of Jesus
John 20:1-29	The resurrection of Jesus and the first appearances

- ❖ John 14:15-17 is part of John 13:31-14:31, the Final Discourse – part I. Part II is especially necessary for the understanding of the “work of the Spirit.”
 - Part I is a dialogue. See below.
 - Part II is a monologue.
- ❖ A detailed outline of John 13:31-14:31:

	When he (Judas Iscariot) was gone,
Jesus said,	<p>“Now is the Son of Man glorified and God is glorified in him. If God is glorified in him, God will glorify the Son in himself, and will glorify him at once.”</p> <p>“My children, I will be with you only a little longer. You will look for me, and just as I told the Jews, so I tell you now: Where I am going, you cannot come.”</p> <p>“A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”</p>
Main topic: “I am going”	
Simon Peter asked him,	“Lord, where are you going?”
Jesus replied,	“Where I am going, you cannot follow now, but you will follow later.”
Peter asked,	“Lord, why can’t I follow you now? I will lay down my life for you.”
Then Jesus answered,	<p>“Will you really lay down your life for me? I tell you the truth, before the rooster crows, you will disown me three times!”</p> <p>“Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me. In my Father’s house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. You know the way to the place where I am going.”</p>
Thomas said to him,	“Lord, we don’t know where you are going, so how can we know the way?”

Jesus answered,	<p>"I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you really knew me, you would know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him."</p>
<p>Main theme: "Show us the Father" / "Show us yourself" – communion with God</p>	
Philip said,	<p>"Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us."</p>
Jesus answered:	<p>"Don't you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'? Don't you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? The words I say to you are not just my own. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work."</p> <p>"Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; or at least believe on the evidence of the miracles themselves. I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father. And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Son may bring glory to the Father. You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it."</p> <p>"If you love me, you will obey what I command. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever— the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you."</p> <p>"I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. Before long, the world will not see me anymore, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live. On that day you will realize that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you. Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves me. He who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love him and show myself to him."</p>
Then Judas (not Judas Iscariot) said,	<p>"But, Lord, why do you intend to show yourself to us and not to the world?"</p>
Jesus replied,	<p>"If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. He who does not love me will not obey my teaching. These words you hear are not my own; they belong to the Father who sent me."</p> <p>"All this I have spoken while still with you. But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you."</p> <p>"Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world</p>

	gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.” “You heard me say, ‘I am going away and I am coming back to you.’ If you loved me, you would be glad that I am going to the Father, for the Father is greater than I. I have told you now before it happens, so that when it does happen you will believe. I will not speak with you much longer, for the prince of this world is coming. He has no hold on me, but the world must learn that I love the Father and that I do exactly what my Father has commanded me.”
	“Come now; let us leave.”

Form and structure

❖ John 14:15-17

The future perspective of the disciples: (vs 15)	“If you love me, you will obey what I command.	
The promise of Christ: (vs 16)	And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever —the Spirit of truth.	
The difference between the world and the disciples: (vs 17)	The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him.	But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you.”

Technical notes and theological background

❖ The following words in this passage need attention:

- Love = “ἀγαπάω”: **1. to have a warm regard for and interest in another, cherish, have affection for, love.**¹
 - The verb “to love” is used 37 times in this gospel and the substantive “love” 7 times. These words are also very prominent in the Letters of John: the substantive “love” is used 21 times and the verb “to love” 31 times.
- Obey = “τηρέω”: **3. to persist in obedience, keep, observe, fulfill, pay attention to, especially of law and teaching**²

¹ Arndt, W., Danker, F. W., & Bauer, W. (2000, p.5).

² Arndt, W., Danker, F. W., & Bauer, W. (2000, p. 1002).

- Command = “**ἐντολή**”: 2. a mandate or ordinance, *command*.³ The commands of God to Jesus and the commands of Jesus to his disciples do not (primarily) refer to the commandments of the Old Testament, but to the sending of Jesus the Son into this world:⁴
 - “For I did not speak of my own accord, but the Father who sent me commanded me what to say and how to say it. I know that **his command leads to eternal life**. So whatever I say is just what the Father has told me to say” (Jn 12:49–50).
- Truth = “**ἀλήθεια**”: 1. **the quality of being in accord with what is true, truthfulness, dependability, uprightness** in thought and deed; 2. **the content of what is true, truth**.⁵
 - Truth is an important theme in the Gospel John:

“For the law was given through Moses; **grace and truth** came through Jesus Christ.” (Jn 1:17) This is not meant to contrast Moses and Jesus, but to supplement Moses (Ex 34.6).

Contrary to the Greek background, the truth is personally embodied in Christ Jesus, not merely intellectual. Truth is acquired through the revelation of God, not through mental exercise, nor by philosophizing, nor by personal experiences:

Jesus said: “**I am the way and the truth and the life**. No one comes to the Father except through me.” (Jn 14:6) In this famous saying, the words way, truth and life are almost synonymous. The word “**way**” refers to the Thora, the law given by Moses. Jesus is the embodied Thora.

- Counselor = “**παράκλητος**”: **one who appears in another’s behalf, mediator, intercessor, helper**.⁶
 - “The principal difficulty encountered in rendering **παράκλητος** is the fact that this term covers potentially such a wide area of meaning. **The traditional rendering of ‘Comforter’ is especially misleading because it suggests only one very limited aspect of what the Holy Spirit does.**”
 - “A rendering based upon the concept of legal advocate seems in most instances to be too restrictive.”⁷ But within the context of John 14-16 this rendering seems to be more appropriate:

³ Arndt, W., Danker, F. W., & Bauer, W. (2000, p. 340).

⁴ Michaels, J. Commandment. In: Green, J. (1992, p. 135).

⁵ Arndt, W., Danker, F. W., & Bauer, W. (2000, p. 42)

⁶ Arndt, W., Danker, F. W., Bauer, W., & Gingrich, F. W. (2000, p. 766).

⁷ Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996, Vol. 1, p. 141).

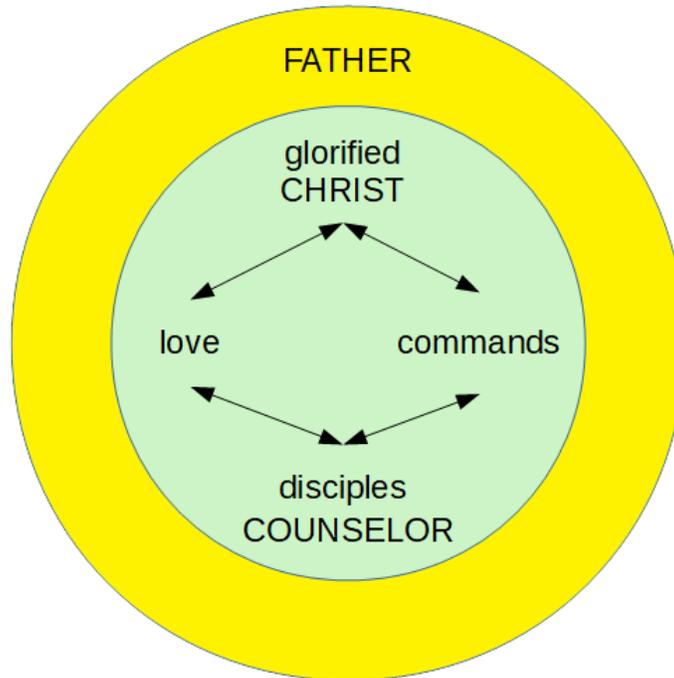
John 16:7-11: "But I tell you the truth: It is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, **the Counselor** will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. When he comes, **he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment**: in regard to sin, because men do not believe in me; in regard to righteousness, because I am going to the Father, where you can see me no longer; and in regard to judgment, because the prince of this world now stands condemned."

Exposition

Main Theme

- ❖ The communion with God and Christ is the main theme of John 14:8-21. This is the reply of Jesus to Philip and the other disciples.
 - "Don't you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me?" (Jn 14:11) = The communion of the Father and the Son.
 - "But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you." (Jn 14:17) = The communion with the Spirit and the disciples.
 - "On that day you will realize that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you." (Jn 14:20) = The communion with the Father, Jesus, and the disciples.
 - The new community of Christians is rooted in the love and communion of the Father and the Son. This communion is created by and a gift from the Holy Spirit (Jn 14:15-17).
- ❖ This communion is rooted in the love of the Father and the Son.
 - "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another" (Jn 13:34).
 - "If you love me, you will obey what I command" (Jn 14:15).
 - "**Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves me. He who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love him and show myself to him**" (Jn 14:21).
 - "Jesus replied, 'If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him'" (Jn 14:23).
 - "The world must learn that I love the Father and that I do exactly what my Father has commanded me" (14:30).
 - "As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have obeyed my Father's commands and remain in his love" (Jn 15:9, 10).
 - "**Those who obey his commands live in him, and he in them. And this is how we know that he lives in us: We know it by the Spirit he gave us**" (1 Jn 3:24).

COMMUNION WITH GOD



- Eternal life = to life in COMMUNION WITH GOD (Jn 17:3).
- ❖ This communion is established through the mission of Jesus Christ by the Father into this world:
 - “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life” (Jn 3:16).
 - “They may be one as we are one: I in them and you in me. May they be brought to complete unity **to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me**” (Jn 17:22–23).
 - His mission into this world is summarized by "my Father's commands". The connection with the love of God culminates in John 15:14: "Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends."
 - **Keeping the commands of Christ means: partaking in the mission of Christ into the world** (Jn 17:18):
 - “As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world.”
 - That means: to proclaim the Gospel and to witness of Christ.

Verse 15

- ❖ “**If you love me.**” Jesus is pointing to the nearby future, after his crucifixion and resurrection, when he has gone to the Father.
 - The love of the disciples is their response to the love of Jesus:
 - “A new command I give you: Love one another. **As I have loved you, so you must love one another**” (Jn 13:34; Jn 15:9, 12).
 - “Greater love has no one than this, that he (Jesus) lay down his life for his friends” (Jn 15:13).

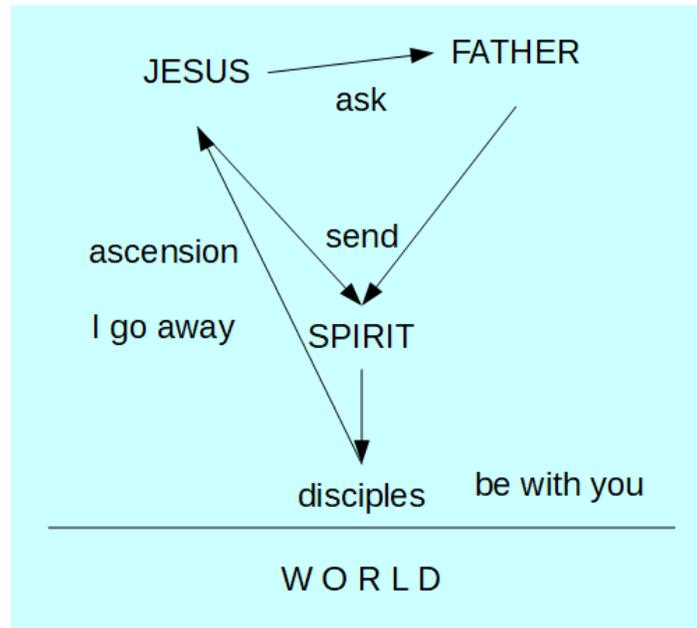
- Jesus spoke these words before his crucifixion and death on the cross. After his resurrection, the disciples will fully understand how great the love of their Master has been.
- ❖ **“you will obey what I command.”**
 - “If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching” (Jn 14:23; Jn 15:10, 17). Command and teaching are synonymous. (See also Mt 28:19, 20).
 - Be aware of these words of Jesus: “For I did not speak of my own accord, but the Father who sent me commanded me what to say and how to say it. **I know that his command leads to eternal life.** So whatever I say is just what the Father has told me to say” (Jn 12:49, 50).
 - The commands of Jesus lead alto to eternal life = communion with God.
 - Love implies obedience.

Verse 16

- ❖ **“And I will ask the Father.”** **“And”** is emphatic. The disciples will love Jesus – AND Jesus will ask the Father.
 - **These words are limited to the period in between the ascension and the Pentecost.** **“Unless I go away,** the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you” (16:6).
 - The Father is the one who sent the Son (Jn 3:16). He will send the Spirit.
- ❖ **“And he will give you another Counselor.”** **“Another”** is important. As Jesus was the first Counselor, the Spirit will be the other like Jesus.” The Spirit is the representative of Jesus. In 1 John 2:1 Jesus himself is called Counselor.
 - Lincoln remarks: “The one whom the Father will give to the disciples is *another* Paraclete. This underscores the narrative’s presentation of Jesus. His mission also can be seen to involve advocacy. Both his earlier witness in the public ministry and his later witness before Pilate are that of a Paraclete, **advocating and prosecuting both God’s and his own case in the trial of truth with the world.**”⁸
 - **“to be with you forever”** — While Jesus will not stay forever amidst the disciples, the Spirit will.
 - **“the Spirit of truth.”** = the Spirit who testifies of the truth, who testifies of Jesus Christ, who is the truth (Jn 14:6).
 - The disciple who received the Spirit will speak the words of God (Jn 3:34).
 - “The Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you” (Jn 14:26).
 - The disciple will worship God. “God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth” (Jn 4:24).

⁸ Lincoln, A. T. (2005, p. 394).

- “When the Counselor comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father, he will testify about me” (Jn 15:26).
- “When he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is



yet to come. He will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it known to you (Jn 16:13, 14).

- ❖ The work of Jesus among his disciples was limited.
 - In time, only three years. The work of the Spirit will be unlimited.
 - In space, only where Jesus was present. The work of the Spirit will be worldwide.

Verse 17

- ❖ **“The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him.”**
 - The world needs to be saved:
 - “Look, the Lamb of God (Jesus), who takes away the sin of the world!” (Jn 1:29).
 - “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life” (Jn 3:16; 11:27).
 - “We (the Samaritans) know that this man really is the Savior of the world” (Jn 4:42).
 - “This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world” (Jn 6:51).
 - “I am the light of the world” (Jn 8:12; 9:5).
 - The world cannot accept him, because they didn’t accept and know Christ.
 - “He (Christ) was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him” (Jn 1:10, 11).
 - And, because the world lives in (spiritual) darkness

- “I have come into the world as a light, so that no one who believes in me should stay in **darkness**” (12:46).
 - This will lead to hatred and conflict.
 - “If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first. If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you” (Jn 5:18, 19; 17:24).
- ❖ **“But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you.”**
 - They know the Spirit because they know Christ.
 - “But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you” (Jn 14:26; see also Mt 10:17-20).
 - “When the Counselor comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father, he will testify about me” (Jn 15:26).
 - This will involve a new birth for all believers in Christ:
 - “Yet to all who received him (Christ), to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God—children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband’s will, but born of God.” See also John 3:1-8.
 - The Spirit will bring the disciples and all believers to complete unity:
 - “My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, 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 so that the world may believe that you have sent me. I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one: I in them and you in me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me (Jn 17:20-23).

Application

General

- ❖ Praise God because he has sent the Counselor, the Spirit of truth.
- ❖ Praise God because he communicates himself to us, sinners. Be amazed that the Spirit of truth dwells in and among the children of God, the disciples of Christ.
 - “Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God” (Eph 5:1, 2).

Verse 15-17

- ❖ Love will change hearts, minds, attitudes, a lifestyle. When we love Christ, our hearts, minds, thoughts, lifestyle will be changed into his image.

- “Tertullian reported in the late second century the comment of the pagans in his day: ‘Behold, how these Christians love each other! How ready they are to die for each other!’ Their mutual love was the magnet which drew the pagan multitudes to Christ. It has the potential to do so still.”⁹
- ❖ The Spirit of truth is given to glorify the Father and the Son.
 - “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires. Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit” (Gal 5:22-25).
- ❖ How can we recognize the work of the Spirit of God?
 - There is faith in Christ.
 - There is the witness to Christ.
 - There is obedience to the commands of Christ.
 - These commands are governed by grace and mercy, love and righteousness.
 - There is love for Christ and the neighbor, the fellow-Christian and people in general.
 - There are the words of Christ.
 - There are wisdom and understanding.
- ❖ Be reminded of:
 - The Spirit has been given and his case of God in the trial of truth with the world.

Quotes

- ❖ “Coming to faith is analogous to falling in love. One cannot fall in love in the abstract. Love comes through an encounter with another person. The same is true of faith. If faith is a relationship with the living Christ and the living God who sent him, then faith can only come through an encounter with them. And the Spirit is the one who makes this presence known.”¹⁰

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⁹ Milne, B. (1993, p. 207).

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