



CHRIST EVANGELICAL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (PCA)

Sermon Reflection Guide; John 16:12-15

1. In verse 13, Jesus tells the disciples that the Holy Spirit will guide them into all the truth. What do you think most people think truth is today?
2. When Jesus says “the truth” he is referring to the true truth of God’s word. How does that help us to better understand how the Holy Spirit guides Christians today?
3. In verse 14 Jesus tells us that one of the roles of the Holy Spirit is to glorify Christ. What does this mean about ministries or churches or Bible studies that focus solely on the Holy Spirit?
4. Since the goal of the Holy Spirit is to glorify Christ, what does that mean we will focus on if we are being led and guided by the Holy Spirit? How does the flood-light analogy apply here?

Sermon Summary

In John 16:12-15, Jesus gives his final summary statement on the ministry of the Holy Spirit. We have already learned much in John 15 and so far in John 16 about the work of the Holy Spirit, but in the closing words Jesus focuses on the how the Holy Spirit guides and how the Holy Spirit glorifies.

Jesus begins in verse 12 by saying that there are many things he wants to teach the disciples but at that point the night before the cross in the upper room he tells them they are not ready for it. But he does say that when the Holy Spirit comes that he will guide them into all the truth. In verse 13 Jesus says, “¹³ When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth...” Jesus tells us that the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of truth and that as the Spirit of truth one of his tasks is to guide us and direct us into the truth. It is important that we realize that Jesus is saying that the Holy Spirit will guide us into *the truth*. This is not merely general truth but rather the Holy Spirit is leading and guiding us into true truth, the only truth we can trust. While many people today believe that truth is a matter of personal conviction the Bible tells us there is only one true truth and only one guide for that truth, the Holy Spirit. This definitive unchanging true truth is none other than the inspired, inerrant and infallible word of God. Jesus is telling the disciples that they will be used as the apostles to write the New Testament under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit’s guiding. It is so important that we realize that while God still speaks, we know that he speaks to us through the Scripture. God is not still granting new revelation in addition to or contrary to his word. Rather, the New Testament canon is closed, and God speaks to us through in the Holy Spirit in his word. Everything we need to know about God and what our duty is to him is contained in the Bible.

Additionally, Jesus tells us in the middle part of verse 13, “...for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak...” Jesus says that the Holy Spirit never gives us his own truth separate or apart from God the Father and the work of Christ. The Holy Spirit is not another God with his

own agenda and his own novel ideas. Rather he is the third person of the Trinity who is sent to be the helper by God the Father to reveal the one single true truth of God's word to the people of God.

In the final part of verse 13, Jesus says, "...and he will declare to you the things that are to come." Jesus is not teaching that Christians today who are filled with enough of the Spirit will be able to predict the future. Rather, he is making a specific promise to the disciples in the upper room with him on the night before his death from their own timeline. Jesus is saying that it is the Holy Spirit who will help them to understand Jesus' death, burial and resurrection. As these things happen the disciples won't understand them but when the Holy Spirit comes, Jesus says he will guide the disciples into all the truth concerning these things.

While we may say that the Holy Spirit still guides us today, we must understand that he does not guide to write new books of the Bible or give to us new revelation which goes beyond or against what the Bible teaches. The Holy Spirit is our help to open our eyes and show us the truth of God's word and our need for Christ. The Holy Spirit works through the word of God. If you want to keep in step with the Spirit today, then read the Bible, study the Bible, pray the Bible, listen to preaching from the Bible, it is in the Bible that you will find the guiding of the Holy Spirit.

Second, Jesus teaches us that a unique work of the Holy Spirit is to glorify Christ. Jesus says in verse 14, "¹⁴ He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you." JC Ryle writes, "The Holy Spirit shall continually teach, and lead, and guide disciples to make much of Christ. Any religious teaching which does not tend to exalt Christ, has a fatal defect about it. It cannot be from the Spirit." Put another way, when a teacher or preacher or church or neighborhood Bible study makes the whole focus of their ministry the Holy Spirit then you know they are missing the mark. Jesus says that one of the most important aspects of the Holy Spirit's ministry is to glorify Jesus. It is always the goal of the Holy Spirit to keep our attention and focus on Christ. Very often ministries that focus solely on the Holy Spirit will teach many wrong things about the Holy Spirit like a "second baptism of the Holy Spirit" and that the whole of the Christian life is centered around subjective miraculous experience. However, we know this is not what the Bible teaches at all and is not the goal of the Holy Spirit. Instead the goal of the Holy Spirit is always to place the central focus on Jesus. JI Packer writes, "When flood-lighting is done well, the floodlights are so placed that you do not see them; you are not in fact supposed to see where the light is coming from; what you are meant to see is just the building on which the floodlights are trained. The intended effect is to make it visible when otherwise it would not have been seen for the darkness, and to maximize its dignity by throwing all its details into relief so you can see it properly." This is the goal of the Holy Spirit, his message is never, come to me, get to know me, look at me. Rather he is always glorifying and pointing to Christ.

Jesus shows us the complete and utter unity of God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit in verse 15 when he says, "¹⁵ All that the Father has is mine; therefore I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you." There is no division in the Holy Trinity there is only unity in mind and purpose. The unity is so complete that all that the Father has belongs to the Son and the Holy Spirit only teaches those things that belong to the Father and the Son.

Josh Moody provides us with an excellent summarizing thought, "The one who loves the Spirit will love Jesus, for the Spirit points us to Jesus. Also, the one who loves will love the Bible, for the Bible is inspired by the Spirit. Father, Son and Spirit are of one mind speaking to us through the Spirit-inspired Bible."