

The Advocate

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[0 : 0 0] Well, we're in our fifth part of our series on the farewell speech of Christ, which is the speeches of Christ from John 13 to John 17 just before his arrest and entry into the garden.

This is the longest section of Jesus' words anywhere in the Bible. It's actually longer than the Sermon on the Mount. And probably the central theme of it is a farewell.

It's a fair thee well. It's the fact that he's departing. He said, this is the hour has come in John 13. The hour is a reference in the book of John always to the death of Christ on the cross.

He said to his disciples, you cannot come where I'm going. I'm leaving you. This is the great goodbye.

Peter was outraged when Jesus first told him this. He said, you cannot leave us. I'll go with you. I'll go wherever you go. I'll die for you.

[1 : 0 0] It's a breakup. I mean, goodbyes are crushing. They crush us, we humans. When the kids move across to the other side of the world, as my mom often reminds me, it's crushing.

It's a fair thee well for a long time. There was an 18th century ballad that many of you might know called Fair Thee Well. And most scholars, literary scholars think that the ballad was written according to Robert Burns' poem, The Red Red Rose, which is a poem about two lovers that are saying goodbye.

And he says this, and it, as fair art thou my body lasts, so deep in love am I. I will love thee still, my dear, till all the sea goes dry.

But fair thee well, my only love, and fair thee well a while, I'll come again my love, in those separated 10,000 miles. Look, the disciples don't know what's happening right now.

I mean, they feel the weight of the separation of 10,000 miles as Jesus is telling them this stuff. It's a fair thee well that they feel like it's forever.

[2 : 1 2] And all the time, when John 13 to 17, when Jesus is talking about his departure, it always comes with a commission. So if the basic theme is kind of a fair thee well, it also is always now, look, I'm leaving you and here's what you have to do.

So you see that in the very beginning of our passage, verse 15, I'm leaving. If you love me, you'll keep my commandments. So we gave a sermon on that just a couple of weeks ago that the great commission moment of John 13 to 17 is Jesus telling his people, I'm leaving you.

Now it's time for you to look to agape, remember, to agape. It's a different love that has ever existed in the history of the world. And to love grounded in the redemption of the cross and the resurrection.

Now when we're talking about that two weeks ago, we said this, that if you're going to obey Jesus' command to love, you have to be born again.

This is the kind of love that you can't have unless you're born again. And we remember from the book of John that John talks about this in John chapter three, when Nicodemus comes to Jesus at night and he says, tell me what to do, what must I do to be saved?

[3 : 24] And Jesus says, you have to be born again. And he's like, what in the world does that mean? And he literally thinks, he says something like, am I to climb back into my mother's womb? He's completely confused, right?

And what does Jesus say? The wind blows where it wishes. You must be born of spirit. You must be born of spirit.

So from the very beginning of the book of John, this ability to love, this ability to love Jesus, this ability to obey his commands, it's been about the wind, the breath of God, the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit, they're all wrapped up together. If you want to love Jesus, if you want to obey his commands, the point of this passage is that you have to have the spirit.

That's what Jesus is getting at here. Look, the answer to the age-old problem, the spirit is the answer to the age-old problem in this passage.

[4 : 24] The oldest problem, the oldest problem that besets humanity is this, we ought to love God and we can't do it. Humans don't agape God.

And they don't agape their neighbor. And why is that? It's because of the great divorce of Genesis chapter 3. The curse, sin.

When Adam and Eve sin, when the curse befalls them in the garden, God comes down and searches for them. Look, it's not as if God didn't know where they were. The point that Moses is writing to us is that there's a great divorce, a great separation, a great divide that's occurred at the entrance of sin into the world.

God and humans are separated in a way they ought not be. The point of the garden was for God to make his home with them. And then in the very next chapter, humans and humans are separated in a way they ought not be.

Brothers killing brothers. And it goes all the way down to even humans' relationship to the land. The land is cursed. A man can't even work the land as he ought. He's separated from the land.

[5 : 29] There's a great divorce that's taken place. And the entire history of the world is the history of the restoration of home. It's the reversal of the great divorce. The spirit in this passage is the answer to the greatest problem in all of history.

All right, so what we're going to do is look at it just by asking two questions. The first is, what is the spirit? What is the spirit?

And the second is, what does he do? That's all. So first, what's the spirit? Three things here. The first thing is this.

When I asked the question, what is the spirit, I already messed up. Because I should have said, who is the spirit? Who is the spirit? You know, in our wonderful confession, in the Westminster Confession of Faith, in our larger Catechism, it opens up in the first question that says, what is God?

But John Calvin in his famous Institute said, already written a century or so before that, whenever we speak of God, we always speak of, with the pronoun, the question pronoun, who, not what, who?

[6 : 34] Who is the spirit, right? The first thing to see here is that the spirit is a person. The spirit is the person. And you can see that because Jesus refers to the spirit in this passage as a he, as a he, not an it.

He refers to the spirit as a he. The New Testament actually ascribes all of these different activities to the spirit. The spirit searches, judges, hears, speaks, wills, teaches, intercedes, witnesses, grieves, and comforts.

You see, these are personal activities. This is the kind of thing that a person does. In other words, the spirit is not a force.

The spirit's not a fate. The spirit's not some unknown power. We'll come back to that in just a minute. The second thing to see is this. If you look down at verse 16, I will ask the Father and He will give you another helper.

Another helper. Now, He says He'll give you another helper. In other words, the identity of this helper is bracketed by this word another.

[7 : 48] What does another mean? That means next to something that comes after, something that comes alongside. In other words, there's already been one helper.

Another helper means there's already been a helper. The way we identify who this helper is is by asking who is the first helper? It's another helper. It's just like the first helper. Well, who is the first helper?

The way we answer this is by the third and final thing, or who is the spirit? That's what He says there. He says in verse 16, I'll send you another helper to be with you forever.

Here's the definition. Even the spirit of truth. The spirit of truth. Now, I was looking at one pastor on this, and he points out that there's a huge difference in this, just one little phrase, the spirit of truth.

What modern people today, contemporary 21st century, 20th century people, think of about being spiritual versus Christian spirituality.

[8 : 52] Being spiritual is an ever popular thing in the 21st century. Being spiritual is the motto that signifies that the whole idea of secularization, that religion would die out, has completely failed.

Religion hasn't died out. It's just that we have plurality of religions more and more in the public sector. One of the most popular forms of that is just simply being spiritual. If you read the Huffington Post, you know that they're all about this kind of stuff.

Just being spiritual. But Christian spirituality and being spiritual in the modern sense are completely different. In our tradition, if you've grown up around Presbyterianism like me or a free church or in the States, in the PCA or OPC or something like that, we typically tend to have a big emphasis on the mind over spiritual experience.

Other churches tend to do the exact opposite. If you go to some churches, they tend to have a big emphasis on spiritual experiences over the mind. But Christian spirituality says no to both of those things.

Listen to, this is one scholar who spent a lot of his time studying kind of modern spirituality. This is how he describes modern spirituality. It's feeling a connection to everything.

[10 : 12] It's feeling a connection to the cosmos, to a higher power, something of a world force or a fate. It transcends the mind and body.

This is the most important thing he points out, that spiritual experience to the modern man takes one beyond the mind, outside of the body, through meditation.

About Christian spirituality, the spirit of truth, you see. The spirit of truth, truth. Yes, to spiritual experience, but in an entirely different way.

What does he mean by truth? What's the referent truth? Well, first thing to notice is this, that the word truth is most often associated in Scripture and in the Bible with the Bible, with Scripture.

In other words, in 2 Peter 1,21, the prophet spoke the scriptures, spoke the truth by the spirit, by the spirit.

[11 : 09] He's the spirit of truth. He's the spirit that authored the Bible. He's the spirit that authored the very Word of God in history.

Normally when we think about the word truth, if you go ask any philosopher, he may be. He'll say something like, truth is simply this, it's the agreement between subject and object in a sentence.

Have you heard that before? You know, throughout a sentence, this chair is made of metal. The chair is the subject of the sentence and metal, being made of metal, that's the object.

It's the agreement between subject and object. That's just the truth. If we go and we examine the chair and we figure out that it's made of metal, guess what we got? We got propositional truth, we got a truth statement, right?

And that's how we normally speak of truth. And guess what? The Holy Spirit is the spirit of that truth. The Holy Spirit is the spirit that speaks the Word of truth, the proposition, the word itself, the scripture, the propositions of truth.

[12 : 16] But there's more. But there's more. John doesn't just mean the agreement between subject and object and the Word of God. He means more than that.

One of the most famous places that the question of truth comes up in the entire Bible is in John chapter 18. And you'll remember it. Jesus has been arrested.

He's standing before a Pontus Pilate and Pilates asking him all sorts of questions and he says to him, what is the truth?

What's the truth? And what does Jesus do? He doesn't say anything. He's silent. Why? You know, when you're reading that passage, you're screaming at John and saying, or Jesus saying, tell him.

Just tell him. Tell him about the kingdom. Tell him who you are. Tell him what you've come to do. Tell him. He'll let you go. But Jesus is silent. Why? Because John expects that the reader already knows the answer.

[13 : 17] You already know the answer to the question, what is truth? You already know, don't you? Then verses before the passage were in, John 14.6, I am the truth.

You see? I mean, we can speculate maybe and imagine that when Pilate says, what's the truth? Jesus just touches his head, his breast.

He just says, I'm standing here. You see, it's not just that the truth is a proposition. It's not just the truth that is the agreement between subject and object. He's the spirit of the truth.

The person, truth is a person. That's the point John's making. He's the spirit of truth. So look, if the Holy Spirit is personal and he's the spirit of the truth, what does that mean?

That means that he is the spirit of Jesus Christ. He is the living spirit of Jesus Christ. We see that in verse 20.

[14 : 19] And that day, you will know that I am in my Father and you are in me and I am in you. Now what day is he referring to there?

On that day, you'll know that I'm in the Father and you're in me and I am in you. We're connected. We're unified. What's that day? It's the day of Pentecost. That's what he's referring to.

He's referring to his resurrection, his ascension, and the coming of the spirit. The day that the spirit comes and falls upon you, you'll know that I'm yours and you're mine. You see what he's saying?

The spirit is the spirit of the triune God. It's the spirit of the Father and the Son. In that day, you'll know that the Father and the Son dwell with you and in you.

How? By the spirit. The spirit is the spirit of the Father and Son. It's the spirit of the triune God. And so with that, we've just blasted ourselves into the midst of discussing the trinity.

[15 : 17] The midst doctrine of the trinity, the head spinning doctrine of the trinity, and all I simply want to say about it is this, that the Father, Son, and spirit are so unified that God says when the spirit comes to be in you with you, I am with you.

I am in you and the Father is in you. That's how unified the spirit is, but it's not a unity where we collapse the distinction, where we lose the fact that it's three persons, Father, spirit, and Son.

Do we have 1 Corinthians 15:45? This is the great passage that shows exactly the point I'm trying to make here. Paul's been talking about the resurrection and he says this, Thus it is written, The first man Adam became a living being, that's Adam in the garden, and the last Adam, Jesus Christ, the second Adam, the final Adam, became life-giving spirit.

Now if you look at that passage, you'll see that spirit there is not capitalized and it should be. It should be. Jesus became, in other words, he gave the life-giving spirit.

That's why in the early church, in the early church, when we were talking about how are we going to talk about God?

[16 : 37] How are we going to speak words about this God that we cannot see, this God that reveals himself as eternity, that the early church fathers decided to say that the Spirit proceeds from the Father and Son.

He proceeds from the Father and Son. He's the Spirit of the Father and Son. Look, if religious mysticism, if modern spirituality is experience of some higher faith, some higher power, some higher force, then Christian spirituality is the experience of the divine, triune, life-giving Father, Son, and Spirit.

If religious mysticism says, meditate in order to leave your mind, leave your body, leave this world, get to a higher order of being, Christian spirituality says, meditate on the truth, the truth that doesn't leave the ground.

You see, the truth that doesn't leave history, the truth that doesn't leave Jesus Christ himself crucified, died, and buried in this world, the truth that says you need to know things in order to experience God.

You see, it's the total opposite. We as Christians don't shirk a mystical experience, but we filter them through knowing Jesus Christ by the Spirit.

[17 : 59] It's a completely different alternative way of being spiritual that's totally counter-contradictory to the way the modern world understands religion.

It's completely different. The Spirit is the life-giving, renewing person of the Godhead that proceeds from the Father and the Son to dwell in the heart of this people.

You know what the Spirit is and the Spirit does? The Spirit is the difference between the fact of, for many of you that grew up in the church, you read the Bible your whole life, you had to.

You weren't going to get away with not doing it if you had Christian parents, and you were bored by it for a long time, maybe.

The Spirit is the difference in knowing the Bible, knowing information about the Bible, knowing the Word of God. Many of you, we've known the Word of God and look, knowing the Word of God.

[18 : 56] You know the difference? The penny drops. The difference is the last way of using the word know becomes love. It becomes love. It becomes desire.

The Spirit is the life-giver. It's He who makes you want the truth. It's He who makes you want the truth.

Last two things on this point. You'll remember, where's the first place that the Spirit pops up in the Bible? Genesis chapter 1, when God was creating the world, it was the breath, the Spirit that was hovering over the face of the waters.

The Spirit gives life in general. He is the giver of life to creation. The Father creates the world. The Son mediates that creation, but it's the Spirit that gives life to it.

He's the life-giving life. There's not a bird, a plant, a tree, a human being in this world that doesn't breathe breath, breathe oxygen without the Spirit being the giver of that life.

[20 : 04] That's the Spirit's role in general, but the Spirit also gives specific life. It gives eternal life, you see. The Spirit makes the great divorce of Genesis chapter 3 into a great reunion.

He's the applied solution to all the world's problems. That's the Holy Spirit. All right. Secondly and finally, what does He do?

Oh, we've already, I've kind of already wrapped some of that up just then, but there's more to see here. Two things that this passage says He does.

Verse 17, He dwells with you. He makes God's home with you. Verse 23, and He is in you.

All these three are kind of the same thing. Verse 26, He teaches you and He reminds you of what Jesus said. That's what the passage tells us.

[21 : 07] So that's the things He does. Now what are the things that you get from Him? Well, the passage says this, verse 19, you see Jesus through Him. Verse 19, you get life.

You get life through Him from the life giver. Verse 20, you will know through Him that you're united to the Son and the Father. The point is this, it's the Spirit that gives you a sharp consciousness that, as John puts it here, that you're not an orphan.

It's the Spirit that gives you the consciousness, the awareness that you're not an orphan. We saw in just a couple of weeks ago in the passage that Jesus calls the disciples, you remember the word, the most unusual word for children, *technia*, my little children.

It's a word that He reserves for nobody else but His called ones. The Spirit gives you the consciousness that you are a called one, a child.

Now what's going on here? What's going on here with these words like He dwells, He makes His home with you, He's going to be with you, He's going to be in you and you and Him.

[22 : 21] These are just a bunch of prepositions that, it's like, what is the word, when the world doesn't mean to be in you and you and Him and with me and with you and all these things.

What were these prepositions talking about? A lot of times we're tempted to think of the Holy Spirit being in us, being filled by the Spirit, in the Spirit, with the Spirit as some type of a kind of a spatial metaphor.

Where's the Holy Spirit, we say He's in our hearts. Where are our hearts? Well, it's inside of this epidermis right here.

Here's my heart. I mean, He's somewhere in this body right here, in this 73 kilos that I have right here. But the point is, it's not spatial.

It's not talking about spatial. What does it mean that He's in you, that He's with you, that He dwells with you, that He makes the Father and the Son's home with you?

[23 : 17] If the point of creation was that God was meant to dwell with humanity, we've already seen that the Spirit is the application of that solution of separation between God and humanity.

You know, scholars, that's why a lot of the Old Testament scholars will tell you that Eden has all the marks of being a temple.

Scholars will refer to Eden as God's garden temple. The temple, you'll remember, in Leviticus and Deuteronomy, when God, in Exodus, when God prescribed it, how did He describe them to build it?

How did He describe them to make it look? What was the ornamentation? The ornamentation was paint the walls with flowers, carve out trees into all the pillars.

The whole place was to look like a garden, you see? It's not that the garden was to look like a temple, but that the temple in the Old Testament was made to look like the garden, you see?

[24 : 20] The point was always that God was to dwell with humanity. The temple was the vehicle, the mode, the mediation of how God was going to solve the problem of the fact that sin removed Him from this world.

The temple looks like a garden. That's what happened. It's no coincidence that Jesus Christ dies next to a garden, that He's buried in a garden, that the new heavens and the new earth in Revelation 19-20 are described as a garden.

It's a temple garden, you see? It's where God makes His throne room in this world. This is the whole point of existence. This is the whole point of history. The Spirit is the giver of God to the world, and He makes good on the work of Christ and the promises of the Father by reversing the great divorce.

This is what it means for Him to be with us. He is the temporary, life-giving Spirit that's coming to reverse the great divorce. He's applying the work of Jesus Christ.

That's what it means. C.S. Lewis in the great divorce, I didn't know this till this week, but it was originally, if you read that book, it was originally called the Grand Divorce when he printed it in the newspapers or magazine or whatever it was.

[25 : 46] The Grand Divorce subtitle, Who is Going Home, was the original title. But Lewis is reflecting in this book on the implications of the great divorce, of Genesis chapter 3, of what the curse has cost us.

He's reflecting on the separation between God and humanity, between humanity and humanity, between families. All the different ways that sin has come in and ruptured this world and divided it in half.

The main focus of the book is between, and this is completely metaphorical, by the way, this is not systematic theology, so don't take it that way. The divide is between Pam in one scene, who's a ghost of hell.

So all the people that are going to hell, he talks about as ghosts. And this guy named Reginald, who's a spirit in heaven. But the spirits in heaven, they walk on grass that is more real than any grass that's ever existed.

They live in mountain cities that are better cities than any man could have ever dreamed. It's a very physical place. Pam gets to the outskirts of heaven and she's not allowed to go in.

[26 : 55] Someone comes out to her and she says, oh Reginald, it's you, is it? And he says, yes dear, I know you expected someone else. Can you, I hope you can be a little glad to see even me for right now.

And she said this, I thought Michael would have come to see me. And then almost fiercely she said, he's here. Of course. And Reginald said, he's there far up in the mountains.

Why hasn't he come to meet me? Doesn't he know that I'm here? Michael was Pam's son. Michael died as an infant, as a young child.

And he's been living in the great cities of heaven ever since. And she's come for him. Pam, she's died and it seems to suggest on purpose to come to get Michael back.

And Reginald says, look Pam, if you wanted to see Michael, you had to have realized by now that you were made for more than Michael. He says, the separation between you and Michael was never about the separation between you and Michael, but about a greater divorce.

[28 : 08] And she says, you mean, are you talking about religion? Are you talking about some type of religion? This is hardly the time for religion. And from you of all people, well never mind, I'll do whatever you need me to do.

Just tell me what I need to do so I can see my son. And he said, no. You're treating God only as a means to Michael. But the whole point is learning to want God for his own sake.

The whole point is to learn that you are created for him. And this is how she responds. Probably the saddest moment in the great divorce. If God loved me, he'd let me see my boy.

If he loved me, why did he take my boy from me? I wasn't going to say anything about it, but it's pretty hard to ignore. Give me my boy, she says. Do you hear me?

I don't care about your rules. I don't care about your regulations. I don't care about God's laws. I can't believe in a God who would separate, who would divorce mother and son from each other.

[29 : 13] I believe in a God of love. That's not the God I believe in. No one has a right to come between me and my son. Not even God. Tell him that to his face, Reginald. I want my boy and I will have him.

He's mine, do you understand? Mine, mine, mine forever and ever. What's Lewis getting at? What Pam cannot see is that the total opposite of what she thinks is true.

She thinks the great separation between her and her son, the awful gulf that is called death and sin, heaven and hell, family and family, mother and son, that gulf, she thinks it's God's fault.

What kind of a God would separate a mother and a son, she says. But what she can't see is that God foresook his own son precisely because she and us were the ones that caused the great divorce in the first place.

The great divide between God and humans, between mothers and sons, the divide of death, it was solved by the God of creation becoming the God of redemption.

[30 : 30] The greatest, worst divorce in all of history. Between God the son and God the father and God the son, Jesus Christ.

Sin has caused a problem. We've lost our home with God. Christ is the mediator of our redemption. He has accomplished it in the cross and resurrection. The spirit is the mediator of our reunion.

You see? He's the life-giving spirit where the wind blows, so comes life. Lastly, we'll just close just a couple of minutes and we'll be done.

What does the spirit do? Is the central point of the whole passage. What does the spirit do? If you look with me at one last thing, verse 16 again, I will ask the Father and He will give you another helper.

Another helper. Now if you look at any number of Bible translations, you'll see a different word there in every single translation. You'll see helper, comforter, counselor, paraclete.

[31 : 31] You'll see all sorts of different words. The King James translated in the 17th century as comforter, and so that translation has been left over in most translations.

But look, it's not really what the word is. The modern, maybe some of you, I don't know, you have all sorts of ideas about what it means to have a comforter, or some of you, your comforter is a tub of ice cream on a Saturday afternoon binge watching Netflix or something.

The comforter is not the word there. The word is literally this, and it's important to note, because some translations will give it to you very literally, the paraclete.

You've probably heard that. He's the paracleptos, or the paracaleo is the verb. That verb is composed of two words, para, para, and kaleo.

You know the first word, para, right? It's the word that we've taken over and used in words like para-shoot, right?

[32 : 33] Paralegal, paramedic. I don't know, you can probably think of some more. There's only three I can think of. What's para mean? Para is somebody who comes alongside of you.

It's not somebody in front of you or behind you, but somebody that stands with you, alongside of you. Para means that's all we have for words like para-shoot. It's the shoot that comes alongside of you to save your life if you're smart enough to jump out of a plane.

It's the paramedic, the medic that comes alongside of you to save your life. What's the word kaleo mean? It literally means to call, but even more than that, it means to judge.

Literally he's the one who comes alongside and judges. That's why the best translation I think for this word that you'll see in some Bibles is advocate or counselor.

Now we know that Jesus Christ is the advocate, Hebrews. What does it mean here that the spirit is our advocate? What's this mean? Jesus Christ accomplished our redemption and he went before the Father and he sat down at his right hand and now he advocates for you.

[33 : 48] He is your advocate before the Father and he sent his spirit to be another advocate. Who does the spirit advocate for? Two.

To you. Jesus Christ is the advocate for you, you see, and the spirit as the advocate for the counselor to you is the simple difference in preposition.

What does this mean? Well, one of the ways that Paul puts it is when your heart condemns you, the spirit is greater than your heart.

The spirit is the living God that comes alongside of you and is your counselor, your judge, when you feel accused, when you feel shamed by your sin, when you walk down the road that every single one of us is prone to and that's to think that you can earn your salvation every day, it's the spirit that comes and speaks into your ear.

He's the counselor to you. He's your paralegal, you see, he's the God that comes and tells you fear not. He's the consciousness that you're a child.

[34 : 55] When you're tempted, when you're condemned, when you're accused, when you're tempted to fear anything but God himself, he is the paracaleo.

He is the one who comes alongside and judges for you. He pronounces the judgment on your behalf and what's the judgment, if you're a believer in Christ?

You have an advocate to the Father, the righteous one, the Lord Jesus Christ. This is the sweet whispers that he's giving into our ear. Look, we're prone to shame, we're prone to doubt, we're prone to fear, we're prone to be condemned, we're prone to anxiety, the spirit comes and says, I'm greater than your heart.

I'm greater than your heart. The Spirit's your counselor and your advocate, he whispers sweet burnings into your ear. Will you listen to him?

Will you listen to him? He speaks through the word of truth because he's the Spirit of truth and he speaks the word of truth to you through the word of truth. Will you listen?

[36 : 00] Will you be willing to have a consciousness that the Spirit of Christ abides in you? Let's pray. Father, we ask that you would make known your spirit to us now, that we would know what it is to have Christian spirituality, spiritual experience, that we would know what it is to have Christian meditation that is on the Spirit of truth, the word of truth, the Logos, the Bible, on the greatest knowledge that exists and that is of the Lord Jesus Christ crucified and raised for us.

And we ask that you would give us hope through this to step into Monday. Amen.