

Glorifying Jesus – John 16:12-15

One of the common mistakes often made in relation to the Holy Spirit is to make aspects of His ministry in our lives an end in and of themselves. So far in this series we have established that the Holy Spirit pours out the love of God into our hearts and shares the peace of God with us. The Holy Spirit gives us power to be witnesses. We know that He has gifts to give us - He is the one who can bring healing to our bodies and minds, He is the one who can reveal to us the heart of God through prophecy and words of knowledge. However, these things are not the appointed end, or destination of His ministry. In fact, we can be at risk of making 'god' out of God's gifts. All these things are wonderful and appointed by Him but they are given for a greater more wonderful end.

Read John 16:12-15

On Remembrance Sunday, many people look at medals and awards given to family members – remembering the sacrifice that was made by many. To place greater value on the metal and ribbon which makes these medals, than the story they are there to tell, would seem incredibly shallow. We can do this with God's gifts. We can do this with the ministry of the Holy Spirit when we place more emphasis on the things He gives us than who He is. The chief end and goal of the Helper's ministry among us isn't that we should 'feel loved' or 'heal the sick' but that 'Christ might be glorified'. The focus of this sermon, passage and the whole purpose of God in creation: The Helper comes into our hearts to guide us into truth that always results in the Christ being glorified.

Q. How can Christians and churches be at risk of promoting the gifts of God above what they point to?

The Holy Spirit Narrates The Gospel Story (vs 12-13)

Jesus starts this passage, fully aware that the disciples were unable to grasp the fullness of His teaching (v12). Jesus has been giving some rich teaching, and great guidance to His disciples. At this moment, Jesus wants to share so much more, but He knows they would not be able to handle it. However, the 'many things' that Jesus is keen to share don't get lost or forgotten, but would be taught to them by the Holy Spirit (v13). The New Testament exists because the Holy Spirit has guided and taught the writers of scripture.

Q. How can our interpretation of events be affected by our situation and personal state of mind?

Q. What are the dangers of relying on our own understanding of events?

We need the Holy Spirit to fully understand all that Jesus has done and all that His death and resurrection means for us. There is a story that needs to be told, and the Holy Spirit is telling that story. Like military medals, God's gifts have a story behind them – and the Holy Spirit is guiding us towards the deeper story.

The Helper declares to us the astonishing things which Christ has done – it's not simply that your sins are forever forgiven, that God is for you, that you have everlasting life – those are the medals. He declares to you the heroism of our great Jesus. He takes us by the hand and leads us to see one marvel after the other: Jesus lived a perfect life for you, He was punished for you, He was judged in your place, all the anger the Holy One has towards evil - all done to you and by you - He suffered that for you. The Holy Spirit declares these things to us. It is the Spirit of God that gives us the answers and reasons for our hope and peace (Luke 12:12). When we are asked the questions, 'Why are you a Christian?', 'Why do you believe Jesus is God?', 'Where does your peace come from?', 'Where does your joy come from?' - that's when, guided by the Spirit, you speak what you have heard from Him.

Q. How do you respond when confronted by these questions?

Q. How can we remind ourselves to rely on the guidance of the Holy Spirit?

The Holy Spirit Will Glorify Jesus (v14)

If no story is told, and the medals simply gather dust, something incredibly special and valuable is lost. How ridiculous would it be if someone else took credit for these medals and made no reference whatsoever to the person who won them. As you tell of the peace you have, the various gifts you have received by the Holy Spirit you are bringing attention and glory to Jesus. All of God's gifts come to us that Jesus might be glorified (v14).

The overwhelming preoccupation of the Holy Spirit is to glorify Jesus. He authors scripture to glorify Jesus, He narrates the truth of God's word into our hearts to glorify Jesus. He gives gifts to His church to glorify Jesus. The greatest evidence of a church filled with the Spirit of God is that Jesus is glorified. What does a 'Spirit-Filled Church' look like? Where Jesus is being glorified, in conversation, in song, in word and in deed. Attention is driven to Jesus.

Q. How are we using the gifts God has given each of us to glorify Jesus?

if the Holy Spirit is active and at work in your life, in this church, then He will be drawing our attention to Jesus the whole time. This is another stunning passage that depicts to us the Trinitarian nature of God, that God is Father, Son and Holy Spirit distinct persons, who have distinct roles. Fully God, fully equal and happy, a picture of what our relationships could become. Jesus secured the Father's Love for us which is pinned to our chest by the Helper (v15) – so that you and I might, with the Helper, glorify Jesus together.

Q. In what ways has the Holy Spirit glorified Jesus in your life?

Q. How do your stories of the work of the Holy Spirit draw attention to Jesus? How is He glorified?