

The Spirit's Revelatory Work Among the Apostles
John 16:12-15

A very important question that every person must address at some in their lives is this: Where will they go for answers when they are faced with difficult questions?

Or in other words, where will people go for answers when they are faced with questions about what college they should attend? Or what career path should they pursue? Or how can they improve their marriage? Or find inner peace and hope? There will be, over the course of our lives, almost an endless string of very important questions that we will face. And in the midst of those questions we will find ourselves searching for answers. But where will we go for those answers?

This is the \$64,000 question and how we answer this question will largely determine whether we will live full and rich lives or empty and shallow lives. And very fortunately for us the passage that we will be studying this morning, **John 16:12-15**, will provide that answer.

But before we begin to look at this passage we need to remind ourselves what we have already considered what has led up to this passage that we will be considering this morning.

Hopefully you remember that Christ has been preparing His disciples for His departure. And in attempting to prepare them for His departure He wanted to make sure that they understood what exactly was going to happen to them after He left them. So how did He do this?

First of all, early in **John 16** He spoke to His disciples about what they should expect in terms of their mistreatment by the world. But then Jesus began speaking to them of a different expectation. Not about what they should expect in terms of their future mistreatment but rather about what they could expect in terms of what they could expect in terms of the future convicting work of the Holy Spirit in the world, also early in **John 16**, but He still was not done in speaking to them about expectations and more specifically about expectations concerning the Holy Spirit's future work.

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From the future convicting work of the Spirit in the world in John 16:1-11 Jesus now turns to the future revelatory work of the Spirit in respect to His apostles in John 16:12-15.

So what did Jesus say to His disciples in these verses? This is what He said. **“I have many more things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. (13) But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come. (14) He shall glorify Me; for He shall take of Mine, and shall disclose it to you. (15) All things that the Father have are Mine; therefore I said, that He takes of Mine, and will disclose it to you.”** This is the passage that we will be examining this morning.

My hope as we examine this passage this morning is this: That we will not only know where we should go to find answers to all of life’s most difficult questions but that we will act upon that knowledge so that not only that we will be blessed but that the Lord will be glorified. So the question I would like to ask this morning as we seek to examine this particular passage is this. What did Christ in John 16:12-15 tell His apostles that they should expect in terms of the Spirit’s future revelatory work?

First of all, Christ told His apostles that they should expect more revelation in terms of the Spirit’s future revelatory work (John 16:12-13). We see this in **John 16:12-13.** So let me read these two verses for you. **“I have many more things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. (13) But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come.”**

Let us begin by looking at **verse 12.** How does it start? It starts with these words, **“I have many more things to say to you.”** Jesus obviously over the three years that He had been with His disciples shared many things with them but there were still yet many more things from His perspective He still needed to share. Isn’t that exactly what we see at the very beginning of **John 6:12?** Let me read this for you one more time. **“I have many more things to say to you.”**

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So why hadn't He shared these things with them earlier? We don't have to guess. Christ immediately answers this question. So let us once again go back and read **verse 12** but this time we will read the entire verse. What did He say? **"I have many more things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now."** So why had He not shared these things earlier? According to **verse 12** He had not shared these things with them earlier because, even up until that night, they were not ready to bear them.

So what exactly did Christ mean by this? What did He mean when He told them that they at that particular time were not yet able to bear these certain truths? Let us first of all consider what He meant by the word "bear." The word "bear" (BASTAZO) signifies "to support as a burden" whether it is physical, such as the cross, or metaphorical, such as sufferings endured in the cause of Christ (Luke 14:27, John 19:17).

So if we understand the word "bear" in this way then we can now clearly understand why Christ had not chosen to share with them certain truths, at least up to this point in time in the upper room, based on **John 16:12**.

Christ had not chosen to share with His disciples certain truths while He was with them because He knew that those truths would have crushed them.

This of course would have been totally unacceptable to Christ who is the Good Shepherd and therefore certainly would not be in the business of crushing His sheep.

And that includes us if we are in fact one of His children. The Lord will never put His children, those saved by grace through faith, under an unbearable load. That is just not going to happen. And why is this? It is not going to happen because He is faithful and will not allow any burden to be placed upon us that would in time ultimately crush us or crush our faith so that we would in fact turn our back on Christ and become a reprobate.

Let me read for you **1 Corinthians 10:13**. **"No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, that you may be able to endure it."** If there is a load that we cannot bear such as was the case with

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Christ's disciples in **John 16:12** then Christ would certainly, based on **1 Corinthians 10:13**, not allow that unbearable load to be placed upon us.

Therefore if we are true disciples of Christ we may be knocked down but we will not be knocked out. We will continue to walk by faith and that faith, though tested, will endure and will ultimately usher us through the gates of glory.

So if Christ had many more things to share with His disciples, who up to that point in time they were still not yet able to bear, then how was Christ going to communicate these truths to them in light of His imminent crucifixion? This brings us to **John 16:13**.

Let me read this verse for you. **“But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come.”**

Though Christ had chosen not to share with His disciples all that He had wanted to share with them during His earthly ministry, Jesus in **John 16:13** promised them that those very truths that had not been shared with them would be revealed to them through the future revelatory work of the Holy Spirit at a time when they would better able to bear those truths. This is what Jesus shared with His disciples in **John 16:13**.

So let us now look at **verse 13** more closely. How did it begin? It began with these words, **“But when He, the Spirit of truth, [or in other words the Holy Spirit] comes, [which we know based on Acts 2 would be on the Day of Pentecost or 50 days from the time Jesus spoke to His disciples] He will guide you into all the truth.”**

What did Jesus tell His disciples? He told them that when the Spirit finally came He would guide them into all the truth. Not just into a portion of the truth, or a large part of the truth but all of it.

Jesus promise to His disciples that the Holy Spirit would guide them into all the truth assures us of several things:

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- (1) First of all, Christ's promise that the Spirit would guide His disciples into all the truth assures us that there will be no further truth made available to us from God other than the truth we find in our Bibles (Ephesians 2:20). In other words, how could there be any further truth made available to us if all the truth had already been made available to His disciples. This is why Christ's disciples along with the Old Testament prophets are considered to be the foundation of the church in Ephesians 2:20. So in light of this don't be looking around for someone today to communicate to you some additional truth from God other than what has already been made available to us in our Bibles. But this is not all that Christ's promise assures us.
- (2) Christ's promise to His disciples that the Spirit would guide them into all truth assures us of the sufficiency of the Scriptures (2 Timothy 3:16-17). Let me read for you **2 Timothy 3:16-17**. "**All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; (17) that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.**" For how many works? The answer is every good work. Every truth that we need to live godly lives in Christ Jesus and to do His work has already been supplied to us. And because these truths supply for us everything that we need to live godly lives in Christ Jesus, these truths therefore become the foundation in helping us to answer every other important question that we will ultimately be confronted with. Is Christ's promise to His disciples in **John 16:13** an important promise? Absolutely! He did not simply say that when the Spirit came that He would guide them into truth but He said that He would guide them into all the truth. And that certainly has major implications.
- (3) But this is not all that Jesus said in **John 16:13**. He also went on to give them several more tidbits about the Spirit's future revelatory work. First of all, He told His disciples that when the Spirit came and guided them into all truth He would not be speaking on His own initiative. Let us go back one more time to **John 16:13** and read a little bit further. So what does it say? "**But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak.**" In other words, the Holy Spirit when He came to Christ's disciples would not be a free

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agent but would be operating at the direction of another who would later be identified in the next few verses. But this was not the only tidbit that Christ shared with His disciples about the Spirit's future full disclosure of truth.

Jesus also went on to share with them that when the Spirit came and guided them into all the truth that He would disclose to them what was to come. So let us once more go back to **John 16:13** but this time we will read the entire verse. **“But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth, for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come.”** And what specifically might that include? In order to answer this question we must go on to the second thing that Christ's disciples should expect in terms of the Spirit's future revelatory work. Not only that when the Spirit came that they should expect more revelatory work but Christ told His apostles they could expect that the future revelatory work of the Spirit would glorify Christ (John 16:14). Let me read for you **John 16:14**. **“He shall glorify Me; for He shall take of Mine, and shall disclose it to you.”**

When Christ told His disciples that when the Spirit came and provided a full and complete revelation of all truth and made sure that they understood that this would include a disclosure of the things that would come, He did not mean simply future events such as what we see in the Book of Revelation. He was talking about what they could expect in the future in terms of the full consequence of Christ's person and work which of course they would later record for us not simply in the Book of Revelation but in the books of the New Testament.

When Christ told His disciples that the Spirit would disclose to them what was to come, He was talking about what would come to them and others as a consequence of Christ's person and work.

And what would be the purpose of this full disclosure of these things and ultimately the recording of these things? It was for the purpose of glorifying Christ.

The book we now hold in our hands is not only the complete revelation of God to us through God's prophets and Christ's apostles, but every word that is written in this book is intended to glorify Christ.

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This is why we must come to this book when we are faced with difficult questions that we believe must be answered because it is through this book and the answers that it gives us to life's most difficult questions that will glorify Christ.

This book has not been given to us in order to entertain us or to amuse us it has been given to us so that when we approach it the words on these pages cause us in all that we do or seek to do to exalt Him, to worship Him, to praise Him, to honor Him, to conform ourselves to Him, or in other words to glorify Him. This is why the Spirit of God has provided us this book.

But this is not the only thing that Christ's disciples should have expected when it came to the Spirit's future revelatory work. Not only should they expect more revelation and not only should they expect that the further and complete revelation would glorify Christ but Christ told His apostles that the future revelatory work of the Spirit would be a cooperative effort (John 16:15). Let me read for you **John 16:15. "All things that the Father has are mine; therefore I said, that He takes of Mine, and will disclose it to you."**

This statement is added in order to eliminate the possible misunderstanding that what Jesus so emphatically called "His" in John 16:14 was "exclusively His." It wasn't.

Christ had spoken what the Spirit would be speaking to His disciples; and what was spoken to the Spirit by Christ was first of spoken to Him by the Father; but whether it was the Father, the Son or the Spirit speaking the truth it was their truth together. And they together were committed to passing this truth in other words their truth to these disciples so that ultimately they would possess all of the truth concerning the person and work of Christ upon which all of God's redemptive purposes are based.

Where will people go for answers when they are faced with questions about what college they should attend? Or what career path should they pursue? Or how can they improve their marriage? Or find inner peace and hope? There will be, over the course of our lives, almost an endless string of very important questions that we will face. And in the midst of those questions we will find ourselves searching for answers. But where will we go for those answers?

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Let us come to God's Word which has been supplied to us through the cooperative effort of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit whose object and purpose is to display Christ and to magnify Him not only on the pages of our Bibles but in and through our lives and in every decision that we make and in every action that we take.

May God give us the grace to apply God's Word so that the Word that has been supplied to us by the revelatory work of the Spirit might glorify Christ.