



May 9, 2021 - "Arrival Promised" - John 16:1-33

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While in Switzerland, our daughter decided to go paragliding. She did not get her adventurous spirit from me...I could never leap off a cliff! But that is just the objection that many people have when it comes to putting their faith in Jesus Christ. They think that following Him would be like leaping off a cliff.



The disciples were anxious and troubled in heart and mind. They felt as if they were peering over a precipice, about to be pushed into an abyss! Could that be where your own thinking is today? Is your heart agitated? In John 14 we saw Jesus' **first answer to anxious hearts**. He promised to depart – but He was not toying with His followers. Jesus was setting the stage for the arrival of the Holy Spirit. On **Ascension Sunday** (May 16) we will learn more about Jesus' departure. In John 16, we see Jesus' **second answer to troubled hearts**. In this passage He expands on the role of the Holy Spirit. Then on **Pentecost Sunday** (May 23) we will see the wonderful results from the coming of the Spirit to indwell believers.

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It pains me to skip over John 15 (one of my favorite passages!) but our focus is on chapter 14 and 16. To sum up, John 15 assures us that believers can be **fruitful** (see 15:1-17) though the world is **hateful** (see 15:18-25). And John 16:1-4 connects to this theme. Jesus did not want His followers to "stumble" or "stray" (v.1) when they faced two certain dangers.

- **alienation** – rejected from spiritual centers by their own culture (v 2a)
- **annihilation** – killed by those thinking they served God's purposes (v.2b)

When it comes to remaining true to Christ, the stakes are high! When He was physically present it was one thing, but His departure disrupted...or did it?

There can be confusion about the work of the Holy Ghost. Two brothers were pushing each other into a mud puddle. Their mother demanded to know what they were up to. They were playing church and baptizing "in the name of the Father, of the Son, and **into the hole he goes!**"

However, John 16 provides us with great clarity about the Holy Spirit! Consider three vital roles.

### ONE: The Holy Spirit came to convict – vv. 5-11

What contrast! In verses 6-7 Jesus pointed out that the disciples were full of **grief** but His departure would actually bring great **good** ("expedient, profitable")! Without Jesus' departure there could be no arrival of the "Advocate" or "Comforter" (the *Paraklete*).

This was a term for **legal counsel** and implied the greater ability of the one helping. Jesus explained the role of the Holy Spirit in relation to the world (i.e. those who threatened His followers).

In verses 8-11 we learn that the work of the Holy Spirit is to **convict** ("refute completely". This would occur in three realms.

- **Exposing evil** – particularly the rejection of Jesus – v. 9
- **Demonstrating righteousness** – particularly the witness of Jesus – v. 10
- **Warning of judgement** – particularly that Jesus will one day judge – v. 11

### TWO: The Holy Spirit came to confirm – vv. 12-15

Verses 12-13 point to the seamless transition from Jesus' ministry to the work of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit will guide (v.13) believers into truth – which implies a pathway of following Jesus. The Holy Spirit is responsible to safeguard the "Follow Me truth" to our hearts. He is "the Spirit of Truth" (14:17; 16:12). He is sent in the name of Jesus to teach and remind believers of all that Jesus taught (14:26).

Here is a before/after picture of **Rudbeckia Hirta**, commonly called Black-eyed Susan. What caused the deterioration? Just look closer at the first picture.



The damage seen in the second picture was caused by slugs! And Satan often works like a slug. His efforts can be barely perceptible until great damage is done to our spiritual vitality. The Holy Spirit confirms believers by spotlighting Jesus, helping to establish God's truth within us!

Merrill Tenney describes this divine dynamic in this way. (*John: the Gospel of Belief*, Eerdmans, 1948, 239)

*The Father plans, the Son perfects, the Spirit executes and reveals. The Father sent the Son; the Son sent the spirit; the Spirit represents the Son as the Son represented the Father...All that the Father has belongs to the Son; and all that the Son has to teach is administered through the Spirit.*

Sometimes we look to people to help confirm our standing in Christ. Listen to what one spiritual giant, Elisabeth Elliot, said of another inspiring Christian, Amy Carmichael. (*Servant*, No. 108, Spring 2021, 9)

*She showed me the shape of godliness. For a time, I suppose, I thought she must have been perfect, and that was good enough for me. As I grew up I knew she could not have been perfect, and that was better, for it meant that I might possibly walk in her footsteps. If we demand perfect models we will have, except for the Son of Man Himself, nothing at all.*

We need to be careful about idolizing anyone. We must allow the Holy Spirit to confirm the truth of Jesus to our hearts.

### THREE: The Holy Spirit came to comfort – vv. 16-33

Jesus promised the Holy Spirit as the comforting presence of God. In Person God is fulfilling Psalm 46:1 – He is “our ever-present help”. Jesus promised the “Advocate” or “Comforter” which also described one called alongside to give aid. This role of the Holy Spirit's work was illustrated for me in 1986 when traveling to Pakistan for a mission trip. The inflight magazine of PIA is called “Humsafar” - an Urdu word meaning one who goes along with you in your journey to give you comfort!

Notice the direction of the conversation in verses 17-28. The disciples were stymied by what Jesus said in verse 16. He then explained that they would have a time of loss that would be turned to joy. Yes, He was going to depart in His death on the cross. But they would rejoice in His resurrection. But then He assured them of His departure to heaven – He was about to return to the Father (v.28).

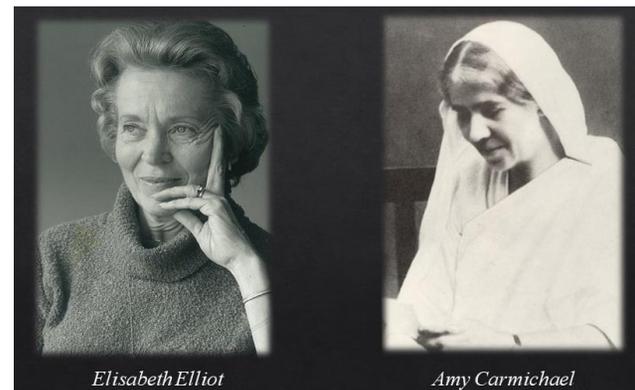
The reaction of the disciples is in verses 29-33. At this point **faith** began to blossom in their hearts. Yet Jesus did leave them trusting in their own believing. Once again, He assured them that **trouble would come** which they could not handle (v.32).

However, Jesus also assured them that **victory would come** (v.33). And here is the comforting work of the Holy Spirit. How do Christ followers enter into the “overcoming” of Christ? It is experienced by “life in the Holy Spirit”.

### REFLECT

Think again of leaping from a Swiss mountainside. Think of the surreal freedom of soaring through the air above the picturesque city of Interlaken! To do this a person must be utterly dependent upon the equipment and laws of aerodynamics. Even the paraglide pilot offers a little picture of the work of the Holy Spirit! You see, the Holy Spirit must be our total sufficiency.

- *When it comes to following Jesus, are you trusting in your own trust? Are you leaning on your loyalty?*
- *Are you living your life in the Holy Spirit? Read and reflect upon Galatians 5:16-26.*
- *How does this related to “abiding in Christ”? See John 15:1-8.*
- *What is the purpose of the Holy Spirit establishing God's truth within us? See John 15:26-27.*



Elisabeth Elliot

Amy Carmichael

[Listen to Elisabeth Elliot share about Amy Carmichael](#)