



TIME OF GRACE®

Jesus' Love, My Life: Holy Spirit, HELP!

Study Notes

Summary

The Holy Spirit often sparks questions and confusion among Christians today. But Jesus' words, though deep, are clear. The Spirit is our counselor, our teacher, our "reminder," and our source of peace. This message teaches us to rely on one of Jesus' greatest gifts, the Holy Spirit.

- Love is a _____ of the _____.
- **John 14:15-17:** ¹⁵ If you love me, keep my commands. ¹⁶ And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever— ¹⁷ the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you.
- The Holy Spirit is _____.
- **John 14:26,27:** ²⁶ But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you. ²⁷ Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.
- **John 15:26:** When the Advocate comes, whom I will send to you from the Father—the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father—he will testify about me.
- **John 16:14:** He will glorify me.
- The Holy Spirit is here to help me _____.
- **John 12:21:** "Sir," they said, "we would like to see Jesus."

Points to Ponder

1. Check out Jesus' words in John 14:15. How does Jesus define love in this verse? What would that type of love look like in your life this week?

2. Read the rest of John 14:15-21. List three truths that encourage you as you try to love Jesus by obeying his commandments.

3. **Challenge:** For the next week, before you go to church or study God's Word at home, ask the Holy Spirit to help you see the glory of Jesus.

Homework for Next Week

Read John 15:1-17.

Time of Grace Ministry
Jesus' Love, My Life: Holy Spirit, HELP!
John 14:15-17, 25-27
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Pastor Mike Novotny

So how much would you pay if I could invent a device that when I push the button on top there would be twice as much love in your life?

Can you imagine if our church had double the amount of love? I mean, I really love our church family; I think it's a fairly kind and accepting and honest and hospitable place. But if I could push that button and like every person who walks through our doors for the first time would experience twice the warmth and twice the selflessness and we would live in community and people would be twice as honest and twice as quick to forgive each other in Jesus' name, like what kind of church would this be if we could double the love in this place?

And as long as I'm talking about like crazy experiments, what if I could push that same button and instantly double the amount of love that you have for God? Like one push and God would be so loveable, so glorious, so beautiful, and so powerful that you could go through the same stuff at work, in your family, but it would bother you half as much because you would have twice the peace and twice the joy in a God that you adore. I mean, you'd have half the guilt, half the shame, half the despair, half the fear, and half the worry because your love for God would grow in such a profound way that his glory would be all that you need to celebrate and be at peace. That'd be a valuable invention, wouldn't it?

Here's the interesting thing though - the night before Jesus bled, he was praying and hoping and talking that that button would be pushed. He wasn't going to have some like invention or a device but what he was talking to his heavenly Father about was your life and your relationships and your connection to God. From the very first start of that night, the first minutes when he washed his disciples' feet and talked about loving one another in radical ways, to his closing prayer where he said, "Let these people love each other as much as we love each other," Jesus was thinking about your life and the amount of love. Which sounds like thrilling on paper but I have a hunch a bunch of you are thinking what I'm thinking right now: That's not so easy in practice. I mean, the reason there is no device or no button is because loving God and loving people is probably one of the hardest things we will ever do in our lives. Because Jesus wasn't talking about loving like some of the people, some of the time. I bet you and I could handle that, right? On our good days - I mean, even terrorists love some of the people some of the time. Jesus was talking about loving all the people all the time, which is really hard if you've ever met people, right? You go to work and there's that one guy and he doesn't even have to open his mouth and you start to feel tense and stressed and worried. And, I don't know, maybe there's some drama at home and things that haven't been dealt with. People are difficult and we ourselves can be difficult and, therefore, love is difficult.

And loving God more than we do, you know, it sounds great and Christian and spiritual but the fact is you can't see God and so it's so easy to get excited about some, you know, YouTube clip or some Netflix show or some music that you hear on the radio or a concert that you go to see. It's easy to get amped up about like your March Madness pics and bracket because you can see that kind of stuff. But you can't see God. And so, to think that God is amazing and glorious and to find all your peace and your joy and your hope in a God you can't see is really difficult. In fact, for lots of us, it feels impossible. And so, we face real challenges that we can see and there's a real diagnosis that the doctor speaks with words that ring in our ears and like loving God sounds, you know, great on a Sunday in church but on a Tuesday morning at work or Thursday evening as you get the mail, not so simple.

So how do you do it? Right? If you're going to walk out of here today and face the same challenge with loving people and loving God and if Jesus says that's what he wants and it's possible, how do you do it? Well, the night before Jesus bled, he answered that question. In fact, the point that he made is so important, if you have a pen in your hand, I'd love for you to write this down. Jesus said that if you want love, here's what you need to know: That love is a fruit of the Holy Spirit. That if you can tap into, if you can get connected to God, the Holy Spirit - maybe not instantly with the push of a button but over time, like fruit growing off a tree - there will be more love for God and for others in your life.

And that's what I want to talk to you about today. John's gospel from chapters 13 through 17 is like a five-chapter long epic sermon that Jesus preaches the night before he dies. But to be honest with you, in my opinion, it's really confusing because Jesus wasn't American. You know, Americans, when we communicate, we have been very, very influenced by western thinking. We like things to be logical and orderly. Like when you come to this church, which is in America, like you want to hear a sermon like, "Pastor, give me the main point and then give me like three sub points and then you wrap it up with a nice conclusion and you tell a story and I'm going to get it." Which is not at all how Jesus preached. In eastern thinking, people didn't make point after point; they would make point A, then point B, then point C, then back to point A, then back to point B, then back to point C. Then let's talk about A again, and then maybe B, and then let's do another A, an A, a B, a C, an A, a B, and an A. The way they taught was through repetition. Not in big chunks and paragraphs and chapters but in little things that would come up like themes again and again. I kind of think of it like the little bracelets my daughters make at home. You know, with the different threads and they wind them around each other so you see a little bit of red like here, here, here, and here? That's what Jesus does.

So today, to help you understand Jesus' teaching on the Holy Spirit, what I want to do is like grab one of the threads, the one about the Holy Spirit, and just pull it out and show it to you. So today, I'm not going to teach you a chapter or a paragraph. Instead, I'm going to jump from like verse to verse to verse to verse and put them all together so our western minds can grasp all the powerful things that Jesus said about the Holy Spirit. Because if you grasp all of it and tap into his power, fruits - real love, real joy, and real peace - can increase in your life.

So let me grab that thread and show you the first spot where Jesus talked about the Spirit the night before he bled. In John 14 he said this: "If you love me, keep my commands. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever, the Spirit of truth." So there you go, right from the start, Jesus is talking about love. He says do you love me? Do you love God? And he doesn't say if you really love me, then go get a Christian tattoo. He doesn't say, you know, put all the presets on your radio stations and get your Spotify playlist to all have Christian music. He says, no, if you love me, if you're passionate about God, keep my commands. Do the things that I say. And Jesus would go on to say what matters to God more than anything else is that we love each other. And Jesus must kind of know that this is going to be challenging for most of us because he doesn't just say do it and amen. Instead, he promises to help. He says I'm going to ask the Father and God's going to give you an advocate to help you and be with you forever; the Spirit of truth.

Let me tell you about that word that Jesus chooses, "advocate." If you go home after this message and you would type in John 14:15-17 and compare all the different English Bible translations, you'd find out that there are rarely two translations that pick the same word in that passage. This translation calls the Holy Spirit the advocate; other translations call him the counselor. Still other translations call him the comforter, others call him the helper, and one even calls him the paraclete. Ever heard that word before? A paraclete is the literal Greek word that Jesus uses - the New Testament was written in Greek - and because this translation thought it was such a difficult word to translate and they weren't sure, they just left it and hoped you would understand it - paraclete. So let me teach you today what a paraclete is. Jesus was taking two Greek words - the word "para" and the word "klete" - and sticking them together. Not parakeet; so if you have any birds in your minds, just get them out. Put an "L" in the middle, paraclete, and the word "para" you might recognize; it means "next to." Alright, you've heard of a parallel line? That's a line that's next to a line. Or if you're in education, a paraprofessional is the person who helps; they're next to the teacher in the classroom. So "para" is "next to." And "klete" literally means "called." So a paraclete is someone that's called to be next to you. And that's why all the English translations pick different things. Well, what exactly does that mean? Is the Holy Spirit like the one that comes next to you and puts an arm around you like a comforter? Is he the ones that comes next and shares a bit of God's wisdom so he's a counselor? Is he one who's there next to you to lend a hand so he's the helper? And the best answer would be yes. The Holy Spirit shows up when you have trouble loving people, when you have trouble loving God, and he encourages and he helps and he counsels and he comforts and he guides. He is the paraclete.

And if you're having trouble loving someone in your world right now, I just want you to think for a second how powerful that promise of Jesus is. That the next time you see that guy at work, the next time you have to hand off the kids with your ex, the next time there's a family gathering and your brother or sister shows up and things just aren't good, the next time you see your neighbor at the mailbox who's always complaining about your dog or how long your grass grows before you cut it. Like when there's a person that's tough to love, the Holy Spirit is your paraclete.

So if you're taking notes in your program, here's the big idea that I want you to remember: That the Holy Spirit is here. It's a simple, beautiful, shocking and really helpful truth that whenever you're going through something difficult, the paraclete, called to your side, is God himself.

Many Christians feel like when they mess something up or when they sin or they're spiritual life isn't perfect that God is far away. And we pray like these crazy prayers like, God, if you're out there or if you're listening, which is why Jesus gave that promise. I'm not going to promise you a God in a far, far, distant place. No, I'm going to ask the Father and he's going to give you the paraclete; the God who's going to help you not from far away but right by your side. In fact, the New Testament will go on to say something crazy that if you're a Christian, if you've come to believe in Jesus, do you know what has now become the Temple of God, the Holy Spirit? You! 1 Corinthians 6 says, "Your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit." When he gives you faith, he somehow like mysteriously takes up residence in your heart so that whenever you need help, it is not far away; it is within you.

So friends, let me encourage you. The next time you find it hard to love, to pray a simple prayer: "Holy Spirit, help." And he's going to hear you even if you whisper. When you roll up to work tomorrow and there's Chuck, you know, and he's being like Chuck always is, you probably shouldn't say this out loud because Chuck might be offended but you can pray, "Holy Spirit, help," like help me be patient with this guy. Help me to be kind. Don't let my love be conditional. Don't let me gossip or slander, God. Help me to love him as much as you love me. Would you double my love, Holy Spirit? I know you hear because you're right here.

And parents, when you go home and the kids - argh - you just want to lock the bathroom door and take your phone and hide from them and hope they fall asleep, you can pray a very simple but powerful prayer: "Holy Spirit, help." Like help me to be like our Father in heaven; to be forgiving and patient. Don't let my love be conditional. Don't let me snap, God. Let me love them the same way that you love me.

And when you're in a relationship and there's tough stuff to work through, when you're both like trying to get your way and it's getting dysfunctional and messy, both of you can pray because at that table is not just you and him or you and her; it's you and God. Say, "Holy Spirit, help us." Help us to be selfless. Help us to put each other first. You're God; you can do anything. You can comfort, encourage, guide, and bless and you're right here at our side. So when you find it tough to love, when your passion for God is waning, say that simple prayer to the Holy Spirit: "Help."

And he'll answer you! Do you know how? The Holy Spirit is kind of weird in the Christian faith because we often don't know how he works. And maybe you're pretty jacked up right now like, "Yeah, I want the Holy Spirit! Come on, Holy Spirit, help me." You're like how does that work? Do you like feel it? Does he whisper? Is it a wind? Is it a motion? Does he like zap you? Or how exactly does the Holy Spirit work? And that's actually what Jesus goes on to explain. If we keep pulling on that thread the night before Jesus bled, we're going to find out exactly how to tap into the power of the Holy Spirit, to hear his voice, and to find the love that we're all craving.

Let me show you kind of a mashup of passages of what Jesus taught about the Spirit. He said, "But the advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I said to you. Peace I leave with you, my peace I give you. I don't give to you as the world gives so do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid." When the advocate comes whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father, he will testify about me. He will glorify me.

You catch it? How do you know when the Holy Spirit is working in your heart? Well, Jesus gives us a hint when he calls the Holy Spirit the advocate. That's another kind of funny word we don't use very often but you see it. He calls the Holy Spirit the advocate twice and once in the verse before; three times we learn that the nickname of the Holy Spirit is the advocate. Which kind of begs the question, what does an advocate do?

If you open up a dictionary on your phone - sorry, you don't open up a dictionary on your phone like this - if you'd open up a dictionary on your phone and type in the word "advocate," you'd find out that an advocate is someone who speaks on behalf of another person. Like mothers, if your kid is getting bullied at school, you don't feel like the teacher's doing anything and you turn kind of like mama bear, like you walk into that classroom and you are an advocate; you're speaking up on behalf of your kid. And it's the same with the Holy Spirit; he is the advocate. He speaks up on behalf of Jesus. So you know the Holy Spirit is working when he shows up at your side and instead of like, "I believe in you! You can do it! You're amazing!" Like that's some self-help stuff that lacks real spiritual power. Instead, what the Holy Spirit whispers in your ear is "Jesus can do it," and "Jesus is amazing." And "Jesus is glorious." And "Jesus has given you peace." And "Jesus has forgiven you." And "Jesus is in the middle of this." And "Jesus has a plan for that." You see it in the last phrases where Jesus says the Holy Spirit will testify about me. He'll glorify, he'll exalt, he'll make a huge deal out of me. And so, you know the Holy Spirit's getting at your heart when you start thinking that Jesus is glorious. When you're singing some song, the Holy Spirit might not show up and say, "Hey! Look at me!" But you see like that lyric that makes you think, "Oh, my goodness, Jesus! You're ridiculous! You forgive me. Your arms are wide open. Like you gave me grace yesterday and then you put more grace on top of it today. I love you, Jesus!" That's the Holy Spirit working.

In our church, we have a bunch of cameras. And you might see the guy that the cameras are pointing at and have no clue who the people are working behind them. But they're just like the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit like focuses the camera of your heart until it's looking right at Jesus and you see him so clearly in like 4K high-def and he looks beautiful and glorious and you love him. That's why the fruit of the Spirit is love because he gives you such a clear view of a God who is so big that your greatest passion in life is to love him even more.

So if you're taking notes, let me have you write this down: That the Holy Spirit is here, your paraclete, to help me see Jesus. And the bigger Jesus gets, the bigger the work of the Spirit in your heart.

It kind of reminds me of an old British guy named William; some of you might have heard me tell this story before. Back in the 1800's, William was a passionate and intelligent man who had a very unfortunate accident that robbed him of his sight. But he still pursued his life with a passion. He learned, he worked hard, and then one day, he met a girl. And they started dating and he pursued her and they fell in love, even though he had never seen her with his physical eyes. They got engaged and they set their wedding day. But in the preparation for the big day, William ran into a surgeon who claimed that he had the skill to reverse the effects of his accident. And so he underwent the surgery, they put the bandages over his eyes, and the bandages were actually scheduled to be taken off on his wedding day. So he took the bandages off and they walked him to the front of the church and when the doors opened, the emotion was high not just because she looked more beautiful than ever but because he saw her for the first time. And you can imagine as she walked up the aisle and they looked into each other's eyes and held hands, he saw this woman that he loved so much.

But if you would have talked to William the day before his wedding, he would have said that he found so much joy and had so much love for this woman he hadn't seen, which is kind of like the Holy Spirit. You know, there is a day coming for everyone who looks to Jesus in faith when we will see him. When Jesus the groom and his church, the bride, see each other face to face and we will party for all eternity the happiness will be so good. But you don't have to wait to love Jesus because when the Holy Spirit helps you to see him and know him and speak with him, our love can spike in incredible ways. And so, I want to give you some encouragement today. Every time you come to church, every time you turn on Christian radio in your car, every time you put on your Christian playlist as you're shaving or showering or getting ready in the morning, every time you open the kid's Bible and have a devotion with your children, every time before you go to bed you open up your own digital Bible and spend some time with God, I want you to pray a very simple prayer: "Holy Spirit, help me see Jesus." Like, I don't just want to go to church. I don't want to sing four songs and hear a reading and listen to a message and just go home. No, I want to see Jesus! Like, I want to see Jesus so clearly that I don't keep thinking about that messed up thing that I did back in the past because he forgave it and he loves me. I want to see Jesus so clearly that he is the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. He's sitting at the right hand of God and he is running the show, including the thing that freaks me out. I want to see him so clearly that I'm not afraid of that thing anymore. I want to see Jesus. I just don't want to tap my foot and raise my hand to some song for some emotional buzz for four minutes. I want to see the Jesus who's embedded in every lyric so clearly that when I leave this place, I'm still singing and I'm still loving and I'm still trusting. I have no desire - I'm too busy, God, to just open a Bible at home and read it to read it to feel better about myself. No, I want to see Jesus until he is so insanely loveable that I love him. And I come face to face with those same old temptations and they look so small and so weak and so unworthy because I've seen something so much better.

Do you know this is the prayer I pray about this moment? You know, 10 to 14 days before I preach, I sit down for the first time with the part of the Bible I plan to teach on and I always pray the same prayer. I have a little couch in my office that has three cushions on it and I always look right at the third one and I talk to the Holy Spirit. You know, the Father sits on the first one, Jesus gets to be the middle - they all sit together, they like each other, they love me - and I try to envision the Holy Spirit. And I say, "Holy Spirit, you wrote this book. Like you know what

every single verse means, you inspired every single chapter for a reason. You know that reason; I have no clue. And I know you love me. And I know you want to help me. And, Holy Spirit, there's 16 hours of things I could say about these verses but you know the people who are going to show up on Sunday. You know who they are. You know what they're going through. You know their doubts, you know their shame, you know their fears, you know their struggles, and I don't. I know one percent of what these people are going through but you know their names and their stories so somehow, Holy Spirit, would you help me to help them see Jesus?"

And every time you come to this place and Jesus looks a little better, it's because he listened and he answered that prayer because the Holy Spirit is not my far away helper; he is my paraclete. And he's yours, too.

Which is what I learned to pray in Pardeeville, Wisconsin. Ever heard of Pardeeville before? It's about 45 minutes north of Madison and when I was a young pastor, on occasion in the weeks leading up to Easter, I used to preach there. You know, beautiful church out in the country, maybe a couple dozen members, but what I remember about Pardeeville is not just the cool name. I remember the note someone left on the podium. And we'd take our rotation and show up in the Pardeeville church to preach, we'd put our notes up there as we arrived early. But there was a little note waiting for us that was a snippet from John's gospel. It's a little quote that comes from when a group of Greek men ran up to one of Jesus' followers with a request. They had never met Jesus before and so they came to him and they said these words: "Sir, we would like to see Jesus." And when any preacher showed up in that church, their congregation had left a note, "Hey, whatever you talk about, whatever passage, whatever theme, whatever stories, whatever props, Sir, we've brought you here because we want to see Jesus."

And maybe you could put that same request on the front of your Bible. Sir, Holy Spirit, I want to see Jesus! I want to see him so clearly that I'm going to go back to the same life but I will not be the same; that my love for my God and my love for my fellow man would not just be a little more, it would double. Not because there's some device but there's a great gift that Jesus gave. I will ask the Father and he will give you the Spirit. Friends, love can change the world. It can change a marriage, it can change a church, it can change a city, and love is possible because love is a fruit of the Holy Spirit that Jesus has given to his church.

Let's pray. Dear God, thank you so much for your free gifts. We love you because you don't make us earn it or deserve it. If we haven't been the best people this week, that hasn't stopped you from loving us. If words came out of our mouth in the heat of the moment that we wish we could take back, that is not stopping you from forgiving us. And even though we are totally unworthy, you have promised your Spirit and you're not going to take that back from us.

Holy Spirit, please give us the faith to believe the things that Jesus taught; that you are not far away but you're with us. And that nothing is impossible for you. A virgin named Mary was conceived by the power of the Spirit. If that can happen, the thing we feel that can't be changed can. And so, God, I pray for hope right now for your people; that they would not be afraid of the situations they're facing. And I pray for great faith. I pray that you would open the eyes of their heart until Jesus is so good and so sufficient that even if the thing in their life doesn't change,

their hearts will. Jesus, you give the kind of peace that the world can't give. Our world cannot guarantee that tomorrow will be okay but you can. Our world loves us in little bits and on occasion but your love is eternal so let that peace overwhelm our hearts.

And finally, Holy Spirit, we talk to you. Be with us on the car ride home. Be with us as we settle down for the night. Be with us as we wake up in the morning and, more than anything, help us to see Jesus. We pray in his glorious, beautiful, and powerful name, Amen.