



**BELIEVERS CHAPEL**

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Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

John 16:12-15

“The Spirit Indwelling and Teaching the Saints”

TRANSCRIPT

[Prayer] Heavenly Father, we think tonight of the teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit, and we pray that he may truly teach us as we think about his teaching ministry. Enable us to learn the principles by which he carries on his ministry and also enable us also to ponder and meditate upon that and make our own the principles by which we may be taught by him. Give us divine illumination as we consider the ministry that he has in unfolding the riches of the Lord Jesus Christ to us. We ask Thy blessing upon each one present. We know there are many questions, many difficulties, many trials, many other types of things that are upon the hearts and minds of those who are gathered in this auditorium, and we ask, Lord, that Thou wilt minister to them out of the riches of the Lord Jesus Christ as we look into Thy word.

We pray in his name. Amen.

[Message] “The Spirit Indwelling and Teaching the Saints.” Now, we have already considered, to some extent, the indwelling ministry in the section on the promise of the spirit, and so we’re concentrating our study tonight on the teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit. To be completely accurate, we should call this section probably our Lord’s teaching ministry because it is his teaching that the Holy Spirit brings to us. It is brought

to us through the agency of the Holy Spirit, but it is really the Lord who teaches for we read in verse 14,

“that He will glorify Me, for He shall take from me and shall report it to you.”

Well, let's read beginning at verse 12 through verse 15, and I'll be reading again from the original text and so there may be some differences with all of the versions that you may have in your hands.

“I have yet many things to say unto you, but you're not able to bear them now. But when that one shall come, the spirit of truth, he will guide you in all truth: for he shall not speak from himself; but as many things as he shall hear, he shall speak: and he will show you or report to you the coming things. That one shall glorify me because he shall receive from mine and report to you. All things, as many as the Father has are mine: for this reason I said, from me he takes and reports to you.”

When I was going through theological seminary one of the things that was done every fall was a series of messages were given through all of the four chapels of the week on the subject of the Holy Spirit's ministry in education. Dr. Lewis Sperry Chafer was at the time the president of Dallas Theological Seminary, and he gave every one of these lectures. And the subjects that Dr. Chafer spoke about were essentially subjects that had to do with the teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit. This section that we are looking at was one of the sections that he emphasized, chapter 16, verse 7 through verse 11 and then verse 12 through verse 15, and then near the end of the week we turned to 1 Corinthians chapter 2, and we looked at the teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit there.

One of the outstanding comments that he made -- and usually he made it at the beginning of the first lecture when all the new students were gathered for the first time in

the chapel. Dr. Chafer would begin his messages by looking out over the audience and saying, In Dallas Theological Seminary we have a faculty of one.

Now, at the time that he said that in those days they had ten or twelve faculty members, and they all sat on the platform just behind him very much like this, except the platform was a little lower in the old chapel building and the men were sitting up against the wall ten or twelve of the men there, and he would begin by saying in Dallas Theological Seminary we have a faculty of one. And then he would proceed to point out that while it's true that we had human teachers there, nevertheless, the teacher in a theological institution ideally is the Holy Spirit.

One of the requirements for entrance into the theological seminary is that they should be born again, the students and of course, in that particular experience is found the indwelling ministry of the Holy Spirit as a result of it. So when we come to the understanding of Scripture, it is helpful for us to remember that the teacher of Holy Scripture is the Holy Spirit. He uses many things. He uses human teachers. He uses books. He uses experiences that we have. He uses the meditations that we make upon the text of Scripture, but ultimately it is the Holy Spirit who is the teacher.

Now, the context of this passage is the Upper Room Discourse. Jesus is speaking to the eleven now. He's preparing them for the time when he will not be here in the flesh. He has said in the immediately preceding section that he's telling them the truth. It is profitable for them that he should go away because if he does not go away they will not have the privilege of the Holy Spirit. And the Holy Spirit when he comes will perform a particular work with reference to the world.

Now, the reason he said that is that he knew that they would be very discouraged that he was not going to be with them and, furthermore, he had told them that they were going to be his witnesses. And so the natural problem that one would have is how are we going to be witnesses to the Lord if the Lord is not here, and how are we going to survive? And when one remembers that the Lord has told them that just as the world has

hated me, it will hate you, it was even more of a problem for them. And so he informs them of the fact that the Holy Spirit is going to be their helper, and it is he who will convince the world of sin of righteousness and of judgment. And while he himself personally will be gone, they may be assured of having the accompanying ministry of the Holy Spirit.

Now, that was designed to encourage them. It was designed to give them boldness. It was designed to enable them to stand up in the presence of the enemies of the gospel of Jesus Christ and nevertheless preach the truth. And when we think of what happened on the day of Pentecost when Peter stood in the midst of the enemies of the truth and preached so boldly that great sermon then, well we see what our Lord ultimately meant when he said that the spirit of truth would come, and he would convince the world of sin of righteousness and of judgment.

Now, the Spirit has a teaching ministry for the believers. And in the twelfth verse, he launches into a discussion of this but begins by pointing out that they themselves have a certain limitation. “Yet many things I have to say to you, but you are not able to bear them now.” The context suggests that the disciples need this instruction to become useful to the Spirit for the work of convincing the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment. In our last study, we pointed out that when we get to the end of the preceding section, we ask the question, Well, how is the Holy Spirit going to convince the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment? And we looked into the context there, and we noticed that the Lord said I say to you the truth. It is expedient for you that I go away for if I do not go away, the comforter will not come to you. And then that is a clue to the effect that he intends that the conviction of the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment shall be by means of the testimony of the apostles. So this particular work of convincing the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment is something that the Holy Spirit will do through these men.

But now there are some limitations that they at the moment experience. I have many things to say unto you. By the way, we should stop on that for a moment. When the Lord Jesus says I have many things to say unto you, it's clear from this that there were many aspects of the truth that he would love to have them know. So that the idea that we may go back to the gospels and if we study the gospels fully and completely we'll have the primary teaching of the New Testament and practically all that we need is a false idea. I have many things to say unto you, but you cannot bear them know.

In other words, there are many things the Lord Jesus wanted to let them know. That would let us know that the gospels are not sufficient for us in this age. And the authority for that is the Lord Jesus Christ himself. It refutes the old liberal cry of back the gospels. It's often thought by some of them that the Apostle Paul's teaching is an illegal expansion of the teaching of the Lord Jesus, that what we have in the Lord Jesus Christ is the simple truth but what we have in Paul is the mystifications of a professional theologian who's taken the simple clear easy teaching of Jesus and has made them difficult for us.

Now, people who don't like Bible doctrine often tend to that because they don't like to have to be told that they must think when they are listening to the word of God or studying the word of God. We have here a kind of preauthentication of the New Testament in our Lord's statement, I have many things to say to you, but you're not able to bear them now, he said.

Now, there are also people who think that individuals who have been born again and who live in the time before the cross are sufficient for everything, but it's clear that our Lord did not regard these Christian men as sufficient for everything at this time. They did not yet have the teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit as they would have it. I have many things to say unto you, but you are not able to bear them now.

Now, this word, to bear, is a rather unusual word in this connection. It occurs in a number of places, but it really means to bear a burden, and it seems to refer not to their

mental unfitness as if they need to go to school and sharpen their brains. It rather refers to their moral unfitness. Their experience sets a limit upon their ability to live out the implications of the revelation that Jesus wants to talk to them about. In other words, they are still immature and at their present state, even though they have been born again even though they have received new life still they are not at the stage of maturity where they're able to bear the kind of teaching that the Lord Jesus wishes to give them. So I have many things to say unto you, but you are not able to bear them now, but when that one shall come. Now, there's no question about the meaning of that one because he's just been talking about the Holy Spirit and here in an appositional phrase he defines that one. When that one shall come, the spirit of truth, he will guide you in all truth, for he shall not speak from himself but as many things as he shall hear, he shall speak, and he will report to you the coming things. The Spirit's coming is going to lead to instruction and also empowerment for the bearing of the things that the Lord Jesus wants to teach them.

Now, the Holy Spirit is called here the spirit of truth, but before we notice that, I want you to notice that he is spoken of as a person. Now, in the Greek text at this point we have when that one, and that demonstrative pronoun is in the masculine gender. One thing that makes it a little difficult is that the word Spirit in Greek -- well, I perhaps should go back and say the Greeks do not use natural gender like we do, but the Greek language has grammatical gender. In other words, something that is really masculine might be given another gender name. In fact, some things that are neuter are often masculine or feminine as the case may be. The Greeks used grammatical gender.

Now, we use natural gender, and we still have some remnants of other things like when we talk about a ship, we will say she came to port. I've never noticed anything particularly feminine about a ship, but nevertheless that's part of the English language. We used to speak of things like that, still do speak of some things, but those are only remnants of the idea. The word for spirit in Greek is neuter. So always neuter adjectives agree with it, neuter participles agree with it. I say always. I mean as a general rule,

that's the rule of grammar. Adjectives should agree in gender, number, and case. So the spirit is neuter grammatically, but there are some indications, of course, that the spirit is not a neuter or a divine principle only but a person, and this is one of the cases in which we have this for we read when that one shall come, and that's masculine. And then it is defined as the Spirit, neuter, the Spirit of truth. So the use of the masculine term when that one shall come, let's us know that the Holy Spirit is a person and not a principle or a power.

Now, many people think of the Holy Spirit as a power. That's characteristic incidentally of the church of Christ. If you run into some people who are of the church of Christ they tend to dislike -- I'm sure that they may object at some of the things that I'm saying, but I think it's really true of them. They tend to discount the personality of the Holy Spirit. I'm not accusing them of being absolutely unsound on this, but I think if you talk with them enough you'll realize that they do exactly that. And then there are the liberals who speak of the Holy Spirit not as a person at all but as a principle, as a power.

Now, these of course deny the trinity. They deny that we have one God who subsists in three persons: Father, Son, and Spirit. The fact that this is a masculine indicates that the Holy Spirit, although the title spirit, Holy Spirit, is neuter he is regarded as a person. So the stress rests on the person of the Holy Spirit.

That's important because when we deal with the Holy Spirit, we're not dealing with a principle. We're not dealing simply with a power. We are dealing with a person. So that when the Bible that the Holy Spirit indwells every believer, we are to remember and know thereby that a person, a divine person, indwells every believer in the Lord Jesus Christ permanently as we read back in John chapter 14 when we were studying this earlier. I will ask the Father, and he will give you another comforter that he may abide with you forever. The spirit of truth, which the world cannot receive. So the Holy Spirit is the present permanent possession of every believer in Jesus Christ. We have the personal presence of the Holy Spirit. He is Christ's representative in our hearts and the

Bible says that he is in our hearts by the spirit. So, when he talks about the teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit here in verse 13, the declaration of this instruction, the stress rests immediately on the personality of the Holy Spirit, and Jesus thinks of him as a person. So when that one shall come, the Spirit of truth. By the way, you will notice that he puts this in the future. The Spirit has not yet come. There is a sense in which the Holy Spirit's teaching ministry begins in its fullness on the day of Pentecost. So from that time on, we shall have the ministry of the Holy Spirit as a teacher in a way that they did not have up to that point.

Now, let's notice the next words. He will guide you in all truth. I like this word “guide.” It really means to lead along the way or to guide in the way. It's found only twice in the gospel of John. It's found here -- in John's writings, I should say. It's found here and it's also found in Revelation chapter 7 in verse 17 where reference is made to the fact that the Messiah will lead believers throughout the ages to come in the future, and he will lead them to living fountains of waters. So the Lord Jesus sends the Holy Spirit to guide us in the truth. And when we reach heaven, we will have the personal presence of the lamb himself who will throughout all the ages of eternity guide us as his sheep from pasture to pasture, from lake or from water to water, beautiful lovely picture of the fact that heaven is not going to be the same thing all the time that we're there. You're not going to get to heaven and after you've been there six months or a year and say this certainly is a dull place. We do the same thing every year. No, it's not going to be that. There is every indication that heaven is going to be a growing experience throughout the ages of eternity. Remember also that God is an infinite God. And if we are to come to know him who is infinite, well that's a subject that will keep us everlastingly at it.

I've often thought that perhaps God is like the dark side of the moon as far as we're concerned. He's revealed one side of himself to us, but when we get to heaven we're going to take a look at some of the things that he has not yet been please to reveal to the saints. The secret things belong unto the Lord, the things that are revealed unto us

and to his children. So when we get to heaven it's going to be exciting to learn some new things. We won't have theology 101, but we will go on 101, 102, 103, 104, and when the ages of eternity have rolled on for a number of ages, we'll still be in theology 1694 and so on.

So he will guide you in all truth. This word occurs in the encounter of Philip and the Ethiopian eunuch and remember when Philip came alongside the chariot and heard him reading from Isaiah chapter 53, he said, “Understandest thou what Thy readest.” And the eunuch said, “How can I if I do not have some man to guide me?” Well, that's the word that is used here. The Holy Spirit is going to guide you in the way in the truth.

Now, the fact that he uses the term “guide” suggests some things to me. First of all, it suggests that this guidance is a gradual experience. We're not going to come to heaven and immediately just know everything, and that's certainly what he refers to now. Some of us have been studying the Bible for thirty years, some of you may have been studying it for forty years. Come to think of it, I've been studying the Bible for forty years. Some of you may have been studying the Bible for fifty years. Well, you, I'm sure, even though you may have every year you've studied it learned some wonderful things, you know that you do not yet have a grasp on all the truth. You know, one of the prayers that I have made ever since I was a young Christian every year was I get down on my knees and I say, Lord, unfold to me more and more of the truth of the word of God this year. And I can honestly say I think that he has given me an increasing knowledge of the word of God. That's one of my special prayers, and I've often I make it every year and also throughout the year as well because I think it's so important. But the guiding into the truth is a gradual thing. And we experience it here. We shall experience it when we get to heaven, no doubt.

I think of 2 Peter chapter 3 in verse 18 where Peter says, “but grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.” It is a growing experience. So the Holy Spirit will guide us into the truth. This guidance is gradual.

Now, I think also that this word “guide” suggests the proper relationship between being forced into the truth and then standing off and saying make up your free will, of your free will make your decisions. He says he will guide. He doesn’t say I will bring you into the truth. He says I will guide you in the truth.

So we have both the sovereignty of God, for he is the one doing it, but we also have in the word “guide,” a suggestion of the fact that our free agency is involved, not our free will. We don’t have free will, but we do have free agency. We do those things that we want to do. I think this involves the idea of response. He will guide you into the truth. And I think also the fact that Jesus said I have many things to say unto to you, the Spirit when he comes he will guide you in the truth suggests that this guidance is never ended as long as we are on the earth.

Now, in the original text there’s some doubt over the expression, the prepositional phrase before the words “truth.” Some of the manuscripts into the truth. Some have simply the preposition in “in the truth.” One of them suggests he will guide you into the truth and the idea back of that is that you were brought in -- be brought into the truth as if perhaps you’d be brought to all of the truth that God intends for you to have. Perhaps that’s what he’s talking about. On the other hand, I personally prefer the read -- the variant reading at this point of “in.” And so it seems to me that he’s saying that I’m going to guide you in the sphere of the truth, in the whole of sphere of truth, and that’s the way I understand it. If we take the other meaning, the meaning would be he will enable them to penetrate all aspects of the truth including that which they cannot bear now, but I take it that he’s going to guide them in the sphere of all the truth. It’s going to be an experience in which they are lead by him into all the aspects -- in all of the aspects of the truth.

You know, we sometimes have the habit of speaking of the early Christians as the fathers. One of the outstanding Scottish theologians of a century or so ago was John Duncan. He was a professor of Old Testament at the University of Edinburgh, and so he

was called Rabbi Duncan. That’s the way the Scots pronounced it. We would say Rabbi Duncan because he was the teacher of the Old Testament there, and he was an outstanding man they called him Rabbi Duncan. Well, he used to resent the habit that we have of talking about the earliest Christian writers outside the canon as the fathers. He held that the fathers such as, for example, Ignatius and Polycarp and the others who were the first Christians after the apostles. He said actually those men have a very rudimentary knowledge of the faith. And that’s true. If you read the apostolic fathers, you will discover they have a rather elementary knowledge of the truth. It’s amazing that after thirty or forty years of the growth of the Christian church, these apostolic fathers have so little understanding of the doctrine of the cross and salvation through the Lord Jesus Christ. And Robert Rainy, who was a principle at New College in the earlier part of this century New College in Edinburgh says elementariness is the signature of all the early literature. What the apostles and some others of their generation taught is one thing, what the church proved able to receive is quite another, and both of these men suggested that it’s not the early church fathers who ought to be called the fathers, but it is we who ought to be called the fathers because we have had the experience and the privilege of being instructed for nineteen hundred years or so by the Holy Spirit in the things of the Lord.

Now, our Lord goes on to say he will guide you in all truth for he shall not speak from himself. Now, some of the renderings of the English at this point read like this: he shall not speak of himself as if the Spirit will never teach anything that concerns himself, but that’s not the meaning of his expression “of himself.” This really is an expression that refers to source. It has the idea of separation. He shall not speak from himself means simply that the source of his teaching is not himself. The Holy Spirit is not the source of the teaching that he will bring us. He shall not speak of himself.

The New International Version has he shall not speak on his own. The teaching will not originate with the Holy Spirit. He will not teach on his own authority, the

Revised Standard Version reads. He shall teach. What shall he teach? He shall teach what he hears. That's what he shall teach. So the Holy Spirit will teach what he hears, and he will teach what he hears from the Son or the Father. Our passage emphasizes the Son, but the Son says all things that the Father has of mind. And so evidently the Son and the Father cooperate in what is to be taught and the Holy Spirit is the one who takes of the things from the Son and conveys them to us. So that everything that the Holy Spirit teaches us is what the Lord Jesus Christ wants us to respond to. The teaching comes ultimately from him. He shall not speak of himself but as many things as he shall hear he shall speak, and he will report to you things to come.

Now, there are some points here in application that are very important. Truth is not by man's discovery. Spiritual truth is not by man's discovery. It's by God's disclosure. We understand divine truth because God reveals it to us. That's important. We tend to think that if a man's smart enough, if he's brilliant enough, then he will understand divine truth. That's not true. God reveals some of his most significant truth to people who might not be able to pass a calculus exam at all. Oh, wait just a minute, he might not be even be able to pass an arithmetic exam, but some of the outstanding truth that he has has been revealed to these individuals. Truth is by God's disclosure. It's not by man's discovery.

Now, I know someone will say but doesn't it help if you know Greek and Hebrew and philosophy and psychology and history and all of the other things. Well, it might help in some ways, but ultimately if a man is not responsive to spiritual things, then of course, all of that knowledge is of no real spiritual significance. It's very important to remember that the Holy Spirit is the source of divine truth so far as we are concerned. And to turn it around, this emphasizes the importance of relying on the Spirit. We rely on the Spirit. We don't rely on our intellects, our brilliance, our skill in the languages, or in the philosophies. Our aptitude for the practical, our personality, or if you're a preacher, for your platform, poise and all of the other things that you think are the things that make

for an effective teacher of the word of God. One of the greatest things that a Christian must learn really that if he is to be an effective servant of the Lord, he must learn to learn by the Holy Spirit and allow the Holy Spirit to disclose truth to him, and then rely upon the Holy Spirit in the teaching ministry of the word of God.

And, furthermore, you need also to learn in your witnessing that you cannot discuss or argue or reason or even love someone into the truth. Occasionally, people say when love is felt, the message is heard. How foolish. That's a sweet little -- that's a sweet little statement which is heretical if there ever was one. When love is felt, the message is heard. Why do you realize what that means? Whoever loved more purely, more fully than the Lord Jesus Christ? Was his message heard? Well, it was heard by little company. He said the world hates me, and it will hate you. And so he was crucified. If you call that getting the message, well it's a different kind of message. Or if you say well he's not a good illustration, then let's take the Apostle Paul. When love is felt, the message is heard. So what did they do to Paul? Well, so far as tradition is concerned he wound up much the same way. Peter -- well, you go right down the list of the apostles, the great men down through the centuries. Think of the Christian martyrs, when love is felt the message is heard. No. No. When the Holy Spirit desires to teach, the message is heard. When he opens the eyes of our minds and hearts to respond the message is heard but not until then. I'm not arguing against a man ministering the truth in love. Our Lord did that. Paul did it. And other great men have done that. That's very important, but so far as the knowledge of the truth is concerned, it comes by divine illumination. How important it is to get down on our knees as we read the Bible and ask for divine illumination. So he shall not speak from himself. Jesus says, he will show you things to come.

Now, that's an interesting expression. Are these things which are future things, are they future from the Upper Room Discourse -- from the time of the Upper Room Discourse from the time of the present. If that's so, if the things to come are future from the time of the Upper Room Discourse, then he's referring to the whole Christian system

which is yet future when our Lord spoke. He will show you coming things. C.K. Barrett, one of the finer commentators on the gospel of John, says that this phrase refers to things that are future from the standpoint of the author. They would then be eschatological events, things to come. Many of you know the book authored by Dwight Pentecost called *Things To Come*. I don't know whether Dr. Pentecost thought specifically about this text or not, but obviously in writing in eschatology, he thought of this as things that are future from the standpoint of the author. That is from the standpoint of John the Apostle. They would then be future things. It's possible that the meaning is simply, he will show you things to come the things that make up our New Testament now. These are the things. Included in those things are the things that are to come in the future, but also included the things that have to do with Christian truth now, truth concerning the doctrine of the church.

Now, there is explanation of the instruction in the last two verses. He talks about its content and its character. And he says in verse 14, that one will glorify me. Now, this is a rather interesting statement in the light of the present state of evangelicalism with its flirtation with the charismatics. He says that one shall glorify me. What is the central work of the Holy Spirit? Is it to give us the gift of tongues? Is it to give us the gift of miracles? Is it to give us other sign gifts? No, the work of the Holy Spirit is Christocentric. He shall glorify me. In other words, the work of the Holy Spirit is to glorify the Lord Jesus Christ, and I think this particular clause should be branded on the tongues of those who speak with tongues.

Now, that was an unloving remark, wasn't it? [Laughter] but I tell you that's about how I feel because I think a great deal of damage has been done to evangelicalism by its flirtation with the charismatics. I must confess. I'm being honest with you. I must confess I do not know of anything really good that has come from charismatic teaching.

Now, let me explain exactly what I mean. I don't mean that something good has not come from charismatics, but it is not from their charismatic teaching. It's from the fact

that they may have come to be believers in the Lord Jesus Christ and to have accepted evangelical truth. The blessing of the charismatics is related to Christ and his salvation not to speak in tongues, not to stress upon the gifts of healing or otherwise, healing and miracles. I hope you understand what I'm saying. I do not think there is anything really good that has come from charismatic teaching. What commentaries have they produced on the Bible had given us illumination in the word of God. That's one of the characteristic things missing in that whole movement. They don't have anything. All their literature is shallow directed towards that experience.

Now, my Christian friends, you should be very careful and study the Scriptures in the light of that. You see, the work of the Holy Spirit is to glorify Jesus Christ. He shall glorify me. In fact, he says it twice here, doesn't he? So the work of the Holy Spirit is to glorify the Lord Jesus Christ. By the way, what a magnificent statement of the deity of Christ. Can you think of any man saying he shall glorify me? That'd be the most self-centered thing to say. He shall glorify me. Any man or movement that glorifies self or the spirit is false to Christ and the Spirit.

Now, it seems to me that there's probably some connection between this word “glorify” and our Lord's statement in John 12 where he says, “Now is come the time in which I am to be glorified.” So to glorify Christ involves the glorification of him as the one who redeems men through his cross. For the spirit to glorify Christ is to glorify him in his crucifixion and his saving work.

Do you remember the servant of Abraham who went to obtain a bride for Isaac? What did he do? Did he talk about himself? No, he talked about his master and how he had given all things into the hands of Isaac. He was his heir. He glorified Isaac and so Rebekah came. That's the work of the Holy Spirit is to glorify the Lord Jesus Christ, and the best of preaching is the preaching that glorifies Christ and glorifies him in his cross.

Romans 8 has been called the chapter on the Holy Spirit. How does it begin? There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, and then it

concludes with nothing shall be able to separate believers from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. The chapter on the Holy Spirit begins with Christ, concludes with Christ, because the Holy Spirit glorifies Jesus Christ.

Now, he says,

“He will show you the things that he receives. That one shall glorify me for he shall take from me and shall report them to you. Everything that the Father has is mine for this cause I have told you he shall take from me and shall report back to you.”

That word means to report back. And so in this very repetition of seeing this three times in this particular context, we note the divine initiative in the undertaking of the teaching of the disciples. It is God the Father, God the Son who teach and build up the saints through the teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit. So the Holy Spirit is like an individual. This is, of course, a human illustration. He's like an individual who goes to the Son and he says, “What shall I tell them?” And the Son says to them what he wishes to be taught, and the Spirit goes back and tells us. He takes from me and reports back to you. So the teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit is to take the things of the Lord. These are the things he wants us to know and understand. That is the things the Lord wants us to understand. These are the things that the Holy Spirit brings to us. His teaching concerning the past. He will bring to remembrance all things. Our Lord has said the present he will guide you in the truth and the future he will show you things to come.

Well, this is a magnificent passage on the teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit, but it will all come to naught if you don't open up the Bible and study the Scriptures. You can be assured, however, that the Holy Spirit, your permanent possession, is the teacher of divine truth. May God enable you to know what it is to be guided by him in the sphere of the truth. If you want to test of whether you are being taught, perhaps you can answer this question: Is Jesus Christ being glorified in my mind and my experience?

Let's bow in a word of prayer.

[Prayer] Father, we are grateful to Thee for this wonderful chapter in which we have such important truth. O God, give us the illuminating ministry of the Holy Spirit. May the Lord Jesus Christ teach us through the Spirit the things that we so desperately need to know and understand. Give us obedience to the word of God. Enable us, Lord, to be useful to Thee in what thou art doing in this age.

For Jesus' sake. Amen.