

DO YOU HAVE THE CABLE?

No. 11 in the series, "Final Briefing" - John 16:5-16

INTRODUCTION

I was ripped off by my health insurance company. I know, you're all astounded. An insurance company treating someone unfairly? Who has ever heard of such a thing? But I got even. I sued them, and I won. However, this is where it gets weird. I didn't know I sued them.

How could you sue a company without knowing it? Well, it seems that there was a class action lawsuit against this corporation and though I wasn't even aware of it I was somehow included in the class action. The insurance company apparently settled the lawsuit. It occurred to me that there is a little bit of a parallel between my situation and that of many Christians. I had something coming to me, could have been counting on it and even acting on it, but I didn't because I was unaware of it. I had this settlement money coming to me, but had no idea it belonged to me. So it is with many followers of Jesus. We have an amazing resource available to us that we are often unaware of and thus do not avail ourselves of. We are going to learn about that resource today as we look at Jesus' words in John 16:5-16. By the way, in case you're interested we recently received our portion of the insurance settlement. It was *three dollars and twelve cents*. Fortunately this resource we're going to learn about today is a much bigger deal than that.

EXPOSITION

JESUS PROMISED SOMETHING SUPERIOR

1. Verse 5 has been the source of much discussion among scholars. Jesus says he is going to "him who sent me," then says, "Yet none of you asks me, 'Where are you going?'" This is puzzling because in 13:36 Peter asked him that exact question, "Lord, where are you going?" Some people start howling about inconsistencies in the Bible. However, I think there is an explanation. In 16:5 Jesus uses a present tense, so it could be translated "none of you is asking me now." Yes, Peter had brought up the question earlier, but Jesus says in verse 6, "Because I have said these things you are filled with grief." They'd kind of forgotten about what was in store for Jesus as he talked about leaving them and they are wallowing in self-pity.

2. Jesus follows that up with a stunning statement in verse 7 that addresses their grief. “It is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go I will send him to you.”
 - a. This sounds like an “eat your broccoli because it’s good for you” kind of statement. Not one of Jesus’ followers thought his leaving them was even remotely good for them. My guess is at least some of them were thinking, “Yeah, sure, that’s the kind of thing people say when they’re doing something you don’t like and they just want to try to make it seem better.” It’s like the girl breaking up with a guy and saying, “This is really for the best for you. You deserve someone who is better for you than I can ever be and I know that you’ll find that person and it will be wonderful.” What the guy knows is he’s being rejected, and that’s not good no matter what anybody says.
 - b. These guys had walked away from businesses and previous lives to follow Jesus around for several years. He was the greatest thing in their lives. Now he’s saying, “Hey guys, it’s been real. Be chill. Peace, out.” He’s leaving them with their dreams and hopes completely shattered. How can that be good?
 - c. Walking around with Jesus would have been amazing. How much stronger would your faith be if you could just spend even a couple of days with Jesus and watch him give sight to a blind man or enable a paraplegic to stand up and walk? We know God wants us to live by faith and trust him, and we try to do that. But all of us wish God would do something that we can *see*. We want him to prove he’s there in an undeniable way. You walk around with Jesus and you see it on a daily basis. Doesn’t it feel like that would make you way stronger and bolder in your faith?
 - d. Think how much easier it would be to pray if you literally were talking to Jesus who was sitting right there across the table from you.
 - e. Think of how much easier it would be to trust him. “Hey, Jesus, I am concerned about where Toby and Anna are going to get the money to get through medical school.” He says, “Do you remember the time we were supposed to pay that tax, and I sent Peter down to the beach to go fishing?” “Yeah, I remember.” “What happened?” “He found the tax money in the mouth of that fish he caught. So I get it. You can get all the money you need any time you want. So okay, I won’t worry.”

- f. I have read that young men's brains are not fully developed until the age of 25. The part that develops last is that part that provides good judgment. Prior to that age young men are prone to do inherently risky things thinking somehow they're going to get away without harm, which is probably why they get guys that age to be soldiers. Along about 25 they start thinking, "You know, that is dangerous and dumb." I wonder if as you get older that part of the brain starts to get over developed. Too much looks dangerous and risky. One place I notice this is I feel like I'm more apprehensive about flying now that I was when I was young. Oh I suppress it, but that thought of being strapped into a sealed tube 35,000 feet in the air with exactly zero control of the situation is increasingly unpleasant for me. Imagine being in a plane experiencing severe turbulence and having Jesus physically sitting in the seat right next to you. Does that change anything for you? You'd be getting all tense, then you'd look over at Jesus, sound asleep and you'd go, "Oh, yeah, that thing with the boat in the storm. Right. We're not going to die because Jesus is here."
 - g. I'm pretty sure that I'd even be a better person if I were walking around with Jesus all the time. I'd be kinder, more patient, more tolerant of the foibles of others, more giving.
3. So how can Jesus say it was a good thing that he was leaving? He said it was because he would send the "Counselor" to be with the disciples. In fact, in chapter 14 he said this "Counselor" wouldn't just be with them like Jesus was, he would actually live and work inside them!
- a. Jesus said this couldn't happen unless he went away. The obvious question is why not? Here's my answer: I don't know. Jesus didn't explain why not. So all we can do is guess. My guess is Jesus was following the Father's plan, and his plan was Jesus had to die on that cross, rise from the dead and ascend into heaven to inaugurate a whole new relationship for us with God. It's called the New Covenant. Included in that covenant was having the Counselor come. That was the plan, so Jesus said, "here's what has to happen. I have to leave. Only when I've done that will he come."
 - b. Why was that God's plan? Who has known the mind of the Lord? None of us. Why did God make the sky blue? Why did he make leaves green? Why did he give me hair that would fall out? Actually

that last one is maybe a result of what Adam and Eve did, but you get the point. We don't know why God planned things as he did. We do know that Jesus followed the plan faithfully.

4. All right, but what's the story on this Counselor person? Who is he and what makes having him so wonderful?
 - a. The Greek word translated "Counselor" is hard to fit into one English word. It has been translated comforter (great, he's like a thick bed spread?), helper, advocate, friend, strengthener, standby. The word literally means "one called alongside."
 - b. So the picture is of a person who is going to come live within us who will help us, be on our side, encourage us, strengthen us, motivate us, comfort us and be with us in the battle of life. In John 14:17 Jesus said of this Counselor, "he lives with you and will be in you." In other words, it is Jesus himself, living in us spiritually.
 - c. This is the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Christ. The prophet Ezekiel said when God gave a new covenant it would include having his Spirit, the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Christ, inside us.
 - d. Jesus says that's better than if he was here physically. Doesn't always feel like it, does it? I can't see or touch the Holy Spirit, but if Jesus was here I could see and touch him. I could see what Jesus is doing in the world. I would always know if he was present. I hardly ever see what the Spirit is doing in the world and can't always tell if he's there.
 - e. If Jesus were still physically on the planet the only way you could really personally benefit from him is if you were physically with him. That means millions of us would be without anything. He would be limited by physical constraints. Most of us wouldn't physically be walking around with Jesus, so we would be on our own. So Jesus sent the Spirit so he could be with all of us all the time.

JESUS PROMISED A POWERFUL PROVER

1. Here is one of the amazing things the Spirit will do. He will "convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment" according to verse 8. Actually the word "guilt" isn't in the original text, so literally he will convict the world about sin, righteousness and judgment. But what does that mean?

- a. The Greek word translated “convict” could mean “supply proof of,” or to convince. But it actually is a little stronger than that. It does mean to convince someone to the point of acceptance. In other words, to bring them to a point of decision. The Spirit will cause people to make a decision about sin, righteousness and judgment.
 - b. The Spirit will convince people of sin, because they don’t believe in him. In the end this is the core sin, the one that can’t be forgiven. Not believing in Jesus is the worst error, the one thing a person can do to ensure God will judge them. So the Spirit will convince people this is a problem they need to do something about.
 - c. Second Jesus said the Spirit will convince people of righteousness. He doesn’t mean their righteousness, he meant Jesus’ righteousness. We know this because he says, “because I am going to the Father.” The fact that Jesus was resurrected from the dead then ascended into heaven proves his true identity. It proves that far from being a false teacher or a phony Messiah that some accused him of, he was the perfectly righteous Son of God. In short, his going to the Father vindicated him. The ancient concepts of righteousness and vindication were closely tied. The Holy Spirit will convince people that Jesus was vindicated by his death, resurrection and ascension and that he is, in fact, who he claimed to be, the Messiah, the Son of God.
 - d. Finally the Spirit will convince the world that Satan now stands condemned. God defeated him through Jesus. He is now beaten and doomed. He may still be running around causing havoc, but the clock is ticking. And the point is that any who buy Satan’s line and follow his lead will share his fate. They will be judged.
 - e. The Holy Spirit will bring people to a place where they understand that Jesus is the Son of God, that they are guilty and deserving of condemnation before God by not believing in him, that God in fact will judge those who are guilty. The Spirit will convince people that they need a Savior and that Jesus is that Savior.
2. Consider what happened in Acts 2. Some Christians camp out on the what happened in this passage when the Holy Spirit was given to all people of God for the first time. However, they may miss something that is important. The dramatic events that day drew a crowd that wondered

what all the commotion was about. This gave Peter an opportunity to explain to them what was happening and then to preach the good news to them. But note his words in verses 22-23. “Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders and signs, which God did among you through him, as you yourselves know.” No one could deny the miracles. They’d all seen them. Peter went on, “This man was handed over to you by God’s set purpose and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross.”

- a. This was not a speech that was going to win Peter any friends. He has just hit them right between the eyes. He’s said, “God proved Jesus was divine through his miracles and you saw them. Yet you not only didn’t believe in him, you had the Romans torture him and kill him on a cross.” He does it again in verse 36, “Let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.” That’s the heart of his message.
- b. What sort of response would you expect to that blunt instrument approach? The message is, “You guys suck. You killed the Messiah.” These were not people prone to admitting wrong and meekly agreeing that they had royally messed up. I would expect that they wouldn’t like what they were hearing and would just tell Peter “shut up or we’ll shut you up...permanently.” I would not expect that they would either appreciate or buy into what he was saying.
- c. Look at their response in verse 37. “When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, ‘Brothers, what shall we do?’” They had heard Jesus preach, and for the most part rejected him. They’d seen him do miracles, but they refused to be convinced. Now Peter says in a fairly simple sermon, “Remember that guy you rejected? Turns out he’s the Messiah, the Lord of all.” And they are “cut to the heart.”
- d. How did that happen? Why would people who got a full-on exposure to the real Jesus in the flesh and rejected him, suddenly feel like their very souls had been laid bare? Why did they suddenly realize they had done the worst thing they could ever have imagined? It wasn’t because Peter was so persuasive. The Spirit of God was convincing them about all of it. That is the power of the Spirit at work.

3. This is a pretty amazing promise. Jesus has just dropped this bomb on these guys telling them he's leaving but they will carry on the kingdom of God without him. Were I in their sandals, I would have found that more than a little bit of a problem. Jesus hadn't convinced all that many people to believe in him, but now they were supposed to go around and really get things rolling. Start pulling those converts in. Here's my problem: if Jesus couldn't do it, how am I supposed to do it?
 - a. Jesus had a great answer. The Holy Spirit is going to work on them and convince them of things they would not otherwise believe. They won't be able to resist his work. That's what happened on Pentecost, when 3000 people flocked into the kingdom of God because they were convinced of sin, righteousness and judgment. It was not because Peter was such a terrific orator.
 - b. Do you ever feel like you're a weak excuse for a follower of Jesus because you simply don't have the ability to debate people who don't believe and convince them of the truth of the gospel? Do you feel like you ought to have answers to those people's objections and arguments and you don't. You are saddened by the fact that nothing you say even interests them at all. Have you ever felt like that?
 - c. Here is a critically important piece of news for you. What is it that will cause people to believe in Jesus? It is that the Holy Spirit convinces them of sin, righteousness and judgment. If he doesn't do that in a person, no matter how much you know, how many answers you have, how effectively you argue for the truth, how smart you are or how eloquent you are, that person will not believe. You cannot convict them of sin, righteousness and judgment, and that is the critical step that has to occur in order for someone to believe.
 - d. In Ephesians 2:1 Paul described the state of every person who does not believe in Jesus. "You were dead in your transgressions and sins." Dead. Can you make dead people live? No, and neither can I. That requires a miracle only the Spirit of God can do. Have you ever tried arguing with a dead person? Oddly, they simply don't listen to reason. In fact, they don't listen to anything. They can't. They're dead. The only way anyone will ever become convinced of his or her need for the Lord Jesus is if the Spirit does the work in their hearts.

- e. We cannot argue people into God's kingdom. There are people who have real intellectual questions about the gospel. But here's a truth we need to know, at the core, what keeps them from coming to Christ is not intellectual. It is in the heart. It is a desire to not submit to God. It is native human rebellion against God. I have seen intellectual questions vanish almost overnight in people not because they finally got the answers they wanted but because the Spirit convicted them, they believed, and somehow the questions just didn't seem like that big of a deal anymore.
- f. This is great news. It means we don't have to fear that our inability to say everything right and have all the right answers and live such a perfect life that it will convince people they need our Jesus might keep them from believing. They will only believe as a result of the work of the Holy Spirit. So we can openly tell them what Jesus has done for us and live our lives before them without fear. Then we pray that the Spirit of God will do his work. It is up to him, not us!

JESUS PROMISED A TERRIFIC TUTOR

1. A second thing the Spirit would do is guide the disciples into all truth. He is the Spirit of truth and he will bring it to their minds. Sometimes people apply this passage to us and talk about how the Spirit can help us understand the Word of God. He does that, and there are passages in the Bible that say this. But that is not really the point of this passage.
2. These guys are going to have to remember all that Jesus said and did. They are going to have to pass that on to other people. Some of them would have to write it down. Not only that but they are also going to have to explain the significance of the whole life and work of Jesus. They are going to have to help people grasp this whole new relationship with God that Jesus had set up.
3. How would they ever do that? Jesus promised them that his Spirit would aid them. He will remind them, he will show them what to say and to write. This is what helps us trust the writers of the New Testament. They weren't just smart men who had some really good ideas. They weren't just guys who had terrific memory capacity. They had the Spirit of Jesus working in their lives to guide them into all truth so the message came across clearly and correctly, whether spoken or written.

APPLICATION

Jesus says having his Spirit within us is better than having him with us physically. It should have a big effect on us, right? It is an awesome thing to say the Spirit of the Almighty God actually is in me. But shouldn't I be a lot different if the Spirit of Christ is in me? Shouldn't I be remarkably different than other people? Shouldn't I *feel* different?" In other words, shouldn't his presence in me have a much bigger effect than what I see? This is why you see some people so desperate to experience some sort of supernatural manifestation of the Spirit, because frankly I am pretty mundane. So I think we need to consider a couple of questions:

WHAT SHOULD WE EXPECT FROM THE SPIRIT?

1. Ability to accept the things of God
 - a. Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 2:14 "The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them because they are spiritually discerned."
 - b. Do you believe that God exists, that he is a personal loving God, that he sent his Son to this world to die for us that we might live, and that by trusting in him, having faith, you are going to live eternally in God's kingdom? If so, why? The majority of the human race does not believe that. Why do you? Is it because your parents raised you to believe it and sort of programmed you? Is it because you are smarter than other people and figured it all out? Or is it the opposite, that you are more gullible and superstitious than other people. You swallow such nonsense that other people don't buy for a moment.
 - c. None of those is true. I know of people who were raised by good parents to believe in Jesus, but they don't. I know of very smart people who don't believe in Jesus. I know of very gullible people who don't believe. Your parents might have taught you, and you may be the smartest or most gullible person on the planet, but if you believe those things it is because the Spirit of God has worked in your life. If the Bible makes sense to you and seems relevant to your daily life it is only because the Spirit is making it so. If the Spirit were not working actively in you then you would be dead in your sin, the Bible would seem incomprehensible, contradictory, outdated and irrelevant.
 - d. Years ago Laurie and I were in Fry's Electronics and we saw a terrific deal on a large LCD HD television. We did not have an HD TV at the

time and we were amazed by the display model we saw. The picture quality was so vivid and crisp. At this particular time we had a financial boon and had a little extra money. We were sorely tempted. We never buy anything impulsively, but we had this money, enough for that TV, and that deal would be gone the next day. We said, “Let’s do it!” It was quite out of character for us. Unfortunately we were profoundly dumb. We had no idea how this whole high definition thing worked. We figured this LCD TV was like any other television. You take it home, plug it in, hook the cable up to it, turn it on and, wow, look at that picture. We were so excited. We got it home, took it out of the box, set it up, turned it on, and were seriously disappointed. We saw exactly the same kind of picture that we had on our old school tube television. It was exactly 0% improved. We looked at each other and said, “This is not worth anywhere close what we’ve paid for it. Let’s take it back.” So we did.

Like I said, we were outliers when it comes to dumb. We found out several years later when Toby came home from college that to get HD you have to have digital HD cable and you have to have an HDMI cable that runs from your cable box to your television. If you don’t have those things bringing the HD signal into your TV you don’t get that great picture, no matter what kind of TV you have.

Think of the Holy Spirit as being like those HD cables. If you don’t have him, if he is not active in your life, no matter what happens you simply won’t get the picture. It absolutely will not happen! If you believe in Jesus and find his Word applicable and understandable and relevant, it is because of the work of the Holy Spirit. So rejoice because your faith is evidence of the work of the Spirit of Jesus.

2. Desire to do God’s will

- a. Ezekiel 36:27 says in the new covenant this is what God will do for us, “I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws.” Most of us probably wish that we had a stronger desire to obey God than we do, but we need to consider that if it were not for the Spirit, we wouldn’t care at all. What we would care about is just doing whatever will get us the most security, power, wealth and approval that we can in this world. God’s will would be of no interest to us whatsoever.

- b. Why are you here at the Anchor Church? You could be going out to brunch this morning or going to the beach. You could be getting those chores done at home. There are so many things you could be doing. Why are you here? You're here because you care about what God wants. Frankly you in this church have a fairly strong desire in that way because there are tons of churches that put on a better show than we do. That you care about doing God's will is evidence of the Spirit.
 - c. Yes, but I'm fickle, I fail to do God's will, I get distracted. All too true for most of us. But you still care, and the general direction of your life is to care about what God wants. That only happens if the Spirit of Christ puts that desire in us. Let me say that again, it only happens if the Spirit of Christ puts that desire in us.
3. Freedom
- a. 2 Corinthians 3:17 says, "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom." One of the main products of the presence of the Spirit in your life will be freedom.
 - b. What kind of freedom? In the context of that verse it was freedom from the grinding need to perform religiously, to keep all the rules and try to earn God's good favor. Where the Spirit is there will be a sense that the gospel is true, that you are accepted and loved by God, and that while you desire to do his will, your failures will never cost you God's love and the blessing of eternal life.
4. Ability to do God's will
- a. Ephesians 3:16 Paul wrote, "I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being." God will give us the power to obey him through his Spirit.
 - b. We see this same idea in Galatians 5:22-23 where Paul talked about the fruit of the Spirit. That is what the Holy Spirit will produce in us. When we look to the Spirit and are led by him we will have the power to do what God calls us to do.
 - c. R. A. Dickey is a pitcher in major league baseball who has an unusual physical trait. He does not have an ulnar collateral ligament in his elbow. This is the primary stabilizer for the elbow. Most people would not be able to turn a doorknob without it. The fact that he can throw at

all is astounding. But this led to a major opportunity to see the Spirit work in his life. He was offered a large contract by the Texas Rangers. It was in a physical exam that it was learned for the first time that the ligament was missing in his arm. He had been excited about signing the contract when he was called into a meeting with his agent and Doug Melvin the Rangers general manager. In his book, *Whenever I Wind Up*, Dickey says Melvin told him they were retracting their offer. He said he felt rage. “Complete rage. It feels as if it starts in my toes and blasts upward through my body.” Melvin, he said, had dropped an atomic bomb on his career. He said he prayed and then said it was “as if there’s a strong hand on my shoulder holding me back, giving me pause. In that instant I have a self-control that wasn’t there a moment earlier. I hear a voice: ‘Relax, I’ve got you, Relax, R. A. It’s okay...I’ve got you.’ The voice is the Holy Spirit.”

HOW DO WE EXPERIENCE THE WORK OF THE SPIRIT?

1. There is a really odd thing about the Spirit of Jesus that we can see even in this passage. Jesus said he was going to send his Spirit into them and told them some of what he would do, but he didn’t give them the how to’s. There’s no Holy Spirit operating manual. How were they to get the Spirit? How were they supposed to have him work and do all this stuff in their lives? Jesus didn’t say!
2. What is frustrating is that absence of how to’s is consistent in the Bible. We are commanded to be filled with the Spirit and to walk in the Spirit and to live by the Spirit and be led by the Spirit. But we are never given the instructions for how you do that. Look all through the Bible and you will not find that passage that says, “here’s what you need to do to be filled with the Spirit: Step One...” You won’t find anywhere in the Bible the “here’s the walk-in-the-Spirit formula.”

Isn’t that weird? Did God goof? Did he intend to include that and somehow he missed the deadline and it didn’t make it into the final edition? Or is this something only a few special people who are more spiritual than the rest of us and somehow know things the rest of us don’t know can figure out? No, it’s not just for a few super spiritual types and God didn’t make a mistake.

3. I think the answer to this interesting dilemma is rather more mundane. Suppose we are talking and decide we want to get together during the

week so I say, “Give me a call.” Well that’s not enough information. What do you mean by that? How am I supposed to do that? Well, you have a cell phone, yes? You take your phone in your hand and you swipe across the screen to unlock it. Then you touch the button on the bottom that is shaped like an old telephone handset. Once that happens you look for a shape on the bottom that looks like a person’s head and shoulders. Touch that and a screen for contacts comes up. You scroll through that until you find my name. You touch the number there then hold the phone to your ear waiting for the call to connect. When you hear my voice you can speak into the phone and talk to me.

Now when I say “give me a call” why don’t I go through all of those instructions? It’s because you already know how to do that. And that’s why God doesn’t have to give detailed instructions on how to be filled with the Spirit and walk in the Spirit. You already know how. Uh, I do? But wait. I don’t. How do I live in the Spirit?

4. In John 7:37-38 Jesus said, “If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him.” John then said Jesus was speaking of the Holy Spirit. The key is believing in Jesus. It is believing what he supplies is enough. It is believing he loves you unconditionally and has forgiven you. It is believing his will is what is best, so letting him lead. It is believing that he will give you the resource you need to follow. When you stray, it is admitting it and drinking of him again. In other words, the way you are led by the Spirit, filled by the Spirit, walk in the Spirit, is by believing in Jesus, and keeping on believing in him. It is as simple as that. There is no other formula.