

So imagine this scenario. Malaysia's just made it back into the Thomas Cup final, and they're going to face off against China. And imagine that we've got Lee Chong Wei in his prime, and of course, China's first singles is Lin Dan in his prime: two of the greatest badminton players of their generation. But then, hours before the match is due to start, the news starts filtering in. Lee Chong Wei isn't going to be able to play. There's been a huge family emergency, so he has to go, even though Malaysia has been counting on him. So that means we're going to need a replacement. And so Malaysia has to turn to their next best player, who happens to be...Liew Daren? Now, no disrespect to Liew Daren, but whereas Lee Chong Wei is in the discussion when it comes to the greatest badminton player of all time, Liew Daren's highest ever ranking is being the world number 10. Chong Wei has won the prestigious All-England tournament multiple times, Liew Daren's biggest achievement is winning a second-tier French tournament once. Everyone in Malaysia knows Lee Chong Wei, even the non-badminton fans, but even badminton fans might struggle to name Liew Daren. He's not exactly the most inspiring replacement! He's not Lee Chong Wei!

Now come with me to a dark night in Jerusalem, where it's Passover time. There's a small group of men, walking silently and following the lead of their leader, Jesus. Everyone knows Jesus. He's been teaching and performing miracles like no one before him. But on this night, alone with his disciples, he's been telling them it's time for him

to go. That, of course, doesn't sound like good news to his disciples at all! Why go? What for? But Jesus makes this absolutely stunning, head-scratching statement. John 16:7. "But very truly, I tell you, it is for your good I am going away." Another Bible translation says: "it is to your advantage"!¹ Really, Jesus? For real? In case you haven't noticed, we're not the most impressive men around! We're actually pretty clueless! We can't teach like you do, we can't do miracles like you. Malaysia can't beat China without Lee Chong Wei, we're not going to overcome the world without you! How can it be better if you're gone than if you stick around?

But Jesus holds firm. Verse 7 again. "Unless I go away, the Advocate will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you." He insists: I need to go in order that you guys might get the Holy Spirit! Jesus, of course, isn't saying that he and the Holy Spirit can't be in the same room. It's not like the British royal family, where there's an unwritten rule that says Prince Charles and Prince William shouldn't be on the same plane in case the plane crashes! But he is saying: I need to complete my mission. For my kingdom to be established, for my saving reign to begin, I need to go to the cross. Only then can a new era begin. Only then can the Holy Spirit arrive in a way he's never done before. Somewhat paradoxically, the disciples will be better off if Jesus goes!

¹ ESV

But the disciples will need to take some convincing. After all, Jesus they can see, but who is this Holy Spirit? What does he do? What *can* he do? Is he an adequate replacement? After all, he's not Jesus! Is this going to be a case of getting a Liew Daren when you've had Lee Chong Wei? Well, that's why in John 14-16, we find Jesus' most sustained teaching about the Holy Spirit. He wants to reassure them: yes, the Holy Spirit is much, much more than adequate. For his ministry is fundamentally a Christ-infused ministry, as we will see. Jesus and the Holy Spirit, you see, are not like two different colleagues in two different departments who have no contact with each other! This morning, we're going to see how he and Jesus actually relate to one another, for our good. And you'll be relieved to know, apart from maybe the first point, we're going to mostly spend our time here in John 14-16, especially John 16. (I'm certainly glad to be more anchored to one passage today!)

But let's quickly recap what we've learnt about the Holy Spirit so far. We know that the Holy Spirit is a person! He's not energy, he's not a life-force, he's someone to be known. In fact, he's God himself. And he's certainly not someone to be pigeonholed, reduced to just one thing, as if he is the sum total of his gifts. Instead, hopefully, we've expanded our horizons a little bit and seen him in more personal terms. He's the Life-Giver, the Power-Supplier, the active presence of God, the agent of change. And he communicates! He speaks to us through the divine-human words of the Bible! His sword is his word,

and his word is how he works. And we're going to see 4 more things today that he does. And we'll spend a bit more time on the first one.

Firstly, the Holy Spirit brings Jesus down to us. [REPEAT] Let me try to show this step by step. Now I'm pretty sure everyone in this hall has heard of Barack Obama. But probably none of us know who David Plouffe is. That's because, as one journalist put it, he was "the invisible supporting the visible." He was Obama's campaign manager!² Many people agree he did a magnificent job, and Obama himself credited Plouffe in his acceptance speech after winning the US presidency, calling him the "unsung hero of the campaign."³ Well, that's what the Holy Spirit is like in relation to Jesus – he's the "invisible supporting the visible", the unsung hero of Jesus' campaign here on earth. We don't see him if we don't look, but he's essential. Let me demonstrate, by looking at Jesus' life.

At the very beginning of Luke's Gospel, the angel Gabriel appears, and announces to Mary: "The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you!"⁴ And so, Matthew tells us, Mary was found to be pregnant *through the Holy Spirit*.⁵ He's right there at Jesus' conception! Then as Jesus begins his public ministry, he goes to be baptised by John the Baptist, and coming out of the water, *the Spirit* descends on him and the Father cries out:

² http://www.creativitypost.com/conversations/the_power_of_the_behind_the_scenes_worker

³ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/David_Plouffe (accessed 27 Feb 2019)

⁴ Luke 1:35.

⁵ Matt. 1:18.

“This is my beloved Son, with whom I’m well pleased!”⁶ In Luke 4, Jesus steps into a synagogue, and announces himself as the fulfilment of Isaiah 61! He’s the Servant, he says, whom *the Holy Spirit anoints* to go proclaim good news to the poor and freedom for the captives!⁷ Furthermore, he’s led by *the Spirit*, both Matthew and Luke tell us, to be tempted, as he showcases his humanity.⁸ And the gospels don’t often make this explicit, but Matthew does once imply that he drives out demons by *God’s Spirit!*⁹ Jesus is performing his miracles in the power of the Spirit! And that makes sense when we realise the Holy Spirit is the invisible supporting the visible! Jesus isn’t just the Messiah, he’s the Spirit-anointed Messiah!

But it’s not just the ministry of signs and wonders that is conducted in the Spirit’s power. There’s this significant statement in Hebrews 9:14 – that it’s through “the eternal Spirit” that Christ was able to offer himself as a perfect sacrifice to God! He was able to endure the cross because of the Holy Spirit. Romans 1:4 then tells us that according to the Spirit, Jesus was declared to be the Son of God in his resurrection. And 1 Timothy 3:16 says Jesus is vindicated by the Holy Spirit, as he is exalted to the right hand of the Father. And so from the birth of Jesus all the way throughout his life, teaching and miracles, and in his death, resurrection and ascension, the Holy Spirit is there all along! And so that’s the first step, the first thing to get. *The Holy Spirit is*

⁶ Mark 1:10-11, Luke 3:22

⁷ Luke 4:16-21

⁸ Matthew 4:1, Luke 4:1.

⁹ Matt. 12:28

working in concert with Jesus. He is at work upon Christ from beginning to end. And if so, then maybe the Holy Spirit isn't a Liew Daren! He isn't a poor substitute for Jesus! On the contrary – if he isn't there, Jesus wouldn't complete his rescue mission!

But here's the second thing to get. *The Spirit was at work upon Christ, but now Christ sends the Spirit to work in us.* That's the second step. In John 14:16, (we saw this verse last week), Jesus says: "I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever – the Spirit of truth." That word "advocate" in Greek is the word *Parakletos*, which simply means someone who is called alongside you – especially, though not exclusively, in a court setting.¹⁰ So some translations say something like "Helper" or "Counsellor" by which they mean legal counsel, and "advocate" is probably as good a translation as any. Indeed, Jesus himself is called a *Parakletos*, an Advocate, in 1 John 2:1! And now Jesus says: "I'm going to send another advocate!" There are two words in Greek for the word *another*, and the one used here, *allos*, means "another of the same kind." So Jesus is saying, (I mentioned this last week too), I'm sending someone else just like me!

Let me illustrate. I have a brother. And we look very similar. We basically have the same voice, and similar mannerisms. And just like me, he has some theological and preaching training, and we share

¹⁰ See Burge NIVAC, also Max Turner, *HS and Spiritual Gifts*, 77.

similar ministry convictions. So imagine if I am stepping down as pastor of this church, but I say to you: “I’m going, but it’s ok, because I’ll send Alfred to you.” I’m sending someone just like me!¹¹ That might terrify you, but oh well. Anyway, that’s what Jesus is doing here. Sending another like himself.

You see, just like Jesus, the Spirit’s all about Truth! Jesus, you might remember, says he’s the Truth in John 14:6. And in John 14:17 and 15:26, the Spirit is now described as the Spirit of truth. And just like Jesus, he has a fundamental ministry of teaching! All throughout John, one of the characteristic things we see about Jesus is how much he teaches. In John 6, for example, we get this extremely long section where he teaches about the Bread of Life. In John 13:13, he is described as the Teacher. And in John 14:23, he says to his disciples: “Anyone who loves me will obey my teaching!” But just a few verses later, in John 14:26, he describes the Spirit’s ministry. And it is also one of teaching. The Advocate, he says, will “teach you [the apostles] all things and will remind you of everything I have *said* to you”! And remember last week, when we said that one of the Spirit’s jobs is to illuminate the mind of the reader? He helps us understand! That’s what teachers do!¹²

¹¹ The shape of this illustration is borrowed from Graham Beynon, *Experiencing the Spirit*, but it works because the situation with our siblings parallel each other!

¹² Ferguson, *The Holy Spirit*, 187.

And just like Jesus, he is not universally accepted. In John 1:11, we're told that Jesus came into the world, and yet his own did not receive him. And in John 14:17, we're told "the world [also] cannot accept him [the Holy Spirit], because it neither sees him nor knows him."¹³ So, clearly, the Holy Spirit is in one sense, just like another Jesus! He's distinct but similar! The disciples are not being shortchanged, and neither are we. The Holy Spirit is not an inferior substitute to Christ! That's why in Romans 8:9, the Holy Spirit is also described as the "Spirit of Christ"!

In fact, it actually gets better. So far we've seen the Holy Spirit works in concert with Jesus in his ministry, and now Christ is at work through the Spirit, who is just like him. But here's the third step. *This Holy Spirit doesn't just come alongside us, but actually dwells within us!* In John 14:20, Jesus makes this staggering statement. "On that day [he's referring to Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit comes], you will realise that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you." Basically, Jesus is saying, just as I share the closest possible fellowship with the Father in the Spirit, so you will share the closest possible fellowship with me through the Spirit!" The Holy Spirit who worked in concert with Christ now brings Jesus down to us. And we don't have to go to Nazareth or Jerusalem to find him. We have him all the time, everywhere!

¹³ Turner, 80.

And we need him inside of us, for without the Spirit, we actually don't get any of the benefits of the gospel! Think about it. Imagine you won a trip to your dream destination – let's say, Tokyo. You get to travel first-class on Singapore Airlines, where you will enjoy a large screen, a personal minibar, onboard shower, luxurious bedding and fast wi-fi. But as long as you are outside the plane, you will never get to your destination, nor enjoy all those benefits! You need to be *in* the plane! And it's the same with Jesus. Jesus has died and risen again, yes! He's won for us so many benefits! But for as long as he remains outside of us, and we are not *in* him, we cannot get to our destination, nor can we enjoy the benefits of the gospel. We cannot enjoy forgiveness and redemption and future resurrection. We need to be "in Christ". And that's what the Holy Spirit does, bringing Jesus to us and into us. Galatians 4:6-7 says:

⁶Because you are his sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, "*Abba, Father.*" ⁷So you are no longer a slave, but God's child; and since you are his child, God has made you also an heir.

This is what the Holy Spirit does. This is his work. This is what we should praise him for. If we don't have the Holy Spirit, we don't get Jesus. And if we don't get Jesus, we don't get the Father. We're not his children! We'll still be lost in our sin. It is indeed for our good that the Spirit comes!

So that's the first point, and actually, we could stop here already and just praise God. But maybe foolishly, I'm going to press on to try to cover a few more points, so I ask for your effort to keep concentrating. And for the remainder of our time, we're going to zoom in on John 16 in particular. So do keep your Bibles open there if you've closed it.

Secondly, the Holy Spirit convicts the world regarding Jesus.

When the Holy Spirit comes, he will act a bit like a Clare Rewcastle-Brown! Her job, as you know, is to expose lies and untruths. And the Holy Spirit is here to expose the lies and untruths that the world tells about Jesus. Look at verse 8. *[READ]* He's here to show what's wrong, and to press the truth home into the hearts of men and women, so that they would see how they've wronged Jesus, and repent. He wants to expose sin and righteousness and judgement. Let's look at each in turn.

Number 1. Sin. That's Verse 9. The Holy Spirit wants to convict us of sin. You see, in the end, every Christian, has the same basic life-story, although the details will vary enormously. If someone is truly a Christian, that means at some point in their story, he or she will come to an awareness of God's holiness and his or her own sin. They become aware of the fact they've rejected Jesus. That's what happened at Pentecost, as Peter stood up, proclaimed to the crowds

about Jesus and exposed their deep disbelief. And as a result, Acts 2 tells us, they were cut to the hearts. We see something like this in the Barrio Revival in 1973 amongst the Kelabits. From what I understand, students were so convicted of sin that that they felt even the weight of being late to school. And according to one of the penghulus, he had no dispute to settle for 3 years, as people forgave each other and stolen properties were returned or compensated for.¹⁴ That's the Holy Spirit's work. He helps us see how I – not the person out there, not my neighbour – but how I've rejected Jesus, how I've grieved him, and thankfully, he leads us to repentance as we turn back to Jesus.

And of course, the Spirit doesn't just do this when we first become Christians, but all throughout our Christian lives. He keeps peeling away the layers. He's like a videographer. Fairly regularly, he will get us to watch the film of moments in our lives, and point out unChristlikeness in us. He'll show us – in that situation, Brian, did you notice you reacted that way? Did you notice what your thoughts were, what you said, what your actions were like? Was that God-honouring, Brian? And if we remain attentive to him, he'll diagnose our hearts. Brian, by reacting that way, what did that show about who you really trust? God, or money? By reacting that way, what did they show about where you seek approval? God, or the people putting pressure on you? By thinking that way, what did they show you about where you think happiness is to be found? God, or something else?

¹⁴ Dexter Low, *God's Mandate for Transforming your nation*, 49.

Now thank God, the Holy Spirit is gracious and usually doesn't show such film for public consumption! But he does keep prompting us to consider whether we do have an ongoing trust in Jesus, or we're placing our hopes somewhere else. And we would do well to pay attention to his promptings. When was the last time you truly felt convicted that a specific thing you were thinking or doing was making Jesus sad? If it was a very long time ago, then it's worth asking - have you been paying attention to the Spirit? Or are you brushing him off? It's something to consider.

Number 2, Righteousness. That's verse 10. This is a tricky verse to understand, but I think Jesus seems to be saying the Holy Spirit will convict the world of its false self-righteousness. After all, when the world sentenced Jesus, a completely innocent man, to death, it showed how twisted their own standards of righteousness were! And now that Jesus is going to the Father, the Holy Spirit will continue that work. When the Holy Spirit empowers Christians to live Christ-like lives, sometimes the world doesn't like it, because it exposes their own darkness! In school, when you don't cheat on your exams even though your classmates are doing so, it can make your cheating friends uncomfortable, because you're showing the wrongness of their actions! At work, when you don't cheat on the taxes, it could make your colleagues uncomfortable, because you're showing you're not chasing after money the same way! They are being convicted of their

lack of righteousness. So no wonder Jesus said earlier not everyone can accept the Holy Spirit! But hopefully, while some people don't like it, others will take note, and that will be one step in their journey towards Christ. That's the Spirit's ministry in this world.

Number 3. Judgement. Verse 11. Again, a tricky verse to understand. It could mean that the world has judged Jesus wrongly and been exposed accordingly, because the cross shows Jesus has actually beaten Satan!¹⁵ Or it could mean that the Holy Spirit exposes the certainty of judgement for all those who side with Satan, since he's already lost!¹⁶ Either way, the work of the Holy Spirit is to show that to be not on Jesus' side is to be on the losing side. He's here to show the world that they're wrong if they think he's irrelevant, or out-of-date, or a nice guy but not someone I want to be close friends with. He convicts the world of their wrong evaluation of Jesus.

And so just like Jesus, a big part of the Holy Spirit's job is to convict people. Just as Jesus exposed the Pharisees for their hypocrisy, so the Holy Spirit exposes the world. But he does this, as Jesus does, so that people will come to Jesus and he will be able to dwell in them. If you're someone who believes in Jesus, this is what the Holy Spirit did to you.

¹⁵ Carson's view.

¹⁶ Graham Beynon; Jackman?

Thirdly, the Holy Spirit guides the apostles into the whole truth about Jesus. That's 16:12-13, verses we already covered last week, but I'll just briefly spend a bit of time here to reinforce what was said. Now at this point, Jesus' hearers are aware they have a heavy task ahead. In John 15:27 – they're given their mission – they must testify about Jesus the same way the Holy Spirit testifies about him! And in John 16:1-4, they are going to face stiff opposition. Jesus talks about how they're going to be thrown out of the synagogues in the name of religion and even kill them. So how are they going to cope? How do they know what even to speak? After all, they don't even understand Jesus half the time! But Jesus, says, no worries! Verse 13: "When he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth." And remember, this isn't about constantly receiving new revelation. In John's gospel – it is Jesus himself who is always presented as the Truth! John 14:6 – I am the way, the truth and the life. John 8:32 – when you know the truth, the truth will set you free – that must refer to Jesus as well! The Holy Spirit will help them know Jesus even more deeply, and how to see life in light of Jesus. Max Turner, who is theologically charismatic and a thoughtful scholar, is worth quoting here:

“The Truth' into which the Spirit guides is *principally the truth Jesus has incarnated and taught, or things in continuity with it...* for John, the Spirit's task is primarily to *clarify* to the disciples. It is to deepen their understanding of the truth already revealed...that is, to bring true

comprehension of the significance of the historical revelation in Christ.”¹⁷

Let’s take an example. Back in John 2, Jesus talks about destroying and raising the temple. And no one has any idea what he means. But John 2:21-22 tells us: “The temple he had spoken of was his body. After he was raised from the dead, his disciples recalled what he had said. Then they believed the scripture and the words that Jesus had spoken.” The Holy Spirit has now guided them into the truth, the significance, of those things Jesus said long ago!

This is confirmed by the rest of verse 13 – “He [the Holy Spirit] will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is to come.” Roughly the same point is made in verse 15. *[READ]* So, the Holy Spirit is not acting apart from Jesus. He will give the apostles only the words of Jesus, which as we saw last week, now comes to us in the words of the Bible. He doesn’t act independently! He’s humble! And he’s relentlessly Christ-centred.

And that brings us to the fourth and final point for this morning.

Fourthly, the Holy Spirit glorifies Jesus. Verse 14. *[READ]*

Ultimately, this is what the Holy Spirit is all about. He’s all about Jesus. At this point, I can do no better than how the theologian J.I

¹⁷ Turner, 83.

Packer describes it. Let me read from his book *Keep in step with the Spirit*, and let him illustrate for you. He says: Consider floodlights.

“When floodlighting is well done, the floodlights are so placed that you do not see them; you are not in fact supposed to see where the light is coming from; what you are meant to see is just the building on which the floodlights are trained. The intended effect is to make it visible when otherwise it would not be seen for the darkness, and to maximize its dignity by throwing all its details into relief so that you see it properly. This perfectly illustrates the Spirit’s new covenant role. He is, so to speak, the hidden floodlight shining on the Savior.

Or think of it this way. It is as if the Spirit stands behind us, throwing light over our shoulder, on Jesus, who stands facing us.

The Spirit’s message is never,

“Look at me;
listen to me;
come to me;
get to know me,”

but always

“Look at *him*, and see his glory;
listen to *him*, and hear his word;
go to *him*, and have life;
get to know *him*, and taste his gift of joy and peace.”¹⁸

The Holy Spirit doesn’t actually want us to think about him or focus on him all the time! It’s Jesus he wants you to gaze upon. Even when

¹⁸ Packer, *Keep in step...*, 57.

he's convicting you of sin, he wants to move you into the direction of Jesus, to find grace there. His purpose is always, always to glorify Jesus. If we always place all our attention on him and never Jesus, something's gone wrong. It's not what he wants.

So again, if we wanted to ask if a ministry is truly Spirit-filled or not, let's ask: is this ministry focused on Jesus, who he is, and what he's done? Where is the spotlight on? Is it on the Spirit himself? Is it on the pastor or evangelist? Is it on visible signs, or the blessings one might get? Or is it on Jesus himself? That'll be a big clue as to whether the ministry is truly from the Holy Spirit.

So as we end, let's remember who the Holy Spirit is all about. He's all about Jesus Christ. They're not colleagues in separate departments. They're not Lee Chong Wei and Liew Daren. Instead, the Holy Spirit is Jesus' campaign manager, always making him look big. So that means if the Spirit is living in us, we will find ourselves drawn back to Jesus. We will want to delight in Jesus. We want to speak of his beauty. And if at the moment, we're struggling to think of Jesus as anything special, or delightful, then let's pray hard for the Holy Spirit to show us how amazing he is again. That's a prayer he'd definitely love to answer. Let's pray.