

# Position and Perspective

John 16:12-15

Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> May 2021

## Key Scriptures

- John 16:12-15
- 1 Corinthians 12:4-11

## Summary

Chapters 14, 15 & 16 of the Gospel of John record some of Jesus' last words to his disciples before he is crucified. In these words, Jesus is preparing them for the huge change in position in their relation to him. No longer will he be walking with them, instead, the Holy Spirit will be dwelling in them. We experience a similarly massive change in position when we trust Jesus with our life, as this is when the Holy Spirit comes and dwells in us. The Holy Spirit is completely, and fully God, just as the Father and the Son are. Therefore, to have the Holy Spirit dwell in us, is to have God in all his fullness dwell in us. Wow!

With this change in position, comes a change of perspective. The Holy Spirit, whom Jesus refers to as the Spirit of truth (John 16:13, see also: 14:17; 15:26), guides us into all truth (16:13). Not all truth in the exhaustive sense that we will know everything about everything, rather, in the specific sense of knowing the fullness of Jesus' glory as indicated in 16:14. The Holy Spirit shifts our perspective so that we increasingly see Jesus more fully. In addition to this general revealing of Jesus glory, the Holy Spirit gives specific gifts; tools for us to use in following the Holy Spirit's call to glorify Jesus and build his kingdom.

The gifts of the Spirit are tools, not badges of status or achievement. In 1 Corinthians 12 Paul gives examples of some of the gifts and guidance on their purpose and use. We read in 1 Cor 12:11 that the Holy Spirit distributes gifts to each person as he determines. This means we need not be anxious if we have not received a particular gift, we can simply trust the Holy Spirit that as we walk with him in relationship and follow his call he will equip us with the gifts we need when we need them. Our posture towards the Holy Spirit is one of active openness to receiving all that the Holy Spirit wants to give us.

Some of the gifts are specifically related to the Holy Spirit's work of guiding us into all truth. The message of wisdom, and the message of knowledge (1 Cor 12:8), prophecy, and the distinguishing of spirits (12:10) are gifts where the Holy Spirit shows us things from God's perspective. These gifts edify the whole church family. A person with the gift of wisdom speaks word from the Holy Spirit into specific situations enabling decisions to be made based on God's wisdom. Similarly, a person with the gift of discernment brings understanding from God about what is going on in the heavenly realms and helps the whole church family understand how to pray and minister into situations.

## Questions/Actions

1. How can you help each other in your small community explore the gifts of the spirit? How can you affirm the work of the Holy Spirit in each person?
2. How can you provide an environment where it is "normal" to recognise gifts in each other and provide space for practice and growth?

3. Pause and be still, ask the Holy Spirit to reveal more of the fullness of Jesus' glory to you. Whilst you do this, you may like to read a passage from one of the gospels that speaks of Jesus.
4. Ask the Holy Spirit about gifts
  - Perhaps you are aware of gifts the Holy Spirit has given you? Listen for the specific invitation of the Holy Spirit to use these gifts.
  - Perhaps you don't feel you have been given any gifts? If this is a painful thought, ask the Holy Spirit to heal past hurts in this area and give you renewed freedom and courage to receive all that the Holy Spirit wants to give you. Thank the Holy Spirit for his ongoing work in you of revealing Jesus' glory.
5. Explore giving each other permission to speak words of prophecy, pictures, scriptures to each other. As long as these words give strength, encouragement and comfort (1 Cor 14:3), and demonstrate love (1 Cor 13) then you are on safe ground. If you receive a word from someone, hold it lightly. If God is getting your attention there will often be several words, pictures, scriptures from different people that are related and together bring clarity. These words may come all at once, but often come over a period of time.