

Another Helper

John 14:15-18, 25-31

It's really a crisis for Jesus' disciples. He had told them he was leaving them. I assume they understood that meant he was going to die. They would be lost, all alone. These were his words,

John 13:33 "Little children, I shall be with you a little while longer. You will seek Me; and as I said to the Jews, 'Where I am going, you cannot come,' so now I say to you."

John 13:36 Simon Peter said to Him, "Lord, where are You going?" Jesus answered him, "Where I am going you cannot follow Me now, but you shall follow Me afterward."

So Jesus sought to encourage his disciples,

v.1 "Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. 2 In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also. 4 And where I go you know, and the way you know."

But they didn't know the way! Their hearts were troubled. They were in great distress. And Jesus promises them another Helper. That's our subject this morning. Another Helper.

I think everyone of you can relate to that. Everyone of you has something that causes stress, something that is a great burden. It might be related to the things of this world—sickness or injury, financial struggles, family relationships, or just the on-going pressures of school or employment. So let me offer you a Helper.

I. THE PROMISE OF ANOTHER HELPER.

It is a promise that comes first from Jesus.

A. A promise of Jesus.

It is a promise Jesus makes to his disciples. Another helper beside himself. He is leaving, but he promises to send his disciples another helper to be with them.

v.16

This is a very fascinating Greek word, and you may already be familiar with it. It is the word 'paraclete.' Literally, the word means someone who is called along side of you. So in 1 John 2:2, the same word is often translated "advocate."

1 John 2:2 "My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. 2 And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world."

An advocate, one who stands by your side. In the context of a courtroom, it is your defense attorney. And as 1 John continues, a propitiation. One who pays the penalty of your sentence for you. That's a pretty good attorney!

The word is sometimes translated Comforter, as in the familiar King James version. By definition, the word means encouragement, or consolation. Or a bit more strong in implication, exhortation. No single English word is sufficient as a translation, so put all those words together and you get the idea. Here it is translated "Helper," someone who is with you. Someone who defends you. Someone who strengthens and comforts you. Someone who helps you in every and all circumstances. That's Jesus' promise.

And it is also,

B. A promise of God the Father.

As we saw two weeks ago, the Father and the Son are inseparably joined together! So also in this promise. The son promises the helper. And so does the Father.

v.16

Similarly,

v.31

But who is this Helper? Here we get into a full revelation of the Trinity. All three persons of the Trinity. The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. This Helper is nothing less than the third person of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit. So when Jesus offers help and hope to his floundering disciples as they struggle with the reality that he will be leaving them, he gives them,

C. A promise of the Holy Spirit.

In verse 17, he is called “the Spirit of truth.” He is defined by truth, the truth which Jesus has embodied, as he said of himself, “I am the way, the truth, and the life.”

John 16:12 “I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. 13 However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come. 14 He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you. 15 All things that the Father has are Mine. Therefore I said that He will take of Mine and declare it to you.”

Please recognize the connection between the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The unity of purpose. And as all the different verses in the Bible are put together about the Trinity, we see that there is but one God, but three persons equal in power and glory. And while the relationship between the Father and the Son is one

defined by that Father-Son kinship, the Holy Spirit is here related to the Father and Son as the one who was sent.

And that’s the meaning of those words we use in the Nicene Creed, “We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son...” Jesus is leaving. He is going to die. He will no longer live as a man among men on this earth. And his disciples will be alone. But, no! They won’t be alone. By the promise of the Father, Jesus will send another Helper, the Holy Spirit, to be with them.

But the focus of this passage is not theological or doctrinal. The focus of this passage is not to teach the doctrine of the Trinity. Rather, the doctrine of the Trinity is presented in order to give you help and hope in the midst of the troubles of this life. The focus of this passage is intensely practical and personal. And I want my sermon to be so as well.

So I want to clearly proclaim, and explain to you, the doctrine of the Trinity. I want you to understand it, at least as far as it is presented in the Bible. One God, three persons, equal in power and glory. And the third person of that Trinity, the Holy Spirit, is sent to you to be a Helper. A Comforter. An Advocate. A Paraclete.

So let’s move into that practical application of this text, and I’ll begin with the question, “Why is this so helpful?” Why is the promise of the Holy Spirit so helpful? How is that promise so helpful for you?

Too often Christians get sidetracked by a focus on the Holy Spirit. They get sidetracked with questions of the what we now call charismatic gifts, speaking in tongues or prophecy. Too many people only think in those terms when they think about the Holy

Spirit. Or they think in terms of emotions, subjective feelings and experiences, as if the presence of the Holy Spirit is determined by how you might feel at any particular time.

Alternatively, many Christians just don't think about the Holy Spirit at all, and perhaps that is where we as reformed churches might be faulted. We don't emphasize the Holy Spirit much at all, because we want to avoid those other things. And that's just as bad. Actually, it's probably worse.

Jesus presents the Holy Spirit as your helper. Your comforter. And that is his promise. So, what is the help that he offers? What should our emphasis be when we talk about the Holy Spirit? How can this promise of the Holy Spirit be your comfort today?

The answer to those questions is found in the emphasis Jesus gives in our text, namely,

II. THE PERMANENCE OF ANOTHER HELPER.

That was the contrast that Jesus offered. His presence among his disciples was temporary. He dwelt among us only for a little while. And in John 1:14, we read that he tabernacled among us. He dwelt among us, as the verse is usually translated. But it was a tabernacle. A tent. A temporary house. He lived for 33 years or so on the earth, and then he left. He ascended into heaven.

So we don't have Jesus with us anymore, in the flesh.

2 Cor. 5:6 "So we are always confident, knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord. 7 For we walk by faith, not by sight."

That's our problem still, isn't it? We don't live by sight. You don't have fellowship with Jesus by sight. He's gone. But the

Holy Spirit is different.

A. He will be with us forever.

And that's the encouragements. That's the comfort. His permanence.

v.16

Forever. That's a long time. Always. Whether you feel it in your emotions or not. No matter what you might see with your eyes. And, in fact, whatever you might experience in your lives. Good or bad. We have a Helper who is with us forever! An Advocate who will always be with us. And how do you know that? How can you come to experience that?

By faith. That's what faith is all about.

Heb. 11:1 "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."

We walk by faith. And "By this faith, a Christian believes to be true whatsoever is revealed in the Word, for the authority of God himself speaking therein." That's how the Westminster Confession puts it. We believe this to be true, because Jesus promises us. And that is the encouragement. That is the comfort. That is the help we receive.

The Holy Spirit dwells with us! That's the comfort Jesus is giving us.

B. He dwells in us by faith.

v.17-18

There, again, is the unity of the three persons of the Trinity. Jesus will come to you. In the person of the Holy Spirit. He will not leave us orphans, without the presence of God. He will send

another helper, the Holy Spirit. And you know him, you believe in him. And he dwells in you. By virtue of your faith!

And that is a great thing! A great encouragement. A great help. And so Jesus urges his disciples to rejoice, even as he leaves them.

v.28-30

And so the help that Jesus offers comes to us by means of our faith. We believe his promise, and gain our strength and our hope from it. Jesus will send to his disciples the Holy Spirit.

So this is our hope,

Ephesians 1:13 “In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, 14 who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.”

When you are burdened by the sufferings of this world, even unto death, and when you are troubled by the ongoing sinfulness of this world, here is your comfort and your help. “You were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise.” And, he is the “guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession.”

2 Cor. 1:8 “But as God is faithful, our word to you was not Yes and No. 19 For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by us—by me, Silvanus, and Timothy—was not Yes and No, but in Him was Yes. 20 For all the promises of God in Him are Yes, and in Him Amen, to the glory of God through us. 21 Now He who establishes us with you in Christ and has anointed us is God, 22 who also has sealed us and given us the Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee.”

And back to,

2 Cor. 5:4 “For we who are in this tent groan, being burdened, not because we want to be unclothed, but further clothed, that mortality may be swallowed up by life. 5 Now He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who also has given us the Spirit as a guarantee.”

Surely we still groan. Surely we are still troubled. In this world, Jesus says, you will have trouble. Peter tells us to expect it, that there is nothing unusual about it.

1 Peter 4:12 “Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you; 13 but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy.”

So what is our encouragement? What is our comfort, our only true comfort in life and death? That Jesus would send you a permanent helper to stand by your side. Another helper who dwells in you, and with you, by faith. Forever.

Let me get a little more specific, here with my third major point. The Holy Spirit surely helps us because of his permanence, but we see two specific ways in which he provides that help for us. His purpose.

III. THE PURPOSE OF ANOTHER HELPER.

First,

A. He will be our teacher.

Look at how Jesus puts it,

v.25-26

Again, a benefit of his permanence. He teaches us “all

things,” Jesus says. And defines that means with the very next phrase, he will “bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.” So it is not new teaching that the Holy Spirit brings. It is not additional revelation that the Holy Spirit brings. But he, the Holy Spirit, becomes the authoritative teacher of that which Jesus has already revealed and taught.

So the Holy Spirit teaches us, reminds us, of what Jesus has said. So Jesus is the truth, in himself. And the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of truth. He remains such a teacher to this day, teaching us what Jesus has said. Teaching us what the Bible has recorded.

And without that Holy Spirit, it’s foolishness, isn’t it? And I would say of what I teach the very same thing Paul says of his teaching,

1 Cor. 2:7 “But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the ages for our glory, 8 which none of the rulers of this age knew; for had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. 9 But as it is written: “Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, Nor have entered into the heart of man The things which God has prepared for those who love Him.” 10 But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God. 11 For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God. 12 Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God.”

We have received that Spirit, and he is at work even here and now, teaching us what Jesus has said.

One final thing. One final definition of the help provided by the Holy Spirit. It is Jesus’ promise, fulfilled by the present of the Holy

Spirit with his disciples.

B. He will provide peace.

v.27

The world offers temporary peace, doesn’t it? The world offers the peace of personal pleasure, which fades away quickly, as soon as the pleasure ends. The world offers the peace of financial security, which of course can be destroyed in a moment’s notice. The world offers the peace of emotional satisfaction, or the escape of mind-altering or mood-altering drugs or alcohol. People get drunk, they get high, in the quest for peace, don’t they?

But what does that experience of peace produce? A hangover.

The peace which Jesus leaves his disciples is different. “My peace,” as he describes it, is true peace. Real peace. The since it lasts, he can say appropriately, “Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.”

Think about it. Real peace removes fear! True peace is the absence of fear.

So what are you afraid of? Death. Or physical sickness and incapacitation? Not being able to take of yourself. Not having enough money. Rejection. Conflict. Change.

What unsettles you? What troubles your heart? Right at that point, you need to hear what Jesus says. And believe his promise, as you receive its comfort.

v.27

That's not me talking. That's not me, a mere human being, saying to you, "Don't worry, it will all work out ok." No, this is Jesus speaking. He is speaking of the comforter, the Holy Spirit, whom he will send to them. He is speaking to those who are greatly distressed with the reality of his departure, and he assures them that he will not abandon them nor leave them as orphans. He will never leave them nor forsake them. Rather, he will send them the Holy Spirit.

As he has promised to us.

If you are a Christian, then he is in you. He lives in you, as Paul writes to the Corinthian church, "Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?" He lives in you, enabling you to embrace Christ, enabling you to believe, enabling you to live a life of faith and obedience. And if you believe in Jesus, then you have the Holy Spirit.

Jesus is your helper. Jesus is your comforter. Jesus is your advocate. And he, with God the Father, sends you another, permanent helper.

2Cor. 1:21 "Now He who establishes us with you in Christ and has anointed us is God, 22 who also has sealed us and given us the Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee."

So what cause you pain and distress today? What causes you to fear? What is it that seeks to ruin your sense of peace? What is it that troubles your heart?

Ultimately, I can't do anything about any of those things. I can't offer any help myself at all. I don't have the answers to the hard questions of life, nor do I have the power to change anything. But I can point you to the Helper whom Jesus has sent from the Father. I can point you to the Holy Spirit, who lives

within you who believe in Jesus. And I can give you this encouragement, this comfort, straight from Jesus' own mouth.

John 16:33 "These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."

v.27 "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."