

The Promise of Another Helper

John 14:15-21

Introduction

In our Gospel lesson today, Jesus is in the Upper Room with His disciples, preparing them for His departure. When He leaves, what are they going to do? Jesus was more than just a friend and mentor. He was their Lord and Master. For three years they hadn't done anything apart from Him, except when He sent them out two-by-two to preach and heal. They were still learning from Him. In our reading today, Jesus answers that question as He promises the Holy Spirit. He paints a thorough picture of the Spirit in two verses of our reading from **John 14**. We will unpack them today.

Trinity

The first thing we see in **verse 16** is the doctrine of the Trinity. Jesus said, *"I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper"* (**John 14:16**). The Son will ask the Father and the Father will send the Spirit. The Spirit is a distinct Person. It was not new to them to hear about the Spirit of God. Throughout the Old Testament, the Spirit of the Lord came upon prophets and kings to do God's work. Some folks today try to say that the "Spirit of God" in the Old Testament is merely God's presence on earth, not a distinct Person. But these words of Jesus are very clear that the Spirit is *another* Person. He is another Helper. Christ has been their Helper. But when He goes away, the Holy Spirit will take His place.

Helper

What does it mean to say the Holy Spirit is our Helper? The word *paraclete* is translated Helper, Comforter, Counselor, and Advocate. Comforter refers to His ministry of care; the Holy Spirit is emotional support for us. Counselor refers to His advisory capacity; the Holy Spirit advises us or guides us. The word Advocate comes from a courtroom setting; the Holy Spirit is one who speaks for us. Paraclete literally means "one called alongside." Originally, this was a warfare term. It referred to a "battle buddy," one who would fight side-by-side with you. And when the phalanx broke down, the two battle buddies would turn and fight back-to-back. While all these other jobs of the Holy Spirit apply, this one stands out. It shows us we are never fighting alone, for when we think we are alone, the Lord always has our back. He will never leave us undefended.

Forever

The Holy Spirit will be with us forever. We never have to worry about Him being recalled. He will always be with us, fighting beside us, protecting, and guarding us. Just as Jesus said before He ascended in **Matthew 28**, *"I am with you always, to the end of the age"* (**Matthew 28:20**).

Spirit of Truth

Jesus calls the Holy Spirit the *Spirit of Truth*. Earlier, in **verse 6**, Jesus said that He is the truth. Jesus calls the Holy Spirit the Spirit of Truth because of what He does (read **John 16:13-15**). He is the Spirit of Truth because He teaches us the truth of Jesus.

The World and the Spirit

“The world cannot receive [Him], because it neither sees Him nor knows Him” (v. 17). The Holy Spirit is the One who works faith in us. But because the world resists the Spirit, they don't have faith. So, they don't know Him or see Him. Because of that, they cannot receive Him. They will never experience His benefits and blessings.

With and In

When Jesus says to the disciples that the Spirit is with them and will be in them, He is pointing toward Pentecost. When the Holy Spirit was poured out on Pentecost, He came to dwell within the life of every believer. This is an advantage that no one before Pentecost had. Remember, we said that He came upon prophets, kings, and others that God had special missions for. But every Christian has the Spirit within us 24/7, fighting for us, counseling us, comforting us, and helping us to overcome. He is given to us at Baptism.

The Holy Spirit and Us

How does the Holy Spirit work in us? He works through the Word of God. When we hear the Word or it is applied to the elements of water, bread, and wine, the Holy Spirit applies forgiveness to our lives and strengthens our faith. He is the other Helper Christ promised. He is our Battle Buddy.

*And the peace of God,
Which surpasses all understanding,
Will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.*
