

The Holy Spirit and You  
John 14:15-27

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A new seminary graduate on her way to her first appointment approached her professor and asked what she should preach about in her new church. Without hesitation the professor replied. "About God and about twenty minutes." Today I would like to preach about God and I will try to do it in about twenty minutes.

We believe in God the Father Almighty creator of heaven and earth. We believe in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord and Savior. We believe in the Holy Spirit as the Divine presence in our lives whereby we are kept in perpetual remembrance of the truth of Christ and find strength and help in time of need.

As Christians we believe God to be best described as a Trinity. On this Pentecost Sunday we turn our attention to the Holy Spirit who is God in us to comfort and convict, to remind and renew, to guide and guard, to sustain and support and to keep us in every way. Come let us take a closer look at what the Holy Spirit can do for you.

**THE HOLY SPIRIT HELPS US.**

As Jesus prepares his disciples for his departure he makes a promise. "*I will not leave you as orphans,*" says Jesus. In fact, "*I will ask the Father and He will give you the 'Paraclete' to be with you forever.*"

Now a Paraclete is someone who is called in, someone who can be counted on in an emergency, someone who stands beside us. Jesus promises a helper, a powerful friend who is none other than the Spirit of God. The problem with the English language is that there is no good translation for this word Paraclete. That is why different translations give different words when you get to this particular passage. Sometimes it is translated Comforter, Counselor, Advocate, Helper, or Advisor. The facts are we just don't have a good English word for this concept that Jesus was trying to communicate to his disciples about the power of the Holy Spirit to come among us and with us to help us, to hold us, to advise us, to give us strength to carry on. Perhaps the best translations are Counselor or Advocate or Helper. Let's explore those a little bit.

*"I will send you another Counselor."* Sometimes in our lives we need someone who will allow us to talk until we know what we are trying to say. We need someone who will probe to the core of our memories and help us find a way. We need someone who will accept us as we are and empower us to become what we are made to be. We need a Counselor.

Somebody said that in our time half the world is going to get advice from the

other half of the world. That may be alright because in reality we need a little help to get through life.

I will be forever indebted to the pastoral counselors, the spiritual directors, and the psychotherapists who have helped me find my way through the wilderness of my own woundedness into the sunlight of God's grace and peace. They have been a friend in time of need, a shelter in the time of storm, a gentle encourager to go deeper into the center of my being and not be afraid. Sometime we need a little help to get through life. We could use a wise Counselor.

Jesus says, *"Peace I leave with you, my peace I give to you, let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid."* Why not let the Holy Spirit start you on that journey today? God, in the person of the Holy Spirit, wants to lead you and guide you and stand with you toward that inner oneness that comes when he fills us with Himself. The Paraclete is a wise Counselor.

The Paraclete is an Advocate for us. Jim Moore tells the story about a man accused of wrong doing brought before the judge. When the judge asked the man if he had an attorney, the man said, "No, I can't afford one." The judge replied "Well, don't worry about that, I'll appoint a lawyer to represent you and I'll choose a real good one." "I appreciate that, Judge," replied the man, "but if you really want to help me, what I need most is not a real good lawyer, but several good witnesses."

An advocate is all of the above. An advocate is a person called in to give a witness. An advocate is an attorney called in to plead the case. An advocate is an expert called in to give advice in some difficult situation.

*"When you face the strong arm of the law, the Holy Spirit will represent you. You are not alone. The Paraclete is coming,"* said Jesus. The Paraclete is a wise Counselor. The Paraclete is a present Advocate. The Paraclete is a genuine regular Helper in the midst of life.

Peter Marshall was Chaplain of the U.S. Senate a half a century ago and died an untimely death. His wife, Catherine Marshall, writes in her classic book The Helper, "In the early morning hours Peter awakened with alarming pain in his chest and down both arms. The doctor came; the ambulance arrived and Peter was rushed to the hospital. I had no way of handling this crisis, but to drop to my knees in prayer. My knees had no sooner touched the floor than I experienced God as a comforting mother. There was a feeling of the everlasting arms around me. It was the infinite gentleness of a loving God touching my heart. In the days following Peter's death, the Spirit carried me over and above the circumstances so that I could actually be used to bring strength to the Nation's Capital as they mourned his death." We are not alone, not even in our hours of sorrow, not even in the shock of grief, not even in the midst of loss.

As Martin Luther put it: "A mighty fortress is our God, a bulwark never failing.

Our helper he amid the flood of mortal ills prevailing.” The Holy Spirit is a Helper. Would you receive Him today?

### **THE HOLY SPIRIT TEACHES US.**

In Verse 26 we read, *“The Holy Spirit whom the Father will send in my name will teach you all things.”*

A new college graduate tossed his cap into the air and exclaimed, “Here I am world; I have my B.A.” That’s when a still small voice inside the graduate said, “Sit down my child and I will teach you the rest of the alphabet.” To live is to discover how little we know and how much we have to learn. To live is to be a student of life.

Helen Keller once said there are four things we need to learn in life:

1. To think clearly without confusion
2. To love people sincerely
3. To act in everything with highest motives
4. To trust God without hesitation

Could you use some help in the school of life? The Holy Spirit can teach us to pray. The Church was born in a prayer meeting. That little group of 120 faithful disciples didn’t have a strategic plan, a church structure, an order for ordination of ministers, nor political expertise. They didn’t hold a General Conference, they held a prayer meeting. On the day of Pentecost, heaven came down and glory filled their souls.

Every time I hear church leaders criticizing government for not having prayer in public schools, I wonder how hypocritical are we going to be? How many of us have prayer in our homes or for that matter serious prayer in our churches? The early Church didn’t complain that Rome failed to have prayer in their schools—they got together in prayer meetings. Peter and John were not wringing their hands that Caligula was bi-sexual and a terrible model for leadership. They preached the power of God to transform a life.

When Paul was in prison, the Church didn’t pass resolutions and protest his treatment. They prayed until the chains fell off and Paul was free. The early church didn’t hold conferences on the connection between religion and medicine; they healed the sick.

When in trouble, they prayed. When intimidated, they prayed. When challenged, they prayed. When persecuted, they prayed even more. If the Church wants to recover its Pentecostal power, it will tend to its prayers. The Church was born in a prayer meeting. In Romans 8:26 Paul says, *“When we do not know what we ought to pray for, the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express.”*

The Holy Spirit can teach us to love. My commandment is this: *“Love each other*

*as I have loved you.*” Jesus repeats it again and again. *“Love one another, love one another, love one another.”* Twenty-five years ago, Jim Cymbala took the Brooklyn Tabernacle Church with twenty people in a broken down building in one of America’s meanest neighborhoods, and by the power of the Holy Spirit transformed it into a six thousand member congregation with the renowned Brooklyn Tabernacle Choir. When asked how he did it, Jim replied: “People just want to be loved. They don’t care about fancy sermons and polished organizations; they just want to be accepted as they are and loved into what they can become.”

He is serious about love. He challenges every group of new members to stamp out slander, gossip, criticism toward anyone in the church by direct confrontation. “Go straight up to the person and say, ‘Excuse me, who hurt you, who slighted you? Let’s go get it straightened out right now.’ But, we will not talk critically about people who are not present to defend themselves and we will confront any loose talking that threatens the peace and unity of this Body.” He makes that speech to everyone who joins that church. Is it any wonder that the Spirit of God is moving through them in a powerful sort of way? You see, when you get people on the same page loving one another and you get the power of the Spirit coming through prayer, only God knows what might happen. The Spirit teaches us to pray and to love. Could you use the Holy Spirit today?

#### **THE HOLY SPIRIT REMINDS US.**

In Verse 26 we read, *“The Holy Spirit will remind you of everything that I have said to you.”*

It’s Memorial Day weekend. More than a weekend to frolic in the sun and picnic on the grounds, Memorial Day is a day to remember. Remember we have been bought with a price. Thousands of people have died that you and I might live in the freedom that we regularly take for granted. How can anybody not be in church on Memorial Day to give thanks to God?

Did you watch the dedication of the World War II Memorial in Washington, D.C. yesterday on television? In that war alone 406,000 Americans gave their lives. We are bought with a price. So let us not reduce freedom to licentiousness nor rights to unrestraint. Remember there is a reason to be born save to consume the corn, eat the fish and leave behind a dirty dish. Not selfishness, but service is our highest honor.

Arizona Cardinals Safety, Pat Tilman, walked away from the 3.6 million dollar NFL contract to join the Army after the September 11 attacks. Earlier this month he was killed in action by friendly fire while serving in Afghanistan. Senator John McCain said at his memorial service, “While many of us will be blessed to live a longer life, few of us will live a better one.” It is time to remember why we are here and how we are here.

It is time to remember that we need a little help to be our best. We can’t do it by

ourselves. Evangelist Tony Evans said, “I was in an airport rushing to catch a plane. I was sweating and puffing when I looked to my right and saw a man passing me by walking half as fast as I was. He had boarded the moving sidewalk that I had missed in my rush to make the next plane. I was going with all of my energy and he was just coasting on by. Suddenly it dawned on me that is a parable of my life.”

The Holy Spirit reminds us not to try harder, but to try smarter. When we walk in the Spirit, He comes underneath us and bears us away. We are still walking, but we are dependent upon Him. Do you remember whose you are today?

Come Holy Spirit, Heavenly Dove  
With all thy quickening powers.  
Kindle a flame of sacred love  
In these cold hearts of ours.

Amen.











