

## The Paraclete Pt. 2

John 14 is this transition point. Jesus has been ministering to people, he's been preaching, teaching, healing, delivering... and now he's on his way to the cross, and he's been telling his disciples that he's going to be going away. And he's saying to them - don't be troubled. Don't be anxious about me leaving you. That actually, it's going to be better for you that I go away.

Jesus proceeds to tell them what life should look like for them when he's gone. He's telling them what they need to know to live life rightly in his absence. And what we learn is that the disciples lives should be markedly different than the world around them. The disciples are to be living lives centered around Jesus and empowered by the person and work of the Holy Spirit.

Just like Jesus tells the disciples what life should look like when he's gone, Jesus is really telling us what we need to know to live rightly this side of the cross. Our mandate is the same as the disciples. To live lives on mission with God. Lives centered around Jesus. Lives characterized by the work of the Holy Spirit both *thru* us and *in* us to glorify Jesus.

It's amazing that in this "going away" sermon, Jesus spends such a significant amount of time teaching on the person and work of the Holy Spirit both in and thru those who follow Jesus.

We saw two weeks ago how, on this side of the cross, in the church age, this time between Jesus being glorified to the Father until he returns to bring his kingdom in its fullness, Jesus is going to give the Holy Spirit to work *thru* his people as they are participating with God in his mission, doing the works of Jesus - all pointing toward God's greatest work, Jesus death and resurrection to redeem ruined sinners to himself.

This week we're going to see how God gives the Holy Spirit to believers to work *in* them for his glory.

It's unfortunate that today within the church, there can be a great divide between what we might call, "spirit" churches, and "word" churches. At the Spirit churches you are always hearing about the work of the Holy Spirit. You know you're at a Spirit church because instead of or in addition to the cross on the back wall or the pulpit is a dove, or a tongue of fire. These churches should be commended for the way they lift up the work of the Holy Spirit, but often you come away with the sense that the giving of the Spirit and his gifts are the center and goal of human history rather than Jesus death on the cross and the reconciliation of sinners to God.

Then on the other hand you have the "word" churches. Many of these churches are shy of even the word "Holy Spirit". They prefer to deal in propositional, objective truths rather than experience. The historical reality of Jesus death on the cross rather than the subjective experience of all its effects today. You often come away from these churches with the sense that the Trinity is made up of Father, Son and Holy Bible rather than Holy Spirit.

In response to what he sees as a lack of understanding of the work of the Holy Spirit, Francis Chan recently wrote a book entitled, *Forgotten God: Reversing Our Tragic Neglect of the Holy Spirit*. In it he writes:

*“From my perspective, [in many churches today] the Holy Spirit is tragically neglected and, for all practical purposes, forgotten. While no evangelical would deny his existence, I’m willing to bet there are millions of churchgoers across America who cannot confidently say they have experienced his presence or action in their lives over the past year.” (15).*

But if the Holy Spirit is as important as Jesus says he is, then experiencing his presence and action in our lives is crucial to living rightly. If the HS work in and thru us should be the defining characteristic of our lives, then we ought to know who he is and experience his work in our lives.

So today we’re going to ask and answer three basic questions of this text:

1. Who is the Holy Spirit?
2. What does the Holy Spirit do?
3. How can we experience the Holy Spirit’s work in our lives?

#### 1. Who is the Holy Spirit?

a.) The Holy Spirit is a person.

Look at verses 16-17.

- HS is not just a power, he’s not just an impersonal force like Yoda talks about in Star Wars, he is a person.
  - How do we know that he is a person? He has a name. He is referred to not as “it”, but him.

b.) The Holy Spirit is God.

- A lot has been made recently about the Bible never using the word “Trinity” or talking about the Trinity in systematic terms. But it’s passages like this that we gain our doctrine from.
- The Athanasian Creed, written in the 6th century, is one of the most important creeds of the church, and was the first to express clearly this doctrine of the Trinity:

*“we worship one God in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity; Neither confounding the Persons; nor dividing the Essence. For there is one Person of the Father; another of the Son; and another of the Holy Ghost. But the Godhead of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, is all one;”*

All of this we can see in this passage. The Holy Spirit is clearly seen as a distinct person, and yet when Jesus talks he sees complete unity between the Father, himself, and the HS. This entire passage is about the Holy Spirit being given to followers of Jesus, but Jesus talks about the HS coming and himself coming in equal terms, as if they are the same thing.

- v. 18 - *“I will not leave you as orphans, I will come to you.”*
- v. 19 - *“The world will see me no more, but you will see me.”*

- v. 21 - *“He who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and manifest **myself** to him.”*
- v. 23 - *“If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and **we will come to him and make our home with him.**”*

So Jesus coming to believers, manifesting himself to believers, and the Father and Son making their home with the believer **are all alternate ways of saying the HS is coming to dwell in the believer.**

Jesus is saying, “The HS and the Father and I... We’re so much **one** that telling you the HS is going to come to you is the same as telling you my Father and I are going to come to you. Yet... we’re so much **three** that I can say that I’m going away but the HS will be with you forever.”

c.) The Holy Spirit dwells with and in the Christian forever.

In v. 17 Jesus tells us that this Helper, Counselor, Advocate, *“dwells with you, and will be in you forever.”*

Let’s take a step back and just see this statement for what it really is. Up until this point in God’s great plan for the world, we’ve seen the Holy Spirit at points. The Spirit has anointed different men and women at different times and for various purposes, but the Spirit is always described as “coming upon” someone for a specific task. So we see the Spirit coming upon Saul as King, but quickly departing Saul when he begins to walk away from God. The Spirit is upon David, upon other prophets and kings. But the idea that the Spirit of God would actually dwell with and *in* a person, not just for a period of time and specific task, but *forever* is absolutely revolutionary!

It is this single reality, God himself dwelling within Jesus followers forever, that makes infinitely better that Jesus goes to be with the Father. I don’t think we fully comprehend this new covenant reality.

Francis Chan, again in his book *Forgotten God*, says this:

*“Those of us who believe in Jesus would never deny the truth that we have the Spirit of the living God, the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead, living inside of us. I’m just not convinced we’ve internalized this truth and enjoyed his blessings as he intends. It seems like this is mostly head knowledge to us, and that we have not owned it. It has not really made much of a difference in our lives, to the degree that if we woke up tomorrow and discovered that it is not true the Holy Spirit lives inside of us, most likely our lives wouldn’t look much different.”*

Christian - do you see that if you believe in Jesus he has given you the person of the Holy Spirit, God himself, to dwell in and with you forever?! Jesus sees this reality of the divine indwelling person of the Holy Spirit absolutely transforming the lives of his followers, and *the* crucial ingredient for living rightly on this side of the cross.

## 2. What does the Holy Spirit do?

We talked last week about this word “Paraclete” or advocate. Jesus is our first advocate in that he stands for us. He is our legal representative before the Father, and

he represents us. And because of his advocacy, because of his death on the cross, justice is for us instead of against us.

The Holy Spirit is another advocate like the first. We talked briefly last week about how the Holy Spirit is like a floodlight. He stands behind us and shines his light toward Jesus. The HS is an advocate, not as much in the legal sense, as Jesus is, but more in the public sense of the word. The Holy Spirit is a lobbyist, he holds up signs and daily calls believers toward something. He works as an advocate saying to our hearts, "this is what you need."

Parking at the fair. What does the HS direct us to? Look at the passage with me.

*"And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, even the Spirit of Truth."*

There are two ways I see in this passage that the HS advocates or points us toward truth:

a.) The Spirit advocates God's Word.

God is the author of Truth. Truth is not something that lies outside of God, that sets the standard on everything in the universe, including God, and whether or not it is true. God himself is the the standard. God is Truth, and so everything that God says, by it's very nature, is not judged to be true or false, but is immediately ultimate truth. The Bible as the Word of God, contains ultimate truths about God, and the Bible was authored by the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Truth.

*"For no prophecy (we know from the context that Peter is talking about the Scriptures) was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit." - 2 Peter 1:21*

When we have the Holy Spirit dwelling in us, he works as an advocate for truth, for His own Word. He's like the fair parking attendants waving his bright yellow baton and saying, "park it here", "here is truth!" - this is going to change your life. So if we have the Holy Spirit in our lives we should also have a growing passion to hear and know the words the Holy Spirit wrote, these words of truth.

But this shouldn't be a passion only for head knowledge, although that is good. We all know that there is theoretical knowledge and experiential knowledge. You can know the fact that Kenyan coffee are one of the greatest coffees in the world, but until you actually put that it to your lips and taste the blackberry and cranberry with hints of cocoa and hazelnut and the sparkling character in the cup you don't really *know* it!

There is a place in Ephesians where Paul prays exactly this - that the church in Ephesus would go beyond this theoretical knowledge and into experiential knowledge:

*"that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith - that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth,*

*and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.”* - Eph. 3:16-19

They are Christians! They already know the love of Christ. Christ is already dwelling in their hearts or they wouldn't be Christians! But do you see Paul's prayer - that through the power of the Spirit, they might know something in a deeper way, in a way that surpasses knowledge.

Chengdu, where we lived in China, is incredibly smoggy most days. Whenever we see shadows on the ground we consider it a nice day out. But there are days, and they come a few times a year, where the clouds lift and the sun comes streaming through. And whenever we have those days everything around you looks more clear, more crisp. We had one of those days the week before we left and we were standing outside on the deck of a friend's apartment looking back at our own place. Ava said to me - Dad, our house looks closer, did it move? When you have days like this, and we have them around here too, everything seems closer, clearer. Do you know what I'm talking about?

This is what the Holy Spirit does. Often we can read the Bible, we can worship, we can listen to sermons, and everything is hazy. But there are those moments when the Spirit takes the clouds away and makes God seem closer, his word seem clearer.

Jonathan Edwards journal:

*“I have at many times had the greatest delight in the Scriptures of any book whatsoever. Oftentimes in reading it every word seems to touch my heart. I often seem to see so much light exhibited in every sentence, and have such a refreshing ravishing food communicated from these words that I cannot get along in my reading. I often used to dwell long on one sentence to see the wonders contained in it. The sense I had of divine things as I read would often, of a sudden, kindle up a sweet burning in my heart, an ardor of my soul that I know not how to express.”*

What is Jonathan Edwards talking about? Have we ever experienced something like this? It is one thing to read the Scriptures, it's another thing to have the Holy Spirit come and reveal truth, for the Spirit to bring us into an experience of his truth.

This is what the HS does. He advocates truth to our hearts. The Spirit takes the truth that he has authored and holds it before our hearts and pleads and promotes and urges us toward the experience of what he says.

b.) The Holy Spirit advocates the Gospel.

I just heard an ad on the radio the other day for a *new* anti-depressant drug on the market that you can participate in a trial for. Antidepressants are America's most prescribed drug with now more than 1 in 10 Americans taking them. What was interesting, as I was reading some articles on depression in America was to find that one of the things at the heart of depression is the area of identity, who we are. One of the most commonly reported results of taking AD drugs was “a return to one's true self”.

A number of years ago, maybe about 40 or 50 years ago, far before this surge in the prescription of antidepressant drugs, MLJ, who was a medical doctor himself,

preached a sermon series called “Spiritual Depression: Its Causes and Cure.” He identified two main causes of spiritual depression - the devil and our own hearts and their attacks on this very issue of our identity.

1 John 3:20 tells us exactly this about the way our own hearts operate:

*“For whenever our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart, and he knows everything. Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence before God;”*

What I want us to see here is the potential for our hearts to do this work of condemnation. Of challenging our new covenant identity.

The devil works in the same way. There is nothing our enemy loves more than to see believers not living in the joy and freedom that we should be walking in through Jesus. So he works as the accuser of the brethren to call into question our new identities.

But the Spirit, as the advocate for truth, defends our cause by holding up before us the reality of what has happened to us in the Gospel. And there are two gospel realities that Jesus mentions in this passage in John that the Spirit advocates to our hearts:

(i) We are no longer orphans but sons and daughters.

vv. 18 - *“I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.”*

Think about an orphan. A child who is left parentless is left without the most crucial things needed for life. Primarily they are left without someone to provide for their needs. A newborn is completely dependent on their parent for *everything*. And even older children depend on their parents for food, clothing, and instruction. An orphan too is left without a defender. Children are so vulnerable, and without parents to protect and stand up for them.... Without parents too, children will not thrive for they are left without the need to be a part of a loving caring family. And without the security and identity that a true loving family brings, there is continued fear of rejection.

In the gospel we go from being orphans to adoption into God’s family as his sons and daughters. We go from outsiders in God’s family to heirs with Christ. But isn’t this the exact spot that our hearts often condemn us? Christian - how many of us, like orphans, have wasted hours anxious over how our needs would be provided? How many of us have felt the vulnerability of life out there. The fear of disappointment and rejection. How many have felt attacked at that very point of identity?

But look at what the Holy Spirit does. Rom. 8:15-16:

*“For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, ‘Abba! Father!’ The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children then heirs - heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.”*

So the Holy Spirit bears witness, advocates, takes his yellow bat... and says in those moments when we feel accused and attacked - Son! Daughter! Look at the cross. Look at what has been done for you! You are no longer orphans, no longer slaves! Don't fall back into fear!

(ii) The second gospel reality that the Spirit advocates is our union with Jesus, our first advocate.

vv. 20 - *"In that day (when you receive the Holy Spirit) you will know (not just theoretically but experientially) that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you."*

In the same way that the enemy and our own hearts can use fear and anxiety to send us off course, he can use our sin to drag us down or our successes to puff us up. But the Holy Spirit is constantly taking the gospel and pounding us with it.

The Holy Spirit reminds us that our standing before God isn't based on either our sin or our success. We are no *in* Christ, *and* our life is lost in our advocate, in our representative. As Paul tells us in Galatians, *"I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me."*

This *positional* truth is made real in experience as the Holy Spirit works in our lives to hold this reality before our hearts.

### 3. How do we experience the work of the HS?

We all want this more don't we?

a.) We must love Jesus.

*"If you love me, you will keep my commandments. **And** I will give you another Helper."* - v. 15

*"He who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and manifest myself to him."* - v. 21

*"If anyone loves me..."* - v. 23

Jesus tells us that the gift of the Holy Spirit is not for those who love spirituality, or a cause, or being in a community, but for those who love him.

b.) We must obey Jesus.

We can obey Jesus without loving him, but we can't love him without obeying him. The promise of the Holy Spirit is given to those who *both* love and obey Jesus.

*"If you love me, you will keep my commandments. **And** I will give you another Helper."* - v. 15

*"Whoever has my commandments and **keeps** them, he it is who loves me. And he who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and manifest myself to him."* - v. 21

*"If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him."* - v. 23

Summit Christian, there are some of us in this room, and I know this because I have been at this place spiritually, we say we love Jesus, we say we want to grow in our Christian life. When I talk about that feeling of closeness to God, of loving the Bible more, of delighting in Scripture, delighting in the things of God. You say you want that, but there are areas of your life that you are not obeying Jesus.

By not obeying Jesus you are showing that there are other things you love more than him.

c.) We must ask.

We saw last week how God's means to doing his works is asking him to do them. Prayer is this amazing act of surrender, it is saying - God, I can't do it, I need you to do it. God delights when his kids ask him. And Jesus tells us that experiencing more of the work of the HS requires us asking. In Luke 11 Jesus asks the question rhetorically,

*"Which father among you, if his son asks for a fish, will instead of a fish give him a serpent; or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? **(And the answer is... none of you!)** If you then who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the HS to those who ask him!"*

Do you want to experience more of the Holy Spirit's work in your life - do you want more of (the things we've talked about). Ask!

d.) We need to fuel the fire.