

Wheelersburg Baptist Church 12/5/93
John 14:15-21 "Practical Help for Present Living"

Communion: Communion is a very tangible reminder that our HELP is in Christ.

Intro: How many think that the Christian life is easy? I propose to you that the Christian life is not only difficult--It's impossible. In fact, you can't live the Christian life...ALONE. To live the Christian life takes supernatural intervention. It takes divine help.

Illust:

I would suggest to you that people don't flounder in the Christian life because they delight in floundering. They don't plan to struggle. They don't intend to become spiritual dropouts. No. Do you remember when you were saved? Do you remember how you delighted in God, how thrilled you were that you were clean and forgiven, and how you were sure that life would never be the same again? Then 6 months later, the thought hit you, "Man, living the Christian life isn't easy! I need help!"

Q: Where do we get the help we need to live the successful Christian life?
Jesus answers that critical question for us in John 14:15-21.

The Setting of John 14

The scene before us is the Upper Room in Jerusalem. The Last Supper is over. The disciple's feet are still damp from the footwashing they received from their Master. Their ears are still ringing from His shocking announcement, "I am leaving You. And you can't follow Me now (13:33)." No doubt, the disciples thought, "We can't live without You, Jesus! We've followed You for 3 years. We've left everything for You. You are more than life to us. Without You, life is meaningless and impossible."

Jesus, knowing their grief, began to teach them. Remember, in just a few hours, He will be betrayed and killed. Yet He thought not of Himself, but of the 11. So He delivered a message designed to comfort them--the Upper Room Discourse.

What was the first thing Jesus asked His grieving followers to do? He said, "Trust Me (14:1)." Then for the next 13 verses, He talked to them about HOPE. He comforted them with some amazing promises, "I'm going to prepare a place for you (2)." "I'm going to come again for you (3)." "I'm going to do great works through you while I'm gone (12)." "I'm going to allow you to communicate with Me through prayer while I'm gone (13-14)."

What is Jesus saying to us in vv 1-14? This. "You can trust Me. And the first reason you can trust Me is because I have given you a HOPE."

Friends, we have a hope. We need not fear the future, for we have a hope.

Q: "Ok, that's fine for the future, but what about now?"

Good question! It's also the very question Jesus addressed next with His disciples. In vv 1-14, Jesus established the truth that we have a HOPE for the future. Beginning in v 15 through the end of the chapter, He teaches us that we have a HELP for the present.

Q: What kind of help has Jesus provided for us for living here and now?

Proposition: In John 14:15-21, Jesus explains 2 critical matters about how we can experience His help in the Christian life.

- I. The help Jesus has given us involves a Responsibility (15, 21).
- II. The help Jesus has given us involves a Resource (16-20).
 - A. Who is He?
 1. He is the Substitute for Christ (16).
 2. He is the Source of Truth (17).
 - B. How does He help us?
 1. He stays with us (16).
 2. He stays in us (17).
 - C. Why? (18) Because Jesus did not want to leave us as Orphans.
 - D. Who benefits? (19-20)
 1. Those who do NOT know Christ, do not.
 2. Those who KNOW Christ, do.

I. The help Jesus has given us involves a Responsibility (15, 21).

V 15 "If ye love Me, keep my commandments."

Now that's quite a statement to make in light of the context. If YOU love Me. Listening to Jesus were 11 men who had left everything to follow Jesus. These were men whose hearts were breaking over the thought of seeing Jesus go. Yet Jesus said, "IF you love Me, keep my commandments."

What does that reveal about true love? It reveals that EMOTION is not always an indication of true love. A few tears doesn't necessarily indicate true love. What does? One word--OBEDIENCE.

If you love Me, keep (better translated "you will keep") my commandments." If I want to experience God's help in my life, I need to accept this responsibility. The way I show Jesus I love Him is what? I obey Him. I keep His commands.

Listen. Obedience is not optional for a disciple. We have been saved to follow, to keep, to obey. We don't obey Christ in order to merit His favor, but because of His favor. We don't obey Him because we have to, but because we love Him. If when you were "saved" you had no intention of obeying Jesus, then you have a deficient faith. The test of love is obedience.

Jesus underscored the importance of this responsibility in His final words to His followers--the Great Commission. Mt 28:19-20, "In your going make disciples of all nations, baptizing them...and TEACHING THEM TO OBEY all the things I have commanded you."

Objection: "Wait a minute. You can't command someone to love, can you? That's dictatorial!"

A: The issue is what you mean by love. If you view love merely as a sentiment, a feeling, an emotion (the way our world does), then Jesus' words will befuddle you. But biblical love is not shallow emotion. True love demands action.

Let me ask you a question...

Q: How can you tell if you really love Jesus? Look at v 21.
V 21 "He that has my commands, and keeps them, he it is that loves Me..."

Think about the connection between "loving" and "keeping" and "having."
Jesus said I don't love Him if I don't what? Keep His commands. And He said I can't keep His commands if I don't what? Have His commands.

How can I have Jesus' commands? It takes exposure. If I really love Jesus, I'll want to find out what He said, so I can obey Him. Ignorance is no excuse. If I don't have a hunger to know Christ and His Word better, how can I say I love Him?

14:23 "If a man love Me, he will keep My words"

14:24 "He that loves Me not keeps not My sayings"

If obedience to Christ is missing from our lives, it means we really don't LOVE Christ. John stated it even more bluntly in I Jn 2:4, "He that says, I know Him, and keeps not His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him."

Q: What does obedience have to do with experiencing God's help?

Fact: If I don't obey Christ, I short-circuite my access to His help.

Illust:

Tran: "Ok, so I need to accept my responsibility to obey if I want to tap into Jesus' help. I can see that. But just what kind of help does Jesus offer?"

II. The help Jesus has given us involves a Resource (16-20).

Now watch carefully, because the following announcement is astounding. Jesus reveals that we have a Resource, a source of Help, for living the Christian life.

A. Who is He?

Vv 16-17 "And I will pray the Father, and He will give you"

Stop there. Last week, in vv 13-14, Jesus command us to "ask," to pray. We learned that when we pray, we are admitting our dependence upon Him. Here He says, "I will pray to the Father," an act of submission on His part.

What will the Father do? "He will give you another Comforter." This is the first of several references to the Holy Spirit in the Upper Room Discourse. Our resource is not someTHING, but someONE. The Holy Spirit is not an "it" or a "force," but a Person.

Q: Who is this person known as the Holy Spirit?

Jesus had a lot to say about the Holy Spirit in His Upper Room message. We'll be learning a lot more in future weeks. But for now, from vv 16-17, notice 2 facts.

1. He is the Substitute for Christ (16).

V 16 "...He shall give you another Comforter."

You probably have heard word-studies about the word "Comforter." It's a great word--"paraklatos." The Greek word is untranslatable into English. It lit. means "called alongside to assist."

"Comforter" is the word used in the KJV. Wycliffe first used the word. "Comforter" was a good word back in the 17th century, but it's limited today. The word comes from two Latin words, one meaning "with", and the other, "fortis," meaning "strength" or "brave" (lit. "with strength"). In the old English, a comforter was someone who helped another frightened individual to be brave. But today, the word "comfort" has to do almost solely with sorrow. A Comforter is someone who sympathizes with us when we are sad. Granted, the Holy Spirit does that, but He does so much more than merely sympathize. Probably the best word is our word "Helper."

So Who then is the Holy Spirit? A key word is the adjective "another." In English we have only one word for "another." In Greek, there are 2 words. Turn to Gal 1:6-7 to see both. "I marvel that you are so soon removed...to ANOTHER gospel, which is not ANOTHER." What's wrong with Paul? Why'd he repeat himself? He didn't. He used 2 different greek words. The first "another" means a "different" gospel. The second "another" means "of the same kind." In Jn 14:16, the word for "another" that Jesus used is that second word. He promised His disciples He would give them, not a different Paraclete, but a Paraclete Who is essentially the same as Jesus is.

Who is the Holy Spirit? He is "another Helper." Who was the first helper? Jesus was. Who is another Helper? The Holy Spirit. Let that sink in. In I Jn 2:, Jesus is called a Paraclete (advocate). In Jn 14, Jesus called the Spirit another Paraclete. The Holy Spirit is none less than a Substitute for Jesus.

Think of what that meant for the disciples. Why were their hearts breaking? Because they dreaded losing Jesus. Yet what did Jesus tell them? "I've made arrangements for you during the time I'm gone. I'm going to send you someone just like Myself! He'll be a Comforter, a Counselor, a Helper, just like I've been to you. He will be to you everything I've been to you!"

Do you know what that means for us? What Jesus was for the disciples 2000 years ago, the Holy Spirit is for us, only more so! Jesus revealed truth to His followers. So the Holy Spirit reveals truth to us in the Scriptures (Jn 16:13). Jesus convicted people of their sin. So today the Holy Spirit convicts people of sin (Jn 16:8). Jesus made intercession for His own in Jn 17. Rom 8:27 says the Spirit makes intercession. Jesus led His disciples. So the Spirit leads us (Rom 8:14). Jesus gave life to dead men. The Bible says that the Holy Spirit gives new life to us who were dead in sin (Rom 8:11).

The Holy Spirit is our Resource. He's Christ's Substitute.

Illust:

2. *He is the Source of Truth (17).*

V 17 "Even the Spirit of Truth"

What does that mean? Well first, lit. translated the phrase reads, "the Spirit of the truth." Jesus already made the staggering claim, "I am the truth." Here He says, "I am going to send you a Helper Who is the Spirit of truth."

We'll see more about this title in future studies, but here let's summarize. The Spirit of truth is the Spirit who communicates truth (see Jn 16:13).

Don't miss this. The Holy Spirit is the Source of Truth. We possess the record of the truth He revealed through the apostles. Where? In the Scriptures.

Listen. The Holy Spirit leads us according to this revealed truth. He never leads us to do anything contrary to the Word of God.

Applic: If someone says to you, "I don't love my spouse anymore. I've prayed about it, and the Spirit made it clear to me that He doesn't want me to be miserable, and spend my life with a person I don't feel compatible with..." You can say, "I don't know what spirit you're listening to, but it's not the Holy Spirit. Because what you said He made clear to you is NOT consistent with His Word."

Question #1--Who? The Holy Spirit is the Substitute, and the Source of Truth.

B. How does He help us?

Jesus and the Spirit are one and the same. Yet there is a distinction. There's one major difference between Jesus and the Holy Spirit. Jesus' ministry lasted 3 years. And even during that time, He was physically limited--when He was in Cana, He wasn't in Bethany or Jericho. So He couldn't be with His disciples ALL the time. But what about the Holy Spirit?

v 16 "He may abide with you forever"

Jesus' ministry had limitations. But right now, the Holy Spirit indwells believers in Madrid and Montreal and Moscow and Minneapolis and Morocco, all at the same time! He helps all of us! How? Jesus revealed 2 truths about His ministry.

1. He stays WITH us (16).

One of the great promises in the OT is that there is coming a day when God will dwell with men. Adam knew that privilege, but blew it. 500 years B.C., Ezekiel recorded God's promise in 37:27, "My dwelling place will be with them; I will be their God, and they will be My people." That would be the blessing of the New Age. God will reside with His people.

The disciples got a taste of that. Jesus lived with them for 3 years. It was marvelous. Yet now He was leaving. That's what made His announcement so incredible!

"I am sending another Comforter, who will abide WITH you forever." The Holy Spirit stays with us. Historically, He came at Pentecost. He came to be with His people. Experientially, He comes to dwell with us the moment we receive Christ.

But there's more.

2. He stays IN us (17).

V 17 "...for He dwells with you and shall be IN you."

Notice the Trinity here. Jesus and the Holy Spirit are One. They are equal. Jesus said to the 11, "The Spirit dwells WITH you, because right now, I am dwelling with you. And if you've seen Me, you've seen Him. But after I'm gone, He (the Spirit) will be IN you."

"He's going to take My place when I'm gone. During My 3 years with you, I've guided you, guarded you, and I've been your Helper. Now He'll do all that."

What a practical truth! We have a Helper! He indwells us. The Holy Spirit assists us. He does not do our work instead of us, or in spite of us, but in us and through us (Wiersbe).

C. Why? (18)

Why did Jesus send us His Spirit?

Key: Because Jesus did not want to leave us as Orphans. That's right. The word "comfortless" is the greek word "orphanos," which means "without a father," from which we get our word "orphan." There are few things as tragic as an orphan. An orphan is alone in a world full of people, without the affection of a parent.

In an ancient greek writing, Plato said that when Socrates died, his disciples "thought they would have to spend the rest of their lives forlorn as children bereft of a father, and they did not know what to do about it." (Barclay, 168)

Jesus didn't leave His followers bereft of a Helper. He sent another Helper! But wait. Look carefully at Jesus' promise in v 18, "I will come to you."

Q: When? What event did Jesus have in mind here? The commentators suggest 5 options, and of those, 2 make the most sense. He could have meant, "I'll come to you again after My resurrection." Certainly He did that. But the context seems to point, not to the Resurrection, but to Pentecost. Do you realize what happened at Pentecost? Jesus, by His Spirit, came to live with His people!

Q: Who is with us right now, the Holy Spirit or Jesus Christ?

A: Yes! In a very real sense, both are true, for though they are distinct persons, they are One in essence. Jesus said in Mt 28:20, "Lo, I am WITH YOU always, even unto the end of the age."

I agree with a statement I read by commentator D.A. Carson (48), "We modern Christians badly need a deepening consciousness of God's sacred presence in us as much as we need moral renewal." We need to be gripped by the mind-boggling truth that if we are Christians, God dwells within us.

Hymn: Charles Wesley pondered this... "Love Divine, all loves..."

Oh friends, what a privileged people we are! Because we live this side of the Cross, this side of Pentecost, God dwells with us. He is not far off. He is our Helper.

Q: How often do you think about the fact that God lives with and in you?

D. Who benefits? (19-20)

READ vv 19-20

Who benefits from the Help of the Holy Spirit? The answer is straightforward.

1. *Those who do NOT know Christ, do not.*
2. *Those who KNOW Christ, do.*

Do you know why the world does not recognize Christ, nor His Spirit? Because they are not in tune with Him. Illust: Without a radio, radio waves go unnoticed.

God's help is available to you this morning. But until you get in tune with God, through His Son, His help will mean nothing to you.