

**Reading:** John 14v15-31

**Theme:** The presence of the promised Spirit.

In John 14, as we have seen before, there are 7 main areas of comfort and encouragement for believers. We have looked at the first 3:

1. Heaven is secure (v2-7);
2. There is in Christ, a certain and sure way to heaven (v4-11);
3. Christ's work will not stop after His departure (v12-14). Now we see:

#### **4. The Spirit's Presence Is Promised (v15-17).**

The disciples were no doubt confused, upset troubled for Jesus had spoken of His going away, of being betrayed, Peter denying Him. Yet Jesus spoke things to encourage and comfort them, for they could so easily wonder what they would do when He was gone. Jesus assured them His work will go on. Yet they would miss Him, His company, guidance and help. Here He promises that in His absence, the Spirit would be present.

This encouragement links to the previous one. How on earth would they do great things? How would they pray in Christ's name, in all Christ is and has done? How would His character be applied to the disciples? They learn this would happen by the coming of the person and work of the Holy Spirit as He would empower them, bring their wills to be like Christ's will. This encouragement is not for those who think they can manipulate the exalted Christ, but for those who are living in total dependence upon Him. There is much in these 3 verses, but I am covering them as a whole to see important principles - though we will not extract all the sweetness these verses. I would encourage you to think about these verses. Let's see 5 things:

#### **1. Loving obedience (v15)**

There is an important and serious "If" here. Some call it a conditional clause. This verse not only affects the promise in v16-

17, but also to v21. All interrelated, connected and dependent upon our loving the Lord and showing that love in practical deeds of obedience. The disciples were to show by loving obedience their love, not by weeping, mourning and hysterics.

We must love the Lord Jesus first and foremost and that love for Christ is to be within us as the motive, the nurse and the food of our obedience. Do not think God is impressed by cold obedience, when our hearts are against Him or do things because we feel we must. Personal affection and love to Jesus will and is to affect our personal obedience. If we love Him, we will do what He commands - *“keep my commands”* says KJV. None of the OT greats ever said anything like this - only the one who is God incarnate can say such and demand such loving obedience to all His commands in OT and NT.

Such a love for Christ will result in keeping, obeying His commandments. It is a good and simple test to apply to someone who says they love the Lord Jesus - do they live in obedience to Him as His word reveals? This is emphasised again in v21. We are not to be overzealous by putting **our** interpretation of what Christ commanded, nor enforce man-made standards or traditions, but realise that those who profess to love Jesus must be lovingly desiring and trying their best to live as He lived and clearly commanded.

The most fitting place for the promised Holy Spirit to abide in, dwell in, is a heart filled with obedient love for the Lord Jesus. Those who profess great things about the Holy Spirit’s work must have a corresponding testimony of loving obedience, else we are to question the Spirit in them! This means we are to question our own lives. Do we love Jesus? This is the most important question. If we do love Him, are we then living in loving obedience? Is there this desire within us or do we feel it does not matter how we live?

Low love for Jesus in our lives, shows in a low standard of obedient living in our lives.

## **2. The Son requests the Father. (v16a)**

Loving the Son will result in obedience and this is connected with the Son, the Lord Jesus, asking, praying, requesting the Father to send another Comforter, Counsellor. Matthew Henry wrote *“Christ will not be an advocate for any but those that will be ruled and advised by Him as their counsel. Follow the conduct of the Spirit, and you shall have the comfort of the Spirit. Those who keep the commands of the Lord Jesus will have this great blessing of Him making His requests on their behalf.*

In v13-14 we have the word “ask”. In NIV we have it again in English in v16, - KJV says “pray” in v16. Yet in the Greek of v16 it is a different word altogether from that in v13-14 (the word (αἰτέω) simply means “to ask, to beg, to call for, to crave”); the word in v16 (ερωτάω) means “to request” and do so on terms of equality. As believers we are to implore, beg, call - that in mercy God would hear and answer us, but God the Son requests as an equal. Jesus always uses this word concerning Him “asking” of the Father - it is always the request of an equal and never the begging of an inferior!

What an encouragement - the Son requests the Father for another Comforter to help us. Here we have the Trinity again glimpsed - Father, Son and Holy Spirit. He is the cause of our being sent the Holy Spirit - the Son’s intercession for the Father to send the Holy Spirit, and yet in 15:26 Jesus says that He will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth - so both Father and Son send the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the Father’s gift to the church sent through the intercession of the Son. What a certainty we have that God would bless, encourage and comfort His people. No wonder Christ’s work will go on after His departure. The Church’s future

is guaranteed and secure and the gates of hell will not and cannot prevail against it. Now see:

### **3. The continuing gift. (v16b)**

Lord Jesus will request the Father and the Father will give to believers another Comforter, Counsellor - identified as the Spirit of truth in v17 and this One will be, abide with believers continually for ever (*present and continuous tense*). The Lord Jesus was to the disciples a Comforter, a Counsellor, but His physical presence would soon be removed. Jesus promises that the Father would send the Holy Spirit and the Holy Spirit would never leave them, but He would be with them continually forever.

Jesus is fully God in every part of His being. He took to Himself humanity to be our Saviour and Mediator. He would soon be returning to the Father, but in His place would be sent another Comforter, Counsellor. Here the term “another” is important to note and remember. We may change our car for *another* totally different make and model of car. Only other hand we may change it and get *another* of the same make and model. The word Jesus uses emphasises and has the meaning of the same type and He is saying “*another of the same kind*” - in other words, another one just like the Lord Jesus. This means the Holy Spirit is a person as Jesus is; has all the attributes as Jesus has as God – it means it is means He is God and He is not an “it”, an influence or a mere power or force, but is the 3<sup>rd</sup> person of the Trinity.

As Jesus was a Comforter, Counsellor, so too is the Holy Spirit. This word παρακλητος, parakletos = Paraclete literally means “*one who gets alongside*” - to help, encourage, comfort, strengthen. It was used in ordinary Greek for a legal assistant, a defence lawyer, an advocate. So old English “Comforter” = one who gives help, encouragement. The word *comfort* catches a sense of it; although the meaning has changed over the centuries. NIV

use of “Counsellor” is perhaps too narrow - restricting it to a legal idea. The term helper, encourager, strengthener are all good, but we will see He also guides, teaches, instructs, brings home teaching of Christ and dwells with and in us.

His work is to provide all the help that is necessary for us as God’s children. He will be our helper, advocate, comforter, encourager, guide, strengthener. He is our Paraclete - so I encourage you to remember the word as a title of the Holy Spirit in His ordinary, routine, but great work in the life of a believer.

The Holy Spirit is given to all believers - while they are on earth away from the Lord Jesus. The particular emphasis in these verses is that He is the Spirit of truth. John in 1 John 5:6 says He is truth and all truth proceeds from Him and He will guide into all truth (16:13). He will always teach in accordance, in agreement with God’s word. Alarm bells should ring when someone claims the Holy Spirit, led them to do or say something not in agreement with God’s word - this is how we are to test the spirits to see if they are of God.

The Holy Spirit causes divine truth to enter the soul; gives it reality, the stamp of authenticity as the very truth of God. He applies the truth to our hearts and lives. It is not blind impulses, nor intellectual ability alone. The Spirit without the word is dumb; the word without the Spirit is dead, but together it is the power of God - to salvation and the word becomes alive to us.

He is the continuing gift sent by the Father, requested by the Son for **all** believers. All believers have the Holy Spirit, for if we do not have Him, then we are not God’s child. It is not *“Receive Jesus and then receive the Holy Spirit. at some later time”*. Yes, we continually have the supply of the Spirit - at different intensities at times – described as filled with the Spirit, outpourings of the

Spirit, sealed with the Spirit, immersed, baptised with the Spirit – these stir up a greater love and zeal for God and the Saviour in our Christian life. By using these phrases and terms, I am referring to biblical experiences which the Christian life can delight in. Not all would agree with me from either side of the charismatic divide, but there's so much more to know and experience in our Christian life. Now let us note:

#### **4. The blind world. (v17a)**

The world cannot receive or know Jesus or the Holy Spirit and by the term '*world*' I mean the moral order of mankind which is in rebellion against God - as they are naturally blind and ignorant to the things of God and the Spirit. (1 Corinthians 2:14). This amazing gift of the Paraclete is only to those who have trusted the Lord Jesus as their Saviour. Yes, He does have a work and role in the world as we see in 16:8-11, but there it is not as the Advocate, but as the Prosecutor to convict the world of guilt, sin and righteousness; but He uses such as He works in the work of salvation to bring people to new birth.

Yet by and large, the world and non-Christian left to themselves are blind, unreceptive and ignorant of the Holy Spirit and His promised purposes and workings. Even though the world may be like that, nevertheless, the promised continuing gift is not prevented from being received - so see:

#### **5. The receiving believers. (v17b)**

Here in these verses we have a number of important terms. Jesus was leaving them, going away, but the Paraclete would be sent to them from the Father - to be with them, in their midst, abide with you; to live with them, dwelleth with them and to be in them (*various translations*).

The disciples knew the Holy Spirit even as Jesus was speaking. They were believers, they had the Holy Spirit. No one could be a believer without Him. He was at work in the OT bringing people to faith, equipping people and empowering people. OT believers had new hearts created in them, “born-again” of God’s Spirit as they believed OT promises, evidences, as they looked forward in faith to the Lamb God would provide. In OT dispensation, economy, His work and person were often veiled, known and yet unknown. The time was coming after Jesus’ death, resurrection and ascension when He would be sent from the Father and Son in His fullness. Then He could apply the work of Christ in all its glorious fullness. He would be let loose to empower the message of the gospel – the power of the gospel was dynamite!

Then the people of God would become international, cosmopolitan and many would be brought into the kingdom of God. From Pentecost onwards the church would come of age - Pentecost was not the birth of the church! Till then she was using childish language, ideas and pictures. Then at Pentecost the church came of age and was able to do as she should by proclaiming the living risen Saviour in power and might. The people of God would become global, Christ’s triumph abolished the middle wall of partition, it was broken down as Paul writes of Ephesians 2:11-22. Peter writing to Gentiles says they were 1 Peter 2:8 *“a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.”*

When the Holy Spirit came at Pentecost, God’s children, people would be transformed. Then timid, denying Peter was bold, authoritative and challenged the rulers and priests openly. The disciples were bold and openly proclaim Jesus as the Messiah. Thankfully the same Holy Spirit is in our midst, is abiding in our lives as believers, whether a mature or young Christian and also

as a church. He is within us, still does His work as the Paraclete in our lives. The Person of the Holy Spirit can be grieved, His work and influence in our lives can be quenched. We can be filled with the Spirit, immersed in Him (*baptism of the Spirit*), sealed by His Spirit - so equipped for His service and strengthened. The Holy Spirit is vital to our Christian life and well-being - as evidenced by the free and constant supply of the Spirit.

He grants us an assurance that now we belong to Jesus and Jesus belongs to us, He witnesses to our spirit that we are the children of God as He has given us life. There is much to learn about Him and to appreciate His work fully. We are to question if we know His life-giving work at all? He points us to Christ and His salvation and grants us new life. Are we born-again of God's Spirit or are we only religious, moral or interested? We need above all to be born-again of God Spirit by believing in the Lord Jesus. If you see your need of Jesus as your Saviour, then the Holy Spirit is already at work in you.

If we are a Christian, then we are God's child and we are to take heart and encouragement, whatever we have understood, that God the Spirit is promised to us. Even though we don't have Christ's presence, we have the continuing presence, work of the Holy Spirit and He will take of the things of Christ, make them real and glorify Jesus in and through our lives. I pray He would do this a lot in our lives and He would glorify our lovely Saviour in and through us.