

Children's Moment

March 15, 2015

Title: Holy Spirit is our Comforter

Object: Teddy Bear or Stuffed Toy

Scripture: **And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever.”** (John 14:16)

This morning I brought my stuffed Pony. A lot of children have a Teddy Bear, or stuffed pony or some other stuffed toy they like to hold close when they are afraid, sick or upset. Some may have a favorite blanket called a "security blanket" they like to snuggle up to when they need some comfort. Have you ever had a favorite cuddly toy or a security blanket? Did it ever help you to feel better when you were afraid or when you were sick?

Did you know that studies have shown that most children become attached to a Teddy Bear, a stuffed pony or favorite blanket and they help to comfort them whenever they are afraid, sick, or upset? Even scientific studies have proven what kids have known for a long time. A Teddy Bear or a security blanket can give great comfort -- especially at bedtime or when you are sick, or when you are separated from your parents.

Jesus understood we all need help. When He was here on earth, He was a source of great help and comfort to His disciples and others. As He was preparing to return to heaven, Jesus knew that there would be times when the disciples would need help and comfort. Jesus told the disciples that He would ask his Father (who is Jesus' Father?) to send them another Comforter or Helper to be with them forever. That is exactly what Jesus did. He asked God the Father, and God sent the Holy Spirit. Not just in times of trouble but God the Holy Spirit is with believers always. He is there to comfort and to guide us and to give us God's wisdom.

I don't know about you, but I am glad that Jesus asked God to send His Holy Spirit to comfort and help me when I am afraid or sick or confused or need wisdom. My Pony may get lost or become ragged and torn, but Jesus promised that God the Holy Spirit would be with us forever and ever.

We may outgrow our need for a Teddy Bear or Pony or a security blanket -- at least, we don't carry them around with us all the time -- but we never outgrow the need for the comfort and guidance of God's Holy Spirit.

Dear Father, we thank you for sending the God Holy Spirit to be our comfort and our guide and to dwell inside our souls. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

John 14:16-17

I want to review last week's teaching. We established that one of Jesus' prime commandments for Christians is to love one another. Jesus tells us "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another." (John 13:34-35) If you love Jesus you must love other Christians. We also saw that there is pain in other people's lives that is unknown to us because we fail to love each other - meaning taking time to know each other, care for each other and pray for each other. Loving brothers and sisters in Christ is a practical love and means at least three things – service, sacrifice and sharing. So, how did we do last week? How did you demonstrate love for someone else? Did you show love for someone you have difficulty with? Did you pray for them?

Church is meant to be simple, but gets complicated because while we are saved, we remain sinners. As a church Christ calls us to sacrifice for each other – giving freely of our resources and ourselves. We are to serve each other and when we do no one's needs goes unmet. When we pray for each other our frustrations dissipate, our desire for fellowship grows. How did you show love for others last week? Who did you serve? How did you share of yourself and your resources?

Is Canyon Bible a community where people feel loved? Do we openly show love for each other and pray for each other? I love and pray for each of you. People come to me with problems and concerns and I appreciate this because I love you and I am called to care for you. However, at times, you should have gone to your brother or sister first and of course, if you had, then there would not have been a

need to come to me. Conflict within our community will dissipate and be resolved when we go to each other and deal directly with each other – this is loving each other. So, my beloved, work at loving each other, praying for each other and serving each other. We will always experience problems and challenges – it is how we handle them that is the difference. My beloved, talk to, pray for and love one another. Let us live as Jesus modeled and taught.

This morning we continue in John chapter 14 discovering who is the Helper.

Who, What and Where

As the church was birthed and expanded problems arose quickly. Time and energy was spent to define what the church believed. These conflicts were a good thing, for they forced the Apostles and those who followed to critically define God, the scriptures and the Church. As a result of their efforts I would like to begin this morning with our reciting ***The Apostles' Creed*** written in the late third century.

Please stand if you are able and read with me –

“I believe in God the Father Almighty; Maker of heaven and earth. And in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord; who was conceived by the **Holy Spirit**, born of the virgin Mary; suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried, the third day he rose from the dead; he ascended into heaven; and sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

I believe in the **Holy Spirit**; holy catholic Church; the communion of the saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. Amen.”

Please be seated.

Let me explain, “**holy catholic Church**” which in our time can be confusing. The word “**holy**” means to be set apart from the unsaved world and belonging to God. And “**catholic Church**” means the universal undivided Church or body of believers who worship the **biblical** Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior.

Every time we recite this ancient Apostles’ Creed one of the things we affirm is our belief in the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the third Person of the Trinity. Christians understand the work of Christ – He redeemed mankind by His atoning death. Most understand that Jesus is God. But, are we clear in our understanding of the work of the Holy Spirit? It seems to some extent the Holy Spirit is taken for granted and for some this Spirit of God is a mysterious power bordering on mysticism. Many Christians today are in the same condition as the followers of Jesus that Paul found when he came to Ephesus. *Paul said to the disciples or the followers of Jesus, “Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?” And they said to him, “No, we have not even heard whether there is a Holy Spirit.”* (Acts 19:2)

Some Christians have a vague knowledge of the Holy Spirit. However, this is abnormal for Jesus clearly taught much about the Holy Spirit. Jesus taught some clear traits and purposes of the Holy Spirit in the verses we are exploring this morning. Are you set in your mind and can you explain whom the Holy Spirit is?

Remember when we studied verses 12 to 15 Jesus said we will do greater works than He did while He was on earth referring to the expansion of His church. As we work to fulfill the will of Christ in our lives and work to expand His kingdom, Jesus will do whatever we ask of Him. The passage ended with teaching the outward sign of our love of God the Father and Christ is our obedience to His commandments.

As we move to our study verses this morning we will learn that knowledge of the Holy Spirit and dependence upon the Holy Spirit and our surrendering ourselves to the Holy Spirit are necessary for us to do the “greater works” Jesus mentioned in verse 12. If there is lack of spiritual fruit in your life this may indicate your lack of submission to the Holy Spirit. We cannot hope to faithfully be obedient to the commandments of God without the power of the Holy Spirit.

Let us go to God in prayer as we prepare to gain understanding of the Holy Spirit by His very power that indwells us and gives us spiritual wisdom.

Let me begin our time by reading John 14:16 and 17, “*I will ask the Father, and He will give you another **Helper**, that He may be with you forever; *that is the **Spirit of truth**, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see Him or know Him, **but you know Him because He abides with you and will be in you.**”* As I teach about the Holy Spirit, Spirit of Christ, Spirit, Helper or Comforter (all of which are different names for the same person) it is these verses I want you to focus on as we explore “Who, What and Where” of the Holy Spirit.*

Who

We have a problem at times with the word “person” and need to understand “person” is defined as the total personality of self. It is hard to grasp One God experienced in three persons or the Trinity. We are not speaking of three separate physical persons or bodies but the complete personality of self or the personality of each - God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit who are the One Triune God.

The first question we must answer as Christians and as a church is the Holy Spirit a real person? If so, His work is to get hold of believers, to indwell believers, impart

wisdom to believers and use believers for the glory of God. If not, is the Holy Spirit some vague power we search for in attempt to get a hold of? Once we get a hold of the Holy Spirit and as we grow in our understanding we can use “It” for our benefit. Either the Holy Spirit is a real person or He is not. You see, if we think the Holy Spirit as a mysterious power of God, we will be thinking, **“How can I get more of the Holy Spirit?”** This leads to self-exaltation and self-sufficiency. One becomes full of spiritual pride and may feel they are a superior form of Christian. We see this with some of the “spirit movements” in churches. On the other hand if we think of the Holy Spirit as a Person, our thoughts are, **“How can the Holy Spirit have more of me?”** If we think of the Holy Spirit as a Divine Person who fulfills the mission of God for the salvation of those God has called and accomplishes His mission by taking possession of us – then we are undone of ourselves and must work at staying undone so that the Divine will dwell in us and take over our lives and amazingly He will use us for God’s glory. The first thought is pagan and has infiltrated into the church – I am a man filled with the Holy Spirit evidenced by the things I can do. The second is the New Testament principle of submission to God and the miracle of what He does through us for His glory.

We see these two different approaches to the Triune God and the person of the Holy Spirit – one is what I call the “wrong way” and then there is the second, the narrow path, I like to refer to as the “right way.” Turn to Acts chapter 8 beginning in verse 9. This is the story of Simon the magician who came to believe in Christ through the preaching of Philip at Samaria. In verse 13 we see Simon believed and was baptized. Because of Simon’s having only general knowledge of Christ or because he believed – but believed not in the real Christ - he fell into error thinking that the Holy Spirit was a power one could purchase and own. Further along in verse 18, Simon offers money to the disciples to buy the power of the Holy Spirit.

Peter's response is direct, "May your silver perish with you, because you thought you could obtain the gift of God with money! You have no part or portion in this matter, for your heart is not right before God." (Acts 8:20-21) When we hear those perverting the Word of God for gain or fame we should say, repent "your hear is not right before God." Simon did ask Philip to pray for him, so he would not suffer the consequences of his actions. However, we see no evidence of repentance. This may indicate he did not truly believe in the Christ of the Bible. Look at all the religions and churches do they adhere to the Jesus of the Bible or a redefined Jesus? How about you, can you articulate who Jesus of the Bible is? Do you understand the biblical person – the Holy Spirit?

Since we are in Acts, please move forward to chapter 13. Here we find a group of men in the church lead by prophets and teachers. The word "Prophets" could also have been translated as "inspired preachers." These men were ministering and fasting. The Holy Spirit directs them to set aside two men; Barnabas and Paul for the work directed by God the Holy Spirit. In Simon's case he wanted to get ahold of and use God for his purpose. In Barnabas and Paul's case God directed and got a hold of men He chose and used them for His plan and His glory.

Jesus says, "I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever; *that is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see Him or know Him, but you know Him because He abides with you and will be in you.*" (John 14:16-17) This is a great promise, but it is great because of the person of the Holy Spirit. If the Holy Spirit were only a power and not a person then this promise of Jesus would be in the nature of compensation – I am leaving you and I am going to give you something to make up for my departing. This is not what this verse is saying – it is not saying Jesus will give something in

trade to make up for His leaving. What it is saying is the divine power of God in the form of another person is being sent to believers. The Holy Spirit is a divine person because He will have **all** knowledge for He will know **all** there is about every believer. He will know if a believer is in harmony with God or under distress. The Holy Spirit must have feelings in order to understand and relate to believers and comfort them. He must have will, not human will, but divine will, for He has been commissioned to see the will of God carried out in believers. In John 14:16 and 17 He is promised as a Counselor, Comforter or Helper to Christians. In 1 Corinthians 12:11 we read, “**But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually just as He wills.**” Meaning the Spirit works in and through Christians as He determines to fulfill the will of God. The Spirit does this for the benefit of Christ’s “church”, which we know is the believers who gather “**...continually devoting themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.**” (Acts 2:42)

What

The scripture distinguish between the persons of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit and defines their different missions thus proving that the Holy Spirit is a person, not just an invisible power. Jesus speaks of His relationship with the Holy Spirit and their different missions saying, “**When the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, that is the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify about Me.**” (John 15:26) Even though the Spirit proceeds from the Father and testifies of Jesus in addition the scriptures teach that the three persons of the Godhead are equal. Matthew 28:19 show the person of the Godhead to be on equal footing because we “**...baptize them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.**” You can also read 2 Corinthians chapter 13 in your home

study time. Here then is your homework – read 2 Corinthians 13 looking for the Holy Spirit.

The Spirit is God is God and equal to the Father and the Son. This is implied in Matthew when Jesus said, **“Therefore I say to you, any sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven people, (scripture teaches we are forgiven our sins and that as believers we do not stop sinning completely once we are saved. Men from the beginning of history have taken God’s name in vain and this is blasphemy and this too will be forgiven those who repent) but blasphemy against the Spirit shall not be forgiven. “Whoever speaks a word against the Son of Man, (Jesus walked among the people and they blasphemed and accused Him of all sorts of ungodly things) it shall be forgiven him; but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be forgiven him, either in this age or in the age to come.”** (Matthew 12:31-32) This a serious charge all should take heed of. It clearly shows the value of the Holy Spirit as one person of the Triune Godhead.

Where

Another question one might ask, “Is the Holy Spirit confined to the souls of believers?” Is He fully God in every aspect? God the Father and the risen Christ are unlimited with respect to time and space, not having size and are, therefore, in Their whole being or person present in every point of space. Sometimes I have a hard time wrapping my mind around this – what a powerful image! God’s omnipresence is not found clearly defined in a few scriptures, but in the breath of the Bible.

An example of His omnipresence is seen in God’s rebuke of the false prophets recorded in Jeremiah, **“Am I a God who is near,” declares the LORD, “And not a God**

far off? “Can a man hide himself in hiding places so I do not see him?” declares the LORD. “Do I not fill the heavens and the earth?” declares the LORD.” (Jeremiah 23:23-24) You may be asking this is all good and fine, but pastor what does this have to do with the Holy Spirit? I am glad you asked. I hope to give you an answer.

In our verse this morning Jesus says, “I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper...” Let me ask you who is the first Counselor or Helper sent by God for the salvation of mankind? That is right; when in doubt always answer Jesus. Now Jesus says God is sending another Helper. Is this other Helper similar to Jesus? Is this other Helper different than Jesus? Lets look at this verse a little closer to see what Jesus is saying.

In the Greek language there are two different words that we translate as “another.” One is ἕτερος “*heteros*” meaning “another” that is **different** from the first. In Luke 20 the owner of the vineyard sent a slave to collect the rent and they abused him. Then owner then sent “another slave; and they beat him also and treated him shamefully and sent him away empty-handed.” (Luke 20:11) These two slaves and the others that were sent by the owner were completely different people. They were **not** the same.

Jesus uses the second Greek word here in verse 16. The word is ἄλλος “*allos*” meaning “another” **just like the first**. So the Helper sent by the Father is another divine being just like the first, Jesus. The Holy Spirit is all-knowing, all-powerful and all-present just like the Father and Son.

Conclusion

Does it matter how we think and what we know about God the Holy Spirit? Yes, it does. For if we recognize His deity, His will, and His holiness and we will rely upon

Him instead of ourselves. If we forget or reduce who the Holy Spirit is we will rely on our own wisdom and our own strength. When we do this we forfeit what God alone can do through us.

Do you acknowledge the authority of the Holy Spirit in the Bible? For, He inspired its writings! Do you acknowledge the power of the prophecies found in both the Old and New Testaments? It was the Holy Spirit that breathed these into the prophet's minds! Do you give reverence to the reading and preaching of God's Word? These are the words given by the Holy Spirit and it is the Holy Spirit that enables you to have the spiritual wisdom to understand them.

If this is not your attitude towards God who dwells within you – then you dishonor the Holy Spirit – for His Spirit is the same as Christ. If you are not allowing the authority of the written Word and the Living Word and the Inspired Word to rule your life then you are being disobedient to God. If you are not sharing the gospel of Christ given by the Holy Spirit with the lost, you are disobedient to God. If you do not love you brothers and sisters in Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit you are disobedient to God.

We are called to live the Word of God. Christ is the Living Word and the Holy Spirit is the same Spirit of Christ and the living Spirit of Christ lives within you. Living in you is the greatest power ever known. To not be used by God is foolishness beyond description. Release God, be obedient to Him and know the love and power of God in your life in all His glory. Amen!