

## **Another Comforter**

In the upper room, the Lord makes an amazing and totally unexpected announcement to His disciples. "Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you" (John 16:7). The word "expedient" as it is found in our bibles does not have the same meaning as it does today. Then it had the idea of something which was "profitable" ie it was "better" for them If He went away. But how could this be possibly true? – to be better off without Him. Who was this Comforter that the Lord was going to send?

This is the basis of our study – to see if it could be better for the disciples to lose the Saviour but have this Comforter also. He is the Holy Spirit whom the Lord would send to them after His departure. He would not come to replace the Lord Jesus, but rather in addition to the Saviour. The Lord called Him "Another Comforter". He would not just be another numerically but another like the Lord Jesus. When the Spirit came at Pentecost, they would have two comforters – the Lord Jesus and the Holy Spirit. The Greek word PARAKLETE, translated Comforter when referring to the Holy Spirit in John's gospel, is translated as "Advocate" when used of the Lord Jesus in I John 2:1, " If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous". If we sin, we have someone we can call alongside to help.

As we look at this study of the Spirit's work for us, we shall see an almost identical list of activities to that of the Lord Jesus, both in the days of His flesh, and presently in the day of His ascension. So, in relation to the disciples, though they would lose the physical presence of the Lord Jesus, they would soon have two divine persons acting for them, the Lord in heaven and the Spirit in them on earth.

### ***Divine comfort***

In John 14, the Lord says to His disciples in the upper room, "Let not your heart be troubled" (John 14:1). The Lord in this part of the gospel had many troubles of His own. In John 11, He groaned in the spirit and was troubled when He saw Mary and the Jews weeping at the graveside of Lazarus. In chapter 12, the shame and suffering of the Cross were looming large in His thoughts. He was troubled in His soul. In chapter 13, He was troubled in spirit as He was about to make it known that one of His disciples was going to betray Him. But in chapter 14, His concern is for His disciples. He also had to give them a ministry that would strengthen them and help them to stand without Him. So He had thoughts for the disciples He was about to leave behind, and therefore He was going to give them Another Comforter - Another of the same kind as Himself.

We shall make a comparison of the two Comforters in what follows.

### ***Divine presence***

The Lord Jesus was with His disciples to help them in times of trouble – most of the time. But there were times when He was not with them. He sent them off to preach two by two. He would sometimes send them off to buy food. Sometimes He would take with Him only Peter, James, and John and leave the others behind. He was constrained by the limitations of a physical body. But this new Comforter would be with them and in them forever – they would always have a divine person with them, by their side. Is this true of every Christian, that he has the Holy Spirit within? In Romans chapter 8, the very presence of the Holy Spirit within is the mark of the genuine believer.

Romans 8: 9 Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.

If we do not have the Spirit, we do not belong to Christ.

Although the Lord Jesus is now in heaven, He maintains a presence with us – not physically as before, but rather in the Spirit. Some verses relating to His present position would suggest that His presence with us is conditional to our current state.

In John 14, His presence and that of the Father seem to be conditional upon us keeping His words.

“ If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him” (verse 23).

“Abode” is the same Greek word as the “mansion” of verse 2. The Lord has gone above to prepare for us a dwelling place. But until that day dawns, He wants us to prepare a place for Him and the Father. One way that we can prepare such a place is by proving our love to Him – by keeping His words. Earlier in this chapter, the Lord has spoken about love for Himself shown by keeping His commandments. What is the difference between His commandments and His words? In 2Sa 23:16 , David sighed, “ Oh that one would give me drink of the water of the well of Bethlehem, which is by the gate. And the three mighty men , brake through the host of the Philistines, and drew water out of the well of Bethlehem, that was by the gate. ”

David was the commander in chief of his small army. Had he commanded the three men to go, they would have obeyed him. But He simply longed for a drink of the well, and in response these three men risked their lives to please David. It showed how much they loved him. Likewise if a man had such love for the Saviour, the Father and the Son would make their abode in him.

Similarly, in Ephesians chapter 3, Paul is praying to the Father on behalf of the saints in Ephesus. One of the things that He prays for is that Christ might dwell in them. Thus he writes:

That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith (verse 17)

To “dwell” here is to dwell in a house – ie to make a permanent dwelling place for Himself. While He was on earth, He had no permanent dwelling place. He “tabernacled” amongst us. He pitched His tent amongst us, as One who had no permanent place here. We can enjoy the presence of all three persons in the Godhead.

Only in Colossians chapter 1: 27 does there appear to be a permanent place for Christ in all of us.

Christ in you, the hope of glory:

### ***Divine guidance***

While the Lord was here, He led them where they should go. Hence we read phrases such as, “He must needs go through Samaria”. “Let us go into Judea again”. “Let us go into the next towns for therefore came I forth”.

But after the Lord ascended to heaven, this role was taken up by the Spirit of God. Hence we read of Paul and his companions getting guidance from the Holy Spirit in Acts chapter 16. They thought they might go into Bithynia but the Spirit forbade them. The Spirit then suffered them not to go into Asia. But when they came to Troas, Paul had a vision in the night. A man of Macedonia said to him, “Come over into Macedonia and help us”. The Spirit was now giving them the guidance previously given to them by the Lord.

### ***The children of God***

In John chapter 1, the Lord is the means whereby men became the children of God. Verse 12 says “But as many as received him, to them gave He power to become the children of God, even to them that believe on his name.”

Through faith in the word of God, we read this verse and we believe that we have become

the children of God. But the Spirit also plays a part in this event. When we are born again, we are born of water and the Spirit, without which we cannot enter into the kingdom of God. But the Spirit also plays a part in keeping alive in our hearts and minds this new relationship with God. "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:"Romans 8:16). It is the Spirit who reminds us that we belong to the family of God. "Ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father"(Romans 8:15).

### ***The love of God***

The love of God was displayed in the gospels by the Lord Jesus. It is recorded that He loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. In the upper room, we read about His love for His disciples - "Having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end ( John 13:1 )". Paul says in Galatians chapter 2:20 , "He loved me, and gave Himself for me".

So what can the Spirit give us as regards to divine love? He is within us to make us aware of God's love. "The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us" (Romans 5:5).

## **Divine truth**

### ***The Lord Jesus and truth***

When He was in the world, the Lord Jesus is said to have been "full of grace and truth". He is the way, the truth, and the life. He tells Pilate at His trial that He came to bear witness unto the truth. In Revelation, He is described as the true and faithful witness.

### ***The Spirit and truth***

In the gospel of John, the apostle tells us a great deal regarding the Comforter who is to come. What will the Spirit do for us? He will lead us into all truth.

He will glorify Christ in us.

This work of the Spirit is graphically seen in the activities of Simeon in Luke chapter 2:

And, behold, there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon; and the same man was just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel: and the Holy Ghost was upon him.

And it was revealed unto him by the Holy Ghost, that he should not see death, before he had seen the Lord's Christ.

And he came by the Spirit into the temple:

There are three mentions of the Spirit in this section

The Holy Ghost was upon him

It was revealed unto him by the Holy Ghost

He came by the Spirit

He came into the temple just as Joseph and Mary arrived to offer their sacrifice. It was no chance encounter. The Spirit led him to the babe , God's salvation

He shall receive the things of Christ and reveal them unto us

Just as the Son came to reveal the Father, so has the Spirit come to reveal the Son. The Son came to speak the words which the Father gave to Him. The Spirit reveals to us the conversations of heaven. Whatsoever the Spirit shall hear, that shall He speak.

He will show us things to come

This is beautifully illustrated in First Corinthians chapter 2 where Paul draws a distinction between the natural (unsaved) man and the Christian.

1Co 2:9 But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God has revealed them unto us by His Spirit.

He will bring all things to our remembrance

John is reckoned to have been a very old man when he wrote his gospel. Far from suffering from dementia, he describes at great length in one almost continuous monologue, from chapter 13 to 17, the last words of the Saviour. We could scarcely recall a conversation we heard the previous day, far less after 50 years or more. It is a lovely example of the Spirit's work.

## **Eternal security**

### ***The Lord's preservation of our salvation***

There are many Christians today who do not believe in the eternal security of our salvation. They believe that if we falter in our Christian life, we could be lost. But in His lifetime here, the Lord taught the reverse. In John chapter 10, He made the following promise. "I give unto them eternal life and they shall never perish, "Never" is a very strong word – a triple negative which could be translated as "No, by no means, not unto the ages". The same word for "never" is used in the verse, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee" (Hebrews 13:5).

In John chapter 10, He also speaks of the divine hands that are holding us.

None shall pluck them from my hand

None shall pluck them from my Father's hand

In Luke chapter 10, He tells His disciples to rejoice because their names are written in heaven. Their destiny is secure.

### ***Eternal security and the Spirit***

What does The Spirit do for our eternal security? In Ephesians chapter 1, Paul tells us that we are sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise. A seal is proof of ownership. God has put His mark upon us.

## **Our inheritance guaranteed**

### ***Christ and our inheritance***

In Ephesians 1, we read of God's inheritance which He will take up when Christ is made head of all things in the millennial kingdom. 10 That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him:

What follows is a divine promise that we shall share in Christ's inheritance.

11 In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will:

We might well say that we are unworthy of such a place but we are predestined to it by the counsel of God's own will. God will share Christ's inheritance with us.

## ***The Spirit and our inheritance***

We are still in Ephesians chapter 1. There we read of the Spirit that He is the earnest of our inheritance, He is the deposit, the guarantee that the inheritance one day will be ours.

## ***Intercession for us in prayer***

In the gospels, we read a little regarding the Lord's prayers for His disciples. At the beginning of His ministry, He continued all night in prayer to God, and in the morning He ordained twelve that they should be with Him and that He might send them forth to preach. Before He called them, He prayed for them. Again in the upper room, He says to Peter, "I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not". His longest recorded prayer for us is in John 17 when He prays no less than five times for our unity.

The Lord's prayers for us did not cease at His ascension. Hebrews chapter 7 tell us of His prayers for us.

25 Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.

"Save" here is not in an evangelical sense. Christ died for our sins. He made one sacrifice for sins. But here in Hebrews 7, He lives to intercede for them.

## ***The intercession of the Spirit***

The Lord however is not the only divine person praying for us. Romans 8 says, " Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered".

## **The fruits produced by each**

### ***Fruit bearing and the Lord Jesus***

We learn about bearing fruit for God in John 15

1 I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman.

2 Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.

We bear fruit for God by abiding in Christ God is always looking for more fruit hence the need for purging.

### ***The fruit of the Spirit***

We learn what fruit the Spirit produces in us in Galatians 5

Ga 5:22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,

## **Gifts given to the Church**

### ***By the Lord Jesus***

These are described in Ephesians chapter 4

11 And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;

12 For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:

The gifts here are men – given to the Church to produce growth and unity.

### ***By the Spirit***

We read of these gifts in 1 Corinthians 12:

8 For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit;

9 To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit;

10 To another the working of miracles;

These gifts given by the Spirit and by the Lord are quite different. Why is this the case? The difference can be explained by the difference in time between the writing of each epistle. I Corinthians 12 is written first, in the earlier days of Paul's ministry. Hence we read of healings, prophecy, tongues, and interpretation of tongues. Ephesians is written in the final days of Paul's life – it is one of his last epistles. Hence the gifts given are not things but men. We do not have apostles and prophets today, but we do have evangelists, pastors, and teachers.