

John 14:15-31 – Another Helper

Intro

- Down through history people have understood the importance of having someone there to help and encourage you (to accomplish something specific or just to get through life).
 - o World War II – “Rosie the Riveter” posters encouraging everyone to pitch in and do their part with the “We can do it” slogan.
 - o 150-200 years earlier during the American Revolution, Ben Franklin said, “We must all hang together or most assuredly we shall hang separately.”
 - o About 100 years before him poet John Donne: “No man is an island...”
 - o About 100 years before him writer John Heywood: “Many hands make light work.”
 - o About 2000 years before him Greek author Aesop: “In union there is strength.”
 - o About 300 years before him King Solomon: Ecclesiastes 4:9-12
 - o Within a short time of creating Adam, God said, “It is not good for man to be alone” and establishes marriage which points to the relationship of Jesus and his church.
- Jesus has been telling his disciples that pretty soon he will be returning to the Father.
 - o Soon he will no longer be visibly, physically present, and he is preparing them for that time.
 - o We get to listen in because this is relevant to us as well – we live in a day when Jesus is not visibly, physically present...but we are not alone.
 - In today’s passage, Jesus is going to emphasize that his followers are not left alone in the world while we wait for his return.
 - Jesus alternates between describing our loving relationship with him and the one who helps us in that relationship.

(15) Called to Obedience

- True love for Jesus is demonstrated by obedience to his commands.
 - o Being a follower of Jesus is not about manipulating him for our own ends.
 - The prayers he promised to answer in the previous verses are not a blank check to enrich ourselves with the things of this world.
 - There are names for the kind of person who forms a relationship with someone primarily to get money & stuff...none of them are complimentary because that is not a true loving relationship.
 - o If you truly love someone, you care about their desires and you don’t intentionally do things that you know will hurt them.
 - o If we truly trust Jesus (and a loving relationship with Jesus is built on faith/trust in him) we believe that the things he commands us to do are the best way to live and flow from his love for us.

- The command he has just given his disciples is to love each other with the same humble, self-sacrificing love that he has for us (13:34-35).
 - o Which falls under his broader commands to love God with all that we are and love our neighbor as ourselves (Matthew 22:37b-39).
 - o Which is also phrased as treating others how we would want to be treated (Matthew 7:12).
 - o The rest of the commandments we have give further instructions on the specifics of loving God and others (Romans 13:9-10).
- Now Jesus speaks of the one who will help us live in loving obedience.
 - o He is no longer going to be here to call the disciples together and teach or rebuke them when he hears them fighting amongst themselves.
 - o The disciples will soon have an even closer relationship of help & encouragement.

(16-20) Helped by the Holy Spirit

- (16-17) Jesus promises that he and the Father will send someone else like him to help his followers.
 - o The word translated as *helper*, *advocate*, or *comforter* has the idea of someone who has been called along side you to help and encourage you.
 - If you want the fancy theological term based on the Greek word: *paraclete*.
 - Outside of the New Testament it usually refers to someone who helps in a legal case by give you advice or speaking on your behalf.
 - It is the same word used of Jesus in 1 John 2:1 where he is described as the one who speaks on our behalf in heaven.
 - o While God the Son is acting on our behalf in heaven, God the Holy Spirit (the Spirit of Truth) comes to help and encourage those who belong to Jesus here on earth.
- Jesus tells the disciples that they are already acquainted with the Holy Spirit since he is with them even at that time.
 - o Jesus' ministry was performed under the anointing of the power of the Holy Spirit.
 - o Earlier in the Gospel (3:34), Jesus is described as the one who has "the Spirit without limit/measure."
 - o Very soon, the disciples too will have the Holy Spirit living & working in them.
 - This is first fulfilled on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2).
 - Since that day, everyone who trusts in Jesus as their savior has the Holy Spirit living within them (see Acts 2:38).
 - o Quick vocabulary note: there is not difference between *Holy Spirit* and *Holy Ghost* – both translate the exact same underlying Greek words.
- The point being made: the Holy Spirit does for Jesus' followers the same kinds of things that Jesus did when he was visibly physically here on earth. For example:

- 1 Corinthians 2:12 – He helps us understand God’s Word (like Jesus explaining his teachings to his disciples in greater detail).
 - Romans 8:16-17 – He gives us encouragement & comfort that we are the children of God with an eternity of blessing in store (as we see Jesus doing , including in these very chapters).
 - Romans 8:26-27 – He helps us pray and prays for us (as we will see Jesus doing in chapter 17).
 - Galatians 5:22-23 – He helps us to be not just people who can check off boxes on a “good behavior” list, but people who have truly godly character (as Jesus constantly urged throughout his teaching ministry).
 - 1 Corinthians 12:4-7 – He enables us to serve God (as Jesus did when he sent out his disciples 2 by 2 during a certain phase of his ministry).
- In all this we must cooperate with the Spirit.
- He is here to help & encourage us, not do it all for us.
 - Think of a skilled personal trainer who makes you do the work to get in shape
 - ...not infomercial con man who promises you amazing results with no effort.
 - Galatians 5:25 speaks of it as keeping in step with the Spirit.
 - He can’t help you understand God’s Word if you aren’t spending time reading it, listening to it, or thinking about God’s Word.
 - He can’t help your prayers if you don’t spend any time praying.
 - His fruit and gifts must be put into action as we love and serve others.
 - Ignoring his leading is spoken of in serious terms.
 - E.g. Ephesians 4:30 refers to disobedience (especially as it relates to our speech and our anger) as grieving the Holy Spirit
 - Think of this as a response similar to Jesus weeping over the hard-heartedness of Jerusalem (Luke 19:41-44).
 - If obedience to Jesus shows love, what does ignoring the guidance of his Holy Spirit show? This is a gift we do not want to squander.
- (18-20) The Holy Spirit connects us to and identifies us with Jesus while he is away.
- After his death and resurrection, he meets with the disciples a few more times
 - That helps them, and now us, realize that because Jesus has defeated death itself, death has no hold on us either.
 - We have life that is new, better, & eternal.
 - We will be seeing Jesus in person when the time is right.
 - It is the Holy Spirit who makes our identification with Christ complete (1 Corinthians 12:13 and more in the coming chapters).

(21-24) Characterized by Obedience

- (21) Jesus returns to the point that this kind of Spirit-empowered close, loving, very personal relationship with God the Father & the Son is characterized by faithful obedience.
- (22-23) Judas (a different one than the betrayer) questions how Jesus can have a close relationship in which he is known to them without the world having some knowledge of it.
 - o He must still be thinking in terms of Jesus being visibly present.
 - o Jesus explains that the relationship he is talking about is God Himself living with/in the believer.
 - *Home/dwelling* is the same word Jesus used up in verse 2 to refer to the dwelling place he will prepare for his followers in the Father's house.
 - "While I am away preparing a place for you to live with God (Father, Son, & Spirit), God will be living here with you (especially in the person of the Spirit).
 - o This encouragement is followed by a blunt warning.
- (24) Anyone who feels free to disobey Jesus' principles and commands shows by their actions that they do not love Jesus.
 - o The love for Jesus that comes with true saving faith produces a transformed life through the power of the Holy Spirit.
 - o I fear for people who think of themselves as Christians because they once said the words of a certain prayer, but they seem unbothered by blatant sin in their life.
 - Rather than the fruit of the Spirit their words and actions constantly boil over with selfishness, hatred, lust, and/or pride.
 - Their actions give the lie to any claim that they have repented of their sins and sought forgiveness & transformation through faith in Jesus.
 - Don't let this be you...as Jesus said at the start of his ministry: repent and believe the Gospel – turn away from sin and to Jesus.
 - o Jesus emphasizes that he is speaking the words of God the Father – God the Son conveying the righteous judgment of God the Father.
 - o Having delivered this warning, Jesus returns to the work of the Holy Spirit.

(25-31) Guided by the Holy Spirit

- (25-26) The disciples in particular are promised that the Holy Spirit will help them properly remember and understand what they have heard and seen of Jesus.
 - o This promise doesn't apply directly to us since we are not eyewitnesses (earwitnesses?) of Jesus' earthly ministry.
 - o We still benefit from it because the result is the New Testament which the Holy Spirit helps us understand.
- It has become popular in some Christian circles to dismiss parts of the NT that might make us uncomfortable as if they were nothing more than the personal opinions of the apostles.

- E.g. Some “red letter Christians” do this by valuing only the direct words of Jesus. The Apostle Paul especially gets picked on in this regard.
- We have God’s promise here and elsewhere that his apostles were guided and enabled by the Holy Spirit to write with proper recall and correct understanding.
 - Reading through the Gospels we see many places where the authors point out their lack of understanding then compared to now.
 - Related passages: 2 Peter 1:20-21, 2 Timothy 3:16-17 (cf. 2 Peter 3:16 where Peter refers to Paul’s writings as Scripture)
 - Don’t let someone trick you with the “did God really say...?” line that Satan has been using since he fooled our first ancestors.
- (27-29) Jesus’ followers can have peace no matter what is going on at the moment.
 - This is not the world’s definition of peace, which basically just means “an absence of conflict or unpleasantness.”
 - For Christians, peace means a calm assurance that God is in charge and so I don’t have to worry, grow discouraged, or despair.
 - Even Jesus leaving for a while shouldn’t trouble them.
 - It means the Holy Spirit is coming.
 - It means that the plan of God the Father undertaken by God the Son is about to be accomplished and provide salvation for all who believe.
 - They aren’t able to understand all of this yet, but after all is said and done the Holy Spirit will help them understand and believe.
- (30-31) This part of the conversation ends with Jesus serving as the ultimate example of obedience.
 - Satan has set in motion the events that will lead to Jesus’ death but Satan does not really have any power over Jesus.
 - This is not Satan’s victory even if it might look like it from the disciples’ perspective for a little while.
 - This is Jesus Christ (God the Son anointed with God the Holy Spirit without limit) obeying the will of God the Father because he loves the Father (and because he loves us).
 - Through this act of Spirit anointed obedience we are brought into this everlasting love.

Application Questions:

- Are you keeping in step with the Holy Spirit (Doing the kinds of things that Jesus sent the Spirit to help us with)?
 - Are you learning from his inspired (God-breathed) word?
 - The Holy Spirit enabled godly men to perfectly write all that we need for life and godliness.

- The Holy Spirit helps us accept it as true and apply it to our lives (but for that to happen we need to know what it says).
 - Are you seeking to obey God in everything, motivated by the fruit of the Spirit?
 - If we love Jesus, we will obey his principles and commands.
 - The Holy Spirit gives us the proper motivation and empowerment to do this.
 - Are you at peace, confident in the love of God?
 - As we saw last week, talking to God in prayer is a privilege God has given us that helps combat anxiety.
 - The Holy Spirit helps our prayers be what they need to be.
 - When we are in step with the Spirit he gives us the confidence that we are beloved children of Almighty God.
- If none of these things are true of you...
 - Have you ever trusted Jesus to forgive your sins & transform your life?
 - Not just saying words that someone told you to say to be saved...
 - ...but actually asking him to save you and trusting him to do so...
 - ...having a desire for him to remove your sin and make you a new person.
 - If you are saved, are you guilty of quenching the Spirit ?
 - Being so out of step with his urging you to love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control that you have grown deaf to his conviction & encouragement.
 - Behaving so much like the world that you grieve God who dwells in you.
 - Showing wasteful ingratitude toward the one who lives within you and wants to help you in day-to-day life.
- Rather than doing that, let us keep in step with the Spirit who makes his home with us until Jesus returns to take us to our true home – Galatians 5:22-26.
- Then we will experience the Spirit's assurance that we belong to God...and that even when suffering comes, we know it is nothing compared to the glory that is coming – Romans 8:16-