



Jesus and The Paraclete

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Introduction

- Over the past 2 weeks, we have looked at the work of the Spirit in the death and resurrection of Jesus.
- We saw Him empower Jesus in His humanity, so that He might endure the cross, enabling Him to act as our Great High Priest, offering Himself as the perfect sacrifice in our stead.
- We saw Him depicted as the active agent involved in the resurrection of Jesus.
- If we were moving along chronologically, you would expect at this stage for us to be going to Pentecost.
- Instead, however, I would like for us to take a step back, to the farewell discourse, one of the last conversations Jesus had with His disciples, where He was preparing them for His departure.
- In the farewell discourse, Jesus
 - Issues a new commandment, instructing His disciples to love one another
 - Assures them that although He is departing, He is going to prepare a place for them
 - Encourages them to abide in Him, like branches in a vine
 - Warns them of worldly persecution
 - Assures them that their sorrow would be turned to joy and that there will be victory in the end

- However, there is a common thread, a central theme that weaves its way through the entire narrative.
- That is the promise of a successor, the Paraclete, the Holy Spirit.
- We see Him discussed in chapter 14, 15 and 16.
- I would love for us to take a brief look at each of these descriptions, because each of them reveal something unique about the person and work of the Holy Spirit.

The Paraclete in chapter 14

John 14:15–18 NKJV

¹⁵ “If you love Me, keep My commandments. ¹⁶ And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever—¹⁷ the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you. ¹⁸ I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you.”

- And we see Him mentioned again a few verses later.

John 14:25–26 NKJV

²⁵ “These things I have spoken to you while being present with you. ²⁶ But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.”

- In this passage, Jesus tells His disciples that He will not leave them as orphans but that He will ask the Father to send another Helper, the Spirit of truth ([John 14:16](#)).
- Sometimes, I find myself wondering how awesome it would be if Jesus were around in the flesh today. Wouldn't it be great to follow Him around, sit

under His teaching, see Him work miracles and address injustices? Wouldn't it be great if you could just have one-on-one talks with Him, share your struggles with Him, and have Him intervene for you?

- Somehow, I do not find myself wondering about the same things when it comes to the Spirit. Perhaps, because the Spirit did not become a man, I am not inclined to try and relate to Him as I would to Jesus.
- But Jesus would seem to challenge that thinking.
- For starters, the words that are used here in the description of this Helper are the words *allos parakletos*.
 - The word *allos*, which is translated here as *another*, means *another of the exact same kind*.
 - The word *parakletos*, which is translated here as *Helper*, has an absolutely astounding range of meaning. Consider the following possible meanings of the word, and as you do, ask yourself, how do these things compare with the person of Jesus:
 - Helper
 - Mediator
 - Intercessor
 - Encourager
 - Advocate
 - Counsellor
 - Comforter
- Friends, all the things Jesus did, the Spirit does as well!
- But significantly, Jesus tells His disciples that this Spirit of truth *would do more*.

- He would not only dwell among them. He would dwell within them, and by virtue of this arrangement, Christ Himself — and by extension the Father also — would continue to be in them ([John 14:17](#)).
- And so while we might long to walk in the footsteps of the disciples, and in the shadow of Christ, Jesus is saying that this new arrangement, where He sends another Helper, is not a lesser arrangement than what the disciples had enjoyed before.
- It is a far superior arrangement because through the Spirit, the disciples would enjoy the fullness of all they had experienced while Christ was with them but they would now enjoy the added benefit of fellowship with the entirety of the Godhead within.

The Paraclete in chapter 15

John 15:26–27 NKJV

²⁶ “But when the Helper comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify of Me. ²⁷ And you also will bear witness, because you have been with Me from the beginning.”

- There is in these two verses arguably one of the greatest disputes and resultant tragedies in the history of the Christian church — the *Filioque*.
- The dispute centres on a fundamental question: does the Holy Spirit proceed from the Father alone, or from the Father and the Son?
- Until the 6th century, the original Greek version of the Nicene Creed affirmed that the Holy Spirit proceeded from the Father. However, at that time, the church was battling an ancient heresy called Arianism, which argued that the Son was not truly God. Some Spanish theologians therefore tacked one word

onto the end of a sentence. That word was the word *Filioque*, a Latin term meaning “and the Son.”

- By altering the sentence, the creed now read that the Spirit proceeded from both the Father and the Son, and as a result, the theology was watertight — Jesus was God.
- The problem, however, is that the Latin church made the tweaks without consulting the Greek church.
- This sparked a controversy that festered for centuries, eventually contributing to the Great Schism of 1054, where the Eastern and Roman churches split.
- An utter tragedy, if you ask me — especially when you read all 3 of our focus passages in succession, because they clearly suggest that both the Father and the Son play a role in the sending.
- If you ask me, the church faces another dispute today, which also centres around the Spirit. That dispute has to do with the continuance or cessation of His gifts. Heaven forbid that we would allow for this disagreement to have a similar devastating impact on unity in the broader body of Christ.

The Paraclete in chapter 16

John 16:5–11 NKJV

⁵ “But now I go away to Him who sent Me, and none of you asks Me, ‘Where are You going?’ ⁶ But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your heart. ⁷ Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you. ⁸ And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: ⁹ of sin, because they

do not believe in Me; ¹⁰ of righteousness, because I go to My Father and you see Me no more; ¹¹ of judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged.

John 16:12–15 NKJV

¹² “I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear *them* now. ¹³ However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own *authority*, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come. ¹⁴ He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare *it* to you. ¹⁵ All things that the Father has are Mine. Therefore I said that He will take of Mine and declare *it* to you.”

- While the Helper is sent to the disciples to do something in them, Jesus makes it clear that the Spirit will also do something through them, in the world.
- He is sent to the disciples, but it is through the disciples that the Spirit *convicts* the world (verse 8).
- The word translated as *convict* in this passage occurs 18 times in the NT and in almost every instance, it refers to the bringing of something to light, showing someone their sin and summoning them to repentance.
- So, it is through the disciples that the Spirit will expose the errors of the world.
- There are 3 ways in which He will do this.

He will show people that they are wrong about sin

- “And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, because they do not believe in me.”

- We live in a world that is constantly trying to convince us that the things the bible describes as sinful, and the things the church has for centuries regarded as such, are not sinful after all.
 - We are constantly presented with new arguments and a new rhetoric — softening, and in some cases even condoning things that the bible tells us will disqualify us from the kingdom of God.
 - In short, our concept of sin has become skewed and our understanding of how to address it has been radically altered. We are encouraged to replace traditional guilt and shame-driven frameworks with self-compassion, self-awareness and constructive methods for self-improvement.
 - We have our ways of dealing with the problem of sin, even though we don't call it by that name.
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- It was the same for the people Jesus was talking about.
 - In the context of the gospel of John, “the world” refers to unbelieving Jews, most notably Jewish leaders who opposed Jesus.
 - For them, sin was a list of thou-shalt-nots. They were very clearly defined.
 - They too had a way of dealing with it — through the Jewish legal system. If you made a blunder, you took your animal down to the temple to see the priest.
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- But Jesus was about to radically redefine how sin is dealt with.
 - No longer would sin be atoned for through the blood of sacrificial animals but through a trust in Him, where the benefits of the shedding of His own blood would be applied to those who believe.
 - This, of course, also radically redefines what sin is.

- In the final analysis, the only sin that truly matters, the only sin that places an impenetrable barrier between us and God is the sin of not believing in His Son.
- If we believe in His Son, all our sins are taken care of. If we do not, they are not. That's it.
- And so Jesus is saying that the first work the Spirit will do through believers in the world is to convict them of the fact that if they do not believe in Jesus, they are committing the most fundamental sin of all!
- "And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, because they do not believe in me."

He will show people that they are wrong about righteousness

- "And when He has come, He will convict the world of righteousness, because I go to my Father."
- We live in a world where people have a pretty skewed understanding of what constitutes righteousness.
- For the most part, righteousness is framed around being a good person, practising the principles of non-harm, anti-oppression and environmental stewardship.
- But again, in the context of the gospel of John, the world that Jesus was talking about were His Jewish opponents.
- For these, righteousness was a strict adherence to Mosaic Law. If you faithfully observed the Torah and you practised charity and almsgiving, you were considered righteous.
- But Jesus was about to radically redefine what constituted righteousness.

- A shift was coming, from external compliance to imputation.
- Rather than a mere keeping of rules, Jesus would make it so that His righteousness would be imputed, that is, legally credited to sinners by faith, making them right with God by virtue of Christ's obedience.
- The righteousness of Jesus is of a fundamentally different quality—one rooted in the heart rather than behaviour alone.
- As we know, His opponents opposed both Him and His teaching.
- And so Jesus is saying that the second work the Spirit will do through believers in the world is to convict them of the fact that Jesus' demands regarding righteousness superseded those of the Jewish legal system, and His resurrection and reunion with the Father serves as a confirmation of that fact.
- If Jesus were not resurrected and if He were not to take His rightful place alongside the Father, then the things He taught about righteousness were of no consequence.
- But if He was resurrected, that changes the game.
- "And when He has come, He will convict the world of righteousness, because I go to my Father."

He will show people that they are wrong about judgment

- "And when He has come, He will convict the world of judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged."
- We live in a world where people have a pretty skewed understanding of who Jesus was.
- Some don't even believe that He existed. Others believe that He existed but that He was nothing more than an ordinary man. Yet others believe that He

was an extraordinary man, and perhaps even a prophet but that is as far as they are prepared to go.

- But again, in the context of the gospel of John, the world that Jesus was talking about were His Jewish opponents.
- For these, their judgment concerning Jesus was just like that of the secular world of today. By their estimation, He was just a regular bloke, and if He was just a regular bloke, then the things He was teaching and claiming about Himself were blasphemous and they had no option other than to judge Him guilty and deserving of death.
- However, what they did not realise is that the thing they used to exact their judgment upon Him — the cross — would be the very thing that God would use to demonstrate that their judgment was wrong.
- Through the crucifixion, resurrection and exaltation of Christ, God did not just address sin and introduce a new standard of righteousness. He decisively broke the authority and power of evil over humanity.
- And so Jesus is saying that the third work the Spirit will do through believers in the world is to convict them of the fact that the legal decision made by the authorities was wrong, and that His resurrection, reunion with the Father, and victory over Satan serves as a confirmation of that fact.
- “And when He has come, He will convict the world of judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged.”

Conclusion

- In His farewell discourse, Jesus prepares not only His immediate disciples but all those who would follow after for life after His ascension.

- He shares with them some sobering truths about what life as a Christ-follower will be like.
- Right in the midst of His description of those challenges, He repeatedly says,
- “But when the Helper comes...”
- For Jesus, the Second Helper, the Paraclete, is Someone in Whom He has the utmost confidence.
- He is the answer to every problem they will encounter.
- This Paraclete will not only succeed Him. Through His work, He will introduce the disciples to a different level of experience and engagement with God.
- Friends, we have in the Spirit a
 - Helper
 - Mediator
 - Intercessor
 - Encourager
 - Advocate
 - Counsellor
 - Comforter
- He is all that we need and more!
- However, Jesus goes on to say that this is not a privilege that we get to keep to ourselves.
- The privilege is to be extended to others.
- And that is where the practical implication comes in.

- The Spirit is given to the disciples but the convicting work of the Spirit is effected through the ministry of the disciples.
- The fact that the truth of the gospel exists is not enough. We need to take up the responsibility of sharing these truths so that the Spirit can do His work of convicting people of the reality of the truths they hear.
- Notice, it is not that we need to do the convicting. We do not need to be super eloquent and have all the answers. We just need to share the truth and trust that the Spirit will do what He has been sent to do.
- He will convict the world where they are wrong about Jesus, that He provides a new standard of righteousness, and that it is by His blood, and His blood alone, that we are saved.