

The Promised Helper

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[0:00] Now let us pray. Father, we ask for your help this morning.! May the Holy Spirit, our helper and teacher, come and guide us into truth.

! Help us understand your word, remind us of what Jesus taught, and apply this truth to our hearts and life. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Now the disciples were facing a crisis. It was the night before the cross. Everything was about to change.

And Jesus just told them to continue the work he was doing. And yes, they would do even greater works than what they had seen him do.

This was overwhelming. They were anxious, confused, and unsettled. The one that they followed, trusted, and built their lives around was leaving them.

[1:03] And they were told to expand on the mission? They were to continue to be fishers of men? How? Didn't this mark the end of the mission?

Who will lead them now? Correct them. Encourage them. Speak to them. Peter? Jesus just said Peter was going to disown him that night.

This passage invites us into that same tension. How do we follow Jesus when we cannot see him? Have never actually heard him speak or ever seen him face to face? Can we know his presence today? Can we hear his words today?

Can he still settle our anxious hearts? Relieve our guilt and shame? Guide us in this often treacherous life?

[2:04] And meet us in our loneliness? Knowing their uncertainty, insecurity, and fears, Jesus makes them promises.

Look at the, I will, my Father will, the Holy Spirit will statements. Hear the promises Jesus makes to the first disciples.

And let's hear him speak to us today. Jesus says in verse 15, If you love me, keep my commands. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever. The Spirit of Truth. Jesus starts off this promise with a condition. If you love me, keep my commands.

Jesus ties love and obedience tightly. Love for him will naturally result in willing obedience.

[3:16] Obedience to Jesus should not come out of duty or a fear of punishment. Such obedience is not what Jesus is looking for.

It doesn't flow from love. True disciples obey out of love for him. Now don't we sometimes wonder if we are true disciples?

Do we love Jesus enough? Do we obey him enough? Enough? Just think of the ways we have failed him just a few days ago.

Well, who was Jesus making these promises to? This promise was made to imperfect disciples, like Peter who would deny him, disown him, and others who would abandon him.

Yet, yet, despite their shortcomings, Jesus made promises to them. Their imperfect, but real repentance and real obedience were evidence that God is already at work in their hearts.

[4:36] Unlike others who say they love Jesus but have absolutely no intention of obeying him, genuine disciples struggle, but they sincerely love Jesus.

For such disciples, Jesus promises them another advocate to help them and to be with them forever, the Spirit of Truth.

Now the word translated advocate is the word paraclete, which means one called alongside to help or to encourage, one who will come with you to help or encourage.

Another advocate, another, implies that the disciples already have won with them, but he is soon departing, Jesus himself.

This new advocate who will replace him will help them and be with them forever. Now this advocate is identified as the Spirit of Truth in verse 17 or the Holy Spirit in verse 26.

[5:48] Verse 26 says that the Holy Spirit will be sent by the Father in Jesus' name. To be sent in Jesus' name means he comes as Jesus' emissary or representative, just like the Father, just like Jesus comes in the Father's name and he is the Father's emissary or representative.

So we see in verse 16 that he has two roles. One, he is to help them and two, to be with them forever. Verse 26 tells us more of what he does.

But notice the pronouns he or him is always used for the Holy Spirit. and he teaches, he reminds, he helps, he stands alongside you.

So he is therefore a person, not a force. And being the Spirit of Truth, everything that emanates from him is truth.

And the Bible makes it clear that he is God. The Spirit cannot be seen, but he can be experienced. Verse 17, Jesus says that the disciples already knew him.

[7:11] He was no stranger to them. He lives with them now, but in the future, he will be in them in a special, more powerful manner at Pentecost.

Now, besides the forgiveness of sins, the giving of the Spirit is a cornerstone of the new covenant that Jesus came to inaugurate.

We will see later that he will dwell in all who believe and trust in Jesus. Ezekiel 36, 27 says that the Spirit will enable people to obey God's commands.

The implication for the disciples and also for us is that even though Jesus is not physically present with them or us today, we have another advocate who is with us, in us.

We are not alone. When caring for a sick child, the Christian is not alone. Believers are not alone in a hospital bed or at work.

[8:22] or in the mission field. Disciples are not alone when they do the greater works of Jesus, sharing the gospel and persuading others.

They are not alone when they face temptations and oppositions to their faith. They have help as they strive to obey the Lord or to love Jesus more.

The world, the moral order that rejects Jesus, do not enjoy such a privilege. Jesus says the world cannot see the Holy Spirit, they cannot accept the Holy Spirit because it neither sees him, his spirit anyway, and they do not know him.

but how the spirit relates to the world is for another sermon in April. For the spirit to come in this manner, in fact, for all the promises Jesus makes in this passage to them, depended on Jesus departing to the Father through that journey of suffering and death on the cross.

so his disciples remain troubled and fearful for the next day, for themselves, for their master. Then Jesus assures them, he says in verse 18, I will not leave you as orphans, I will come to you.

[9:57] What does Jesus mean by that? What does he mean he will not leave them as orphans, he will come to them? He is about to die. What Jesus says in the next few verses make it clear how Jesus intends to come to them.

Firstly, he will not stay dead. He will come to them at his resurrection. Secondly, he will come to them by making his home with them, that is, by indwelling them.

thirdly, he will come to them and us by his spirit-inspired word. So firstly, he will come to them at his resurrection.

Verse 19, he says, before long, the world will not see me anymore, but you will see me. after Jesus dies on the cross and is buried, the world indeed will not see him anymore.

But not long after that, three days later, his disciples will see him, one after another. He leaves.

[11:16] It will be to their amazement and eventual joy. in his post-resurrection appearances, Jesus only appears to his disciples, if you read the Gospels, and he never appears to the world.

But something else would change in the lives of the disciples. Verse 19, Jesus says, because I live, you also will live.

You see, when Jesus died on the cross in obedience to his Father, he won for his disciples everything he promised them before.

Forgiveness of sin, the way to the Father through himself, a secure place in the Father's house, guaranteed access to the Father.

Because Jesus lives, they will live. Yes, it will mean that they too will have their own resurrection in the future, but right then, while in the world, their lives take on a new reality, powered by the resurrection of Jesus, they have resurrection life.

[12:40] For one, Jesus says in verse 20, on that day, the disciples will truly understand and believe fully that Jesus is indeed in the Father, that they are one.

They will realize all he said about himself and the Father is true. And Jesus himself will be different. His body will not be the same.

By then, God has glorified his Son. This resurrection life also opens a new way of relating to Jesus. Here is a second way Jesus will come to them. He comes to them by making his home with them and by indwelling them. You find that in verses 20 to 24.

Jesus says, you will also realize that you are in me and I am in you. The disciples will live their new lives in Jesus and he indwells them.

[13:52] They will still have Jesus. And this promise is extended in verse 21 to whoever has my commands.

Not just to the first disciples. To all who have his commands and keep them are those who love him. Jesus says, the one who loves me will be loved by my father and I too will love them and show myself to them.

He's talking about us. He's talking about you. We are loved by the father and by Jesus and Jesus has revealed himself to us.

Then Judas, not Judas Iscariot, said, but Lord, why do you intend to show yourself to us but not to the world? This Judas, probably Judas, son of James, you will find him listed, you will find him in the list of apostles in Luke 6.

16. Being a Jew, he expected the Messiah to reveal himself to the world in a very startling, public, spectacular manner, not in a private disclosure to a small group.

[15:10] But Jesus' reply shows that he is not that kind of Messiah king. Not yet. Yes, one day he will reveal himself in a spectacular manner at his second coming, but not yet.

His mission at this first appearance is to be the crucified Messiah who takes away the sins of the world. For now, he will show himself to all who believe him and want to follow him.

He says in verse 23 to 24, for anyone, anyone who loves me will obey my teaching. Remember what I said about struggling but genuine disciples.

For this anyone, Jesus says, my father will love them and we will come to them and make our home with them.

What staggering words. What staggering words. Jesus has said it twice. Verse 21 and verse 23.

[16:16] My father will love them. We Christians can be so jaded that these words fail to move us.

We are so used to hearing that God loves us. So sometimes these words just flow over our heads. But ponder for a moment again the wonder of that truth.

God, the creator God, the Holy One who absolutely hates and abhors sin loves you.

Loves you. You would have thought a God like this would have just crushed and destroyed a sinner like you and me. But no.

God loves you. He loves you because of his son. Because you love his son who died for your sins.

[17:23] For no other reason. The second mind-blowing statement is this.

We will come. We, father and son, by now in this passage we have been presented with the privilege of being indwelled not just by the Holy Spirit in verse 17, by Jesus in verse 20, but now also the father.

Some say that it is through the Holy Spirit that the father and son is said to indwelled believers. But I will take Jesus at his word. He says we will come to them and make our home with them.

These words are not his own. They belong to the father who sent him. We the triune God father son and holy spirit who is undivided dwells in us.

Should not such a revelation just blow our minds? It's simply earth shaking. I repeat myself God the creator God the holy one who absolutely hates sin loves us and dwells in us. Should not that humble us cause our souls to soar with awe and with songs of praise with love for Jesus and thanksgiving to him for his finished work on the cross that made it all possible?

[19:08] Can our relationship with God be any more intimate? Does it not give us comfort in our weakness, our suffering, our loneliness, our trials?

Should it not give us boldness to obey him, to live for him, to risk for him, to persevere even in persecution? The world will never understand.

It cannot. You do not need to fly to Palestine to find Jesus. Even if you did, you will not find him there physically.

But you can right there in your living room, in your bedroom, talk to Jesus. Confide in your heavenly father.

Hear him through the Bible by the mediating presence of the spirit. Jesus is still with you to hear all about your day, your struggles, your disappointments and failures and is ready to comfort, strengthen and strengthen you by his spirit.

[20:26] Even when we do not feel him, he is within us. When the first disciples met the resurrected Jesus, as they slowly understood the reality of the love and the indwelling of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, especially in power at the Pentecost, they were transformed from fearful, insecure men into the apostles we meet in the book of Acts, fearless, bold and trusting, bearing witness to the risen Christ and bringing thousands to faith in him.

Finally, Jesus says he will come to us by his word, his teaching. Wait, wait, how are we who live more than 2,000 years after Jesus left, who did not hear Jesus ourselves or even know his teaching?

How can we be sure what we read in the Bible is true and accurate? The disciples, sometimes they don't seem that they really understood everything Jesus said.

How will we know Jesus' words for sure? Jesus tells us how. In verse 25 to 26, this is what he says, All this I have spoken while still with you, but the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in by name, will teach you all things and remind you of everything I have said to you.

Now, this promise to the first disciples is absolutely crucial for Christians who come later. It was a promise that Jesus' teaching will be remembered, understood, and preserved accurately by them, the first disciples.

[22:33] The Holy Spirit himself will teach them all things pertaining to Christ and will remind them of everything Jesus ever said to them. Not only will they faithfully remember Jesus' life and words, the Spirit will also help them in their understanding and their interpretation of the significance of Jesus' words and actions and their implications.

Things that they may not have understood when Jesus first spoke them or did them, they will now understand clearly and accurately and with a new insight.

For example, in John 12, 16, when Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a donkey to the adulation of the people, John wrote in verse 16, At first, his disciples did not understand all this.

Only after Jesus was glorified did they realize that these things have been written about him and that these things have been done to him. And if you go and read it yourself, John 2, 22, you will also hear something like that, that it's only after Jesus rose from the dead that they realized he was talking about his resurrection and his body as the temple.

So the Spirit helped them understand also the reason of Jesus' sacrifice on the cross, the significance of the crucified Messiah, to understand Jesus' divinity and his humanity, love and obedience to the Father.

[24:18] And of course the salvation plan of God that was fulfilled in the Gospel. The first disciples, if you want to like, you can call them the apostles, they would teach this to others, first orally, mouth to mouth, okay, from person to person, verbally, then they would put these teachings down in writing, either by themselves, through close associates, or through scribes.

All the while the Spirit will inspire their teaching and their writings, and these are now collected and preserved for us in the New Testament.

So, we, 21st century followers of Christ, we can be confident that all we need to know about who Jesus is, his mission and work of salvation, and his ethical teachings have been accurately recorded for us.

And we, because we love Jesus, we can be assured that we are rightly obeying him as we obey what the Bible teaches. Now, this work of the Holy Spirit in teaching and reminding extends to the life of all believers, but not in the same way as to the apostles.

The Spirit illuminates his word to us so that we can understand the scriptures. He makes the word of Jesus come alive to us today.

[25:52] He will bring to our mind scriptures to apply, in our situations, or to the decisions we need to make. He redirects our attention back to Jesus and to his word.

When we have all these blessings and privileges from Christ, we do have assurance, we do have confidence, and we do have peace. Jesus says in verse 27, peace I leave with you, my peace I give you.

I do not give you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid. peace I leave. The Hebrew shalom, translated peace, is much more than just the absence of conflict or turmoil.

It means complete well-being. Shalom is a fundamental characteristic of the messianic kingdom anticipated in the Old Testament.

Shalom encompasses all the blessings we have in the kingdom of God, the abundant life under the gracious hand of God. Through his impending death and resurrection, Jesus would secure shalom for his followers through all the promises he has made to them.

[27:19] Now, this world is unable to give this peace. Human sin ensures that every attempt at real peace, whether the inner peace of the soul or the peace in the world, it is rapidly swamped by human hatred, selfishness, malice, bitterness, anxiety, and fear.

The peace that Jesus gives is a supernatural inner tranquility of spirit that is expressed even in the midst of messy daily responsibilities, of messy relationships in the midst of troubles, persecution, or suffering.

And it dissolves fear. So Jesus says again to his disciples, do not let your hearts be troubled, do not be afraid. And Jesus himself displayed this supernatural peace throughout his hour of suffering. by his death, he took upon himself the sins of the world and ushered in the promised messianic peace. And later this peace is imparted as part of the fruit of the Holy Spirit.

Jesus offers us this shalom in every situation. He offers forgiveness for our sins and guilt, guidance for our uncertainties, companionship for our loneliness, comfort for our griefs, advocacy as we face injustice.

[29:07] Answer to every prayer in his name. Open access to the Father, the empowerment of the Holy Spirit for our weakness, divine indwelling now, a promise of life after death in the Father's house, a dwelling in the new heaven and earth in the age to come.

Yes, we indeed have the messianic shalom. I remember in 1981, my first year as a medical student, my first year as a Christian.

The first professional exam was coming up and I was a mess. I had never felt so unprepared for an exam. I was in a panic and my soul was wracked with anxiety.

My mind was in a muddle. One evening after dinner, I sought out my self-group leader. He came, he sat with me on a bench at the badminton court of fifth college.

As I poured out my anxious thoughts, he shared some Bible verses and prayed with me. Then a peace transcended my heart.

[30:32] There was another person with us, someone we could not see. The Spirit was there reminding us of the appropriate scriptures for the moment and helping us to pray and he extended the peace of Jesus to me.

Then on 4th January 2013 just before my first neurosurgery for a meningioma I felt peace and I remember telling God Father now I rest in your everlasting arms.

Brothers and sisters this peace the Lord Jesus he leaves that with us. In verse 29 Jesus now tells his disciples look you are still torn up about the fact that I am going away and then coming back again but if you love me if you love me be glad I am going to the Father for the Father is greater than I because even if that journey takes him through the horrors of the cross he is returning to his home to the intimacy of his father's bosom to the glory he had with the father to the place where the father in his unfaded glory is greater than the son in his incarnate state can the disciples if they love him stop being preoccupied with their own loss and instead realize that his departure to his own home is to

Jesus gain and so rejoice with him what about us are we sometimes more preoccupied with our own griefs and sorrows and fears or even our comfort than to things that bring Jesus joy then Jesus says that he has told them of his impending death even though they might not really get it yet so that later on when it does happen they will truly understand and believe now let's take a quick doctrinal diversion because the phrase the father is greater than I when taken in isolation from the rest of scripture has led to the birth of heretical teachings in the past and now and it is a favorite verse of anti-Christian debaters they say see see the father is greater than I can only mean that Jesus is not God or that he is a lesser! God no the Bible never does not support such heresies!

[33:26] the very first verse of John's gospel declares in the beginning was the word that is Jesus and the word was with God and the word was God and then in verse 18 the son himself is God and Jesus declares many times the father and I are one and the rest of the New Testament bears the same testimony of Jesus divinity so what does it mean that the father is greater than the son the Athanasian creed an ancient creed that unpacks the trinitarian nature of the one God describes the Lord Jesus like this it will appear on the slide if you can read it you can read it together with me so this is the section on Jesus that we believe and confess that our

Lord Jesus Christ God's son is both God and human equally he is God from the essence of the father begotten before time and he is human from the essence of his mother born in time completely God completely human with a rational soul and human flesh equal to the father as regards divinity less than the father as regards humanity the last two sentences again equal to the father as regards divinity less than the father as regards humanity so the father in that sense is greater than divinity because of Christ in his incarnate state but it's also true and correct to explain that sentence this way when Jesus says the father is greater than

I I can take off the slides now when the father says the father when Jesus says the father is greater than I Jesus means that the father as the one who sends and commands is greater than the son who is sent and is obedient you get that yeah let's get back to the last two verses of this passage then I will say much more to you for the prince of this world is coming he has no hold over me but he comes so that the world may learn that I love the father and do exactly what my father has commanded me the prince of this world Satan is on his way in the person of Judas with soldiers and other officials to arrest Jesus this world the moral order that rejects Jesus has a ruler people think that they are autonomous but as the

Bob Dylan song puts it you got to serve somebody people who are not following Jesus are actually ruled by someone whether they are aware or not they are ruled by Satan the prince of this world but Jesus says Satan has no hold over him Jesus has nothing on Jesus I mean Satan has nothing on Jesus since Jesus was sinless and blameless Satan thinks he is going to defeat and kill Jesus but he has no real power over Jesus in fact Jesus death far from being the sign of his defeat at the devil's hands is proof rather as Jesus says I love the father and do exactly what my father has commanded me Jesus journey to the cross is out of his voluntary obedience to the father is evidence of his love for the father just as the love of

Jesus disciples for him is proven by their obedience so too the love of Jesus to the father is proven by his obedience and it was ultimately displayed in his willingness to suffer and sacrifice his own life for humanity and the world must learn this and it will learn this Jesus was not defeated by his death rather Jesus was vindicated by his death the cross resurrection and the exaltation of Jesus hinged on the commitment of the son to love and obey his father no matter the cost there was no other way for sins to be forgiven and for the messianic age to come except through the atoning death of the sinless blameless obedient son of God then

[38:48] Jesus says come let us leave this probably meant that Jesus and his disciples were leaving the upper room to make their way out of the city to the Kidron Valley into the garden of Gethsemane and Jesus continues to teach them along the way but it is also possible that after Jesus said come let us leave the group never really left but continued talking in the upper room just like how we sometimes announce okay it's time to go it's time to go at our home fellowship meetings but nobody leaves as the conversation company and food are simply too good so you can see you can interpret it how you want because Jesus continues to teach them after that so brothers and sisters we have looked at the I will promises that

Jesus made to his scared and anxious disciples we who live after the fact of the cross the I will statements have for us become I have statements promises fulfilled Jesus has not left any of us orphans he indwells us with his presence he has left us his word that we might follow him and obey him so let us love him who has saved us strive to obey him repent when we fail and all the time depending on the Holy Spirit to help us in our walk with him let us pray almighty God thank you for dwelling with your people Lord deepen our love for Jesus and may our lives be marked by joyful obedience

Holy Spirit please help us walk daily in your presence guide us strengthen us and illuminate your word to us remind us of all that Jesus has said please shape our thoughts our desires and our actions according to your truth in obedience to Christ may the peace of Christ dwell in our hearts we pray this in the gracious name of Jesus our Lord and our Savior Amen