

Help is Here

"The Person, Work, and Ministry of the Holy Spirit"

John 14:16–18

What is God doing? He is saying that help is *here* for us, help is here *now*, and that help is the person of the *Holy Spirit*. We want to reclaim some things in terms of the person, the work, and the ministry of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is not weird. *People* are weird. People that are weird with the Holy Spirit were weird *before* the Holy Spirit showed up. So, don't blame weirdness on the Holy Spirit when we need to be blaming weirdness where it belongs, which is on the *people* who act weird. That's just reality. That's the world we live in. People who are just all over the map were that way before they were saved. They were that way before they were baptized and filled with the Holy Spirit.

Jesus didn't just come to save us. He came to *stay with* us, and he wants to *abide in* us. We talk about "Christ in us, the hope of glory." That presence of Christ is the person of the Holy Spirit. That's the Spirit of Jesus, and he's living *in us*. But, not only does he want to live *in us*, he wants to live *through* us. When we're filled with the Holy Spirit and we're walking with him, living what's called the Spirit-led life, we meet somebody on the street but, before we even get there, the aroma of the Holy Spirit precedes us. And, when we have the aroma of Christ on our life and the power of the Holy Spirit working and living in us, he gets there before *we* do.

Then people smell something, but they just don't know what it is they're smelling. That's the Holy Spirit, the *person* of the Spirit. Right before the cross, the disciples were anxious, and Jesus responded with a promise found in John 14:16: "*This is what's going to happen. I'm about to leave. And I will ask the Father and he will give you another Helper.*" That word "helper" is very important - it's the Greek word *pariclete* or *paricletos* - "*and the Helper is going to be with you forever - even the Spirit of truth whom the world cannot receive because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him for he dwells with you and will be in you.*"

Jesus was saying, "*I've been anointed to preach the gospel to the poor, but I'm about to go away, and if I don't leave, then the person of the Holy Spirit can't come. Since he is Spirit, he can be in all of you while I can't. Right now, I can only be with you or with these people, but when I leave, my Spirit will go into all.*" In Acts 2:17 he talks about how the Spirit of the Lord will be poured out on all flesh in the last days, "*whom the world can't receive because it neither sees him nor knows him but you know him for he dwells with you and will be in you. I will not leave you as orphans. I will come to you.*"

How will Jesus come to us? - in the person of the Holy Spirit. The old King James called him the Holy *Ghost*, which sounds scary, so we're not sure if we really want this "*Holy Ghost*." People have translated that into something scary, mysterious, and dark, but Jesus calls the Holy Spirit our "Helper," which can also mean "the Comforter" or "Counselor." The same word *paricletos* can be defined as "Advocate." So when the Holy Spirit comes to us - he's *upon* us and *within* us, we actually have one who *advocates* on our behalf. Who's he advocating to? He's advocating before the throne of God.

Romans 8:34 says he's praying and interceding for us, and he literally goes before us to the Father to say, "*Father I'm presenting My son - I'm presenting my daughter to You today.*" He does that *for* us and on our *behalf*. He is an advocate *and* he is also a *friend* who walks with us. Sometimes we feel lonely but our feelings can trick us. Feelings can be very deceptive, and the enemy knows how to manipulate those. But here's the thing - we're never alone as a son or a daughter of God. As a child of God, we may *feel* lonely, but we are never really alone. He never leaves us and he never forsakes us. That's his promise.

If we're feeling alone, that means we're not leaning into the One who lives inside of us and who walks with us. Where he says, "*I'm going to bring you another helper,*" that word means *another* "*of the same kind.*" In other words, "*I'm bringing you someone like Me - the same kind. In fact, it will be Me and my Spirit in you. I'm bringing that to you.*" The word "helper" also means *counselor, comforter, helper, intercessor, advocate and friend*. So, help is not just *on the way*, help is already here.

We should say, "*Thank You, Holy Spirit, for living in me. Thank You for being my Helper, my Counselor, my Comforter, my Advocate, my Intercessor, my Friend. Thank You for living Your life in me and through me in Jesus' name.*" What are we doing there? - we're making a declaration of faith of his presence in our life. The person of the Holy Spirit is "God with us." He is "God In Us." The Holy Spirit's not weird. The Holy Spirit's not a "force." He's not just some apparition or ghost. He is a person. In fact, he's the Third Person. Not first, second or third. They're One *in the same essence*: God - the Father; Jesus - the Son; and the Holy Spirit. So, we have the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit - *the Trinity*.

The Trinity literally comes from two words put together which mean *tri-unity*. Triunity - three in one - three unified. So the Trinity is what works *together* - the Father, the Son, and the Spirit - to bring life to us so that we can fulfill the purposes and the plans that he has for us and that he has for this world. They are working *in us* and they are working *through us* in the Person of the Holy Spirit.

Acts 13:2

"As they were praying [worshipping the Lord and fasting], the Holy Spirit said, 'Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.'"

In a survey at Oak Hills in San Antonio from three-thousand people, and another one here eight years ago, the same number-one question was, *"How can I hear the voice of God?"* That's what people want to know, and they're *still* saying, *"Tell us how he speaks."* Henry Blackaby, in his book, *Experiencing God*, says the Lord speaks in four ways: he speaks through the Church - that's the people, the community, the body of Christ. He speaks through the Word of God - he speaks through his Word. That's probably where we will hear his voice the most. Also, he speaks through prayer.

When we spend time in the Word, we hear him speaking to us *through* that Word. There are verses that are kind of go-to's that we may like. But every time we read them, the Holy Spirit can illuminate a different nuance of each one, so it's almost like we're reading them for the first time. We have to understand that the Word of God is stacked with Truth. And, the Holy Spirit dwells in us, almost like a filter, to get to us what we need when we need it. We may read the same verse a hundred times, but it may say a hundred different things to us. Why? Because the Holy Spirit will highlight exactly what we need when we're reading it.

The Holy Spirit speaks through *people*. Sometimes he'll have somebody come to us and say, *"Hey, I was just praying and you came to my mind and I think he wants me to tell you this."* We call that a "prophetic word" - the foretelling, or *forth*-telling, of the Word where we're actually bringing a word from God to someone else. We have to be careful with that because we can be subjective. Sometimes our filter can get involved in that and that's where it can get tricky. So, we have to be really discerning.

We also must be discerning when someone comes to *us* and says, *"Hey, I feel like God's given me a word for you. Can I share it with you?"* We only receive it with *discernment*. We *discern* what spirit is behind that. How? We say, *"Lord, is this true? Jesus, is this true?"* Here's what happens: When God speaks to us through other people, if it's true and it's Truth that God's getting to us, it will *resonate* in us, and we'll probably recognize it as something that God was *already* saying to us. That brings clarity to something we've already been thinking about, wrestling with, or studying. Then, all of a sudden, we can get clarity through another person.

God also speaks to us in *prayer*. When people say, *"Man, God hasn't spoken to me in so long,"* the answer is probably, when was the last time they spent time in prayer - or the last time they read the *Bible*? *"Well, you know, I'm busy. Life's happening. I'm distracted."* One of the greatest tools of the enemy is *distraction*. He just comes to set up distractions one right after another. Why? So we won't get to *people* - so we won't read the *Word* - so we won't *pray* - so we won't listen to what somebody has to say to us, even those from the Body - the Church.

Those are the most common ways that the Lord speaks to us, but not all of the ways. Those are ways he speaks, but he also leads - the Holy Spirit *leads* us. Romans 8:14 says, "*For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.*" In other words, if we're being led by the Spirit, we prove we're a son of God or a daughter of God by actually following the One who's leading us. That means that we're going where *he* goes. When he says in Isaiah 30, "*And you will hear a word behind you saying this is the way, walk in it, whether you turn to the right hand or to the left.*"

When we're going somewhere, sometimes we just sense that we're supposed to do something different - we're supposed to change direction. We *were* going to turn *right*, but now we're turning *left*. Then we're like, "*What's going on?*" That's when our antennas go up - we start getting that sense or feeling that we're not going in the right direction, and it could be that we need to do a *3-second burn*, because we may be a little off-course. We can do that and he will speak to us. He will lead us. He will order our steps and delight in the details of our life.

Ephesians 4:30 ESV

"And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption."

The Holy Spirit can be *grieved*. There's lots of ways to grieve the Holy Spirit. First of all, there is disobedience - that's number one - when he's led us to do something, and we've *committed* to do it. We said, "*I consecrate my life to You, Lord. I'm all Yours. I'll do what You tell me,*" but then we *don't*. We do what he says until we *don't* - and that grieves him.

Disunity, dissensions, and gossip grieve him - all the dark things listed in the New Testament are things that grieve the Spirit of God - and he says, "*don't grieve the Holy Spirit of God.*" But the greatest way we grieve him is to disobey him. When he brings something clear to us and we just say, "*I can't do that. I'm just not there.*" The Holy Spirit can be grieved, but also, he's not just a person, the Holy Spirit is himself *God*. He's *Christ in us, the hope of glory*. He is *God with us* - "*Emmanuel, God with us.*" He's all of those, because, again, he's the Trinity - the *Tri-unity*,

In Acts 5:4, Ananias and Sapphira were going to make a big production out of their giving. They wanted people to see *them*, and not only that, but they actually held back part of what God told them to give. When confronted about it, Peter said to Ananias, "*Why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit? You lied to the very Spirit of God. You lied to him by not giving what he told you to give, and by keeping it for yourself. You have not lied to man, but to God,*" and there we see that the Holy Spirit is equated with God.

When we have the Holy Spirit and we're walking with him and we're led by him and walking in his steps, we will produce not just *good* results, but the *God-kind* of results. Jesus said it was better for him to go so that the Spirit could come and be in them, *and* he wants to take up residence in us. In John 16:7, Jesus said, "*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 go, I will send him to you.*" We don't just have *help* available, we have God present in our life, and we need to start our day with that awareness.

We should wake up every day and say, "*Good morning, Holy Spirit.*" It's just a way of *righting* ourself even before we step out of bed. The Hebrew people and the early Christians, when they would wake up in the morning, before their feet hit the ground, would say, "*Good morning, Father. Good morning, Abba. Thank you for returning my soul to me today. Thank you for another day to live. Holy Spirit, lead me today.*" That's not weird or mystical - just *relational*. We can have a *relationship* with the Holy Spirit. We can talk with *him* and he will walk with us.

Another thing about the work of the Holy Spirit is "God in us - God *within* us." The Holy Spirit does his deepest work *inside* of us. He does *deep* work - things that no one can see but someday will be *felt*. The Holy Spirit also *convicts* - not to shame us, but to bring us *back*. He's doing a "3-second burn." He's not trying to change *everything* - he's just trying to get us back *on track*. John 16:8 - "*And when the Holy Spirit comes, he will convict the world concerning sin, righteousness, and judgment.*" It's not the pastor's job to convict us of anything. He's not the Holy Spirit, but it *is* his job to preach the Word of God, and the Word of God will bring conviction - and he *convinces* us of our sin.

The Holy Spirit also *regenerates*. Christianity is not "*behavior modification.*" God actually *changes* us. He *regenerates* us. In John 3:5, Jesus said, "*Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.*" We're not just a better *version* of the old us - we are an entirely *new creation* in Christ. 2 Corinthians 5:17 says, "*Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away. Behold, the new has come.*" We are new creations. The old has passed away. Our old life is *back there* and now we're living a new life in Christ.

We can say that every day and mean it. We can start fresh every day. Sometimes we need to start fresh *five times* in a given day. That's the reality where we live. We can say, "*Lord, I'm going to reconnect with You. I need my union healed with You. Because I'm in Christ, I'm a new creation. The old is back there. The new has come. I'm now walking in new life. I can stand up tall and walk different now because I'm not who I used to be.*"

The Holy Spirit gives us his power to live boldly and to represent Jesus everywhere we go. Jesus said in Acts 1:8 *"But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, all Judea, and Samaria, to the end of the earth."* Wherever we are, we can receive the Holy Spirit, and we can be filled *again*, even right now. By faith, we trust and believe that he's doing it. We say, *"Oh, Lord, fill me up because I cannot fill myself up."*

He empowers us to be bold and to represent Jesus, and he also gives us gifts of the Holy Spirit as listed in 1 Corinthians 12 - the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. As in Galatians 5:22, he produces *fruit* in us - love, joy, peace, patience, kindness - the fruit of the Spirit is love. The reason we need to be filled up over and over is because we are leaky vessels and we need to be filled again and again. Ephesians says that we're to be *continually* filled, or *ever-be* filled with the Holy Spirit because we leak out and we need more of him.

When our day is getting hard and things are getting rough, we can receive everything we need from God - over and over and over throughout any given day. We can ask God to fill us up. *"Lord, I need you to fill me up. I need all that You are. Especially now because I'm about to go into a meeting that could be hard. I'm about to do something that's difficult. I'm about to have to face something that I don't want to face. Fill me up."* And, when we go into that place, wherever it might be, the aroma of Christ on us, it fills us up before we get there. They will already see us coming *...and his aroma is already filling the atmosphere.*

Prayer

Father, we honor You. Lord, and we say 'yes' to You. Thank You that You don't just improve our life, You change our nature. Thank You that You have made us all-new creations in Christ. You give us Your strength, courage, energy, motivation, and inspiration. We turn our back on everything else because we're turning to You, Lord. We need You. Would You fill us right now with the Holy Spirit and power? As we leak out everywhere we go, fill us again so that the very atmosphere changes with the aroma of the Holy Spirit where we live, where we work, and where we play. In Jesus' name. Amen