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John 14:15-21

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Intro words about the Farewell Discourse (i.e. Jesus prepares his disciples for his leaving)

John 14:15-21

¹⁵“If you love me, keep my commands. ¹⁶And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever—¹⁷ the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you. ¹⁸I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. ¹⁹Before long, the world will not see me anymore, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live. ²⁰On that day you will realize that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you. ²¹Whoever has my commands and keeps them is the one who loves me. The one who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love them and show myself to them.”

The Word of the Lord. (**Thanks be to God**)

For three years now Jesus has been walking alongside of his disciples—

Eating together;

Getting into trouble with the Pharisees;

Watching him heal the sick;

And probably just hanging out...

Enjoying company and fellowship together—

But the party was coming to an end.

Jesus’ language about leaving his disciples is getting clearer...

They’re about to say goodbye to their friend and teacher.

So before Jesus leaves—

Before he is crucified, dies, and is buried—

His disciples get together and make a music video for him:

[show “If You Leave Me Now” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=32GdEFADy6s> 0:30-0:55]

Maybe they had their emotions under control like this—

“Oh Jesus, please don’t go”—

But Scott Hoezee from Calvin Seminary sees this story a different way. He says,

“I picture the scene as looking...like a Christmas Eve dinner party that has started out fine but then explodes into something quite different when suddenly Dad uses the occasion to inform his children that he is having an affair, that he is in love with another woman, and that he and Mom will soon be getting a divorce for the good of all. At that Christmas dinner table there would be tears, there would be glassy-eyed stares, there would be a confusion and disorientation almost too great for many to bear.”

Maybe this is closer to what is going on inside of the disciples.

Their world is crashing down all around them.

All of their hopes are placed in this one man...

This man who is hailed by John the Baptist as the Son of God...

He’s the one sent from above—

Heaven breaking into earth.

The disciples know that there is something special about this guy...

That God is nearer to them than ever before.

At this meal he tells his disciples that he’s leaving.

This is not just having to say “goodbye” to their friend and teacher...

For them this is the end of the incarnation...

The end of God breaking into their world. (Gail O’Day)

So we can expect that on the inside the disciples are sensing chaos...

Tears, glassy-eyed stares, confusion, and disorientation as you look around the table.

It reminds me of what’s been happening with our girls lately...

Whenever mom and dad leave the room, their world collapses.

“You’re leaving us forever!??”

“Where are you going?”

“Don’t go!”

Jesus is leaving and this scares his disciples...

So Jesus speaks into their fear...

And he speaks into their chaos, saying:

“I’m not going to leave you alone.”

“I’m going away, but someone else will come to you.”

The disciples are probably thinking:

“Yeah, that’s great Jesus, but we want YOU.”

[Maybe they made another music video: “Nothing Compares to You”]

Jesus says,

“I’m going to ask the Father, and he’s going to give you another Advocate...”

“And this one will be with you forever...”

“With him, you’ll never be alone.”

Jesus promises his disciples the Holy Spirit.

The phrase that we’re looking at in v. 16 literally reads, “another Paraclete...”

“I will ask the Father and he will give you *another* Paraclete.”

In order to have “another” of something, you have to have one prior to it...

“Here is a \$20 bill. Would you like another one like it?”

If the Spirit is being sent as *another* Paraclete, then Jesus must have been the first.

In 1 John 2:1 Jesus is actually called a Paraclete:

“We have an Advocate/Paraclete with the Father, Jesus Christ...”

So, what exactly is a Paraclete?

Have you ever heard this word before?

For decades, Bible scholars have struggled to translate this word.

We see their struggle in the different ways it’s translated today:

Advocate (NIV 2011);

Counselor (NIV 1984)

Helper (NASB);

Comforter (KJV);

There's no one word in English that captures the full meaning of Paraclete.

This is because "Paraclete" is not so much another name for the Spirit...

It's a way of describing the function of the Spirit—

What the Spirit does.

"You're going to receive the gift of the Spirit..." Jesus says...

"And I assure you, the Spirit won't disappoint!"

When we look at what the Spirit does, it aligns with what Jesus does:

Jesus	Spirit
<p>Teach</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - "Not until halfway through the festival did Jesus go up to the temple courts and begin to teach." (John 7:14) - "You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and rightly so, for that is what I am." (John 13:13) 	<p>Teach</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - "the Holy Spirit...will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you." (John 14:26)
<p>Witness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - "I am the way, the truth, and the life..." (John 14:6) - "Even if I testify on my own behalf, my testimony is valid for I know where I came from and where I am going." (John 8:14) 	<p>Witness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - "the Spirit of truth...will testify about me." (John 15:26)
<p>Presence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - "On that day you will realize that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you." (John 14:20) - "Remain in me, as I also remain in you." (John 15:4) 	<p>Presence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - "he will help you and be with you forever...he lives with you and will be in you." (John 14:16-17)
<p>Accepted by the World?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - "The world did not recognize him...his own did not receive him." (John 1:15) - "I have come in my Father's name, and you do not accept me." (John 5:43) 	<p>Accepted by the World?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - "The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees nor knows him." (John 14:17)

To teach, to witness, to be an abiding presence...

These were some of the roles of the Spirit...

And this is what Jesus did.

Literally translated, the Paraclete is “one who is called alongside.” (DA Carson)

This is essentially what Jesus did with his disciples:

He walked alongside of them for three years...

Witnessing to God’s kingdom, pointing them the way to the Father, showing them how to serve, and showing them how to love...

Essentially showing them how to be disciples.

‘God-in-the-flesh’ walked with them for three years...

And now it was time for him to return to the Father.

This freaked out his disciples...

How would they get along without him?

God knew what his people needed—

He knew that they couldn’t make it alone—

So he promised to send them *another* to walk alongside of them...

And this one would be there forever...continuing the work that Christ started.

What does this mean to us today?

In this Farewell Discourse, Jesus is preparing his disciples for life after he’s gone.

And this is the place where we’re at today...

Christ has ascended into heaven.

He’s no longer physically present among us. (Gail O’Day)

So, how are we supposed to manage now that Christ is absent?

Because, let’s be honest, sometimes it’s hard not being able to physically see or touch Jesus.

Believing, and carrying on would be so much easier, we think, if Christ was present among us.

Many of us can relate to the same feelings that the disciples had.

At times we feel alone.

At times we feel abandoned...like we’ve been forgotten...

By God and by those closest to us.

One of the hallmarks of Christianity—

One of the defining characteristics of our faith—
 Is supposed to be having a built-in, instant community.
 When God calls us to know him, he calls us into a group of people...

He calls us into a body (1 Cor 12:27);

He calls us into a family. (Eph 2)

Christians make up a body/family that has over 2 billion members worldwide...

People with whom we're intimately united through the work of Christ.

So why do we still feel alone? (SLOW)

Why do we struggle to mature as Christ's disciples?

Why does it feel like nobody *really* knows us?

Why does it feel like we're walking through this life without anyone by our side?

Did God forget his promise???

No, I think the problem might be in our understanding of how God works.

We live in a culture and a time that is highly individualistic.

And it creates problems for us when we read passages like this.

In English we don't have a word to distinguish the 2nd person plural.

If I wanted to talk to this group over here, I would say:

“Everyone on this side, I want YOU to raise your hand.”

But in this passage (in the original language), there is a distinction.

The word “you” shows up 14 times in these 7 verses...

And in every single one, the “you” is plural:

“I will ask the Father and he will give y'all another paraclete to help y'all and be with y'all forever.” (14:16)

“Y'all know him for **he lives with y'all and will be in y'all.**”

Jesus gives the Spirit to the group of his followers.

Almost exclusively in this Gospel (7:38 is an exception), the Spirit comes to the believing community.

He promises to send the Holy Spirit to the gathering of God's people.

So when we isolate ourselves—

Or when we disconnect from the body—

We're essentially disconnecting ourselves from God's presence.

Yes, the Spirit dwells in all of his people individually...

But there seems to be an emphasis on God's gathered people.

This is where he wants to do his work in and through us.

Where are my grade 11s and 12s here today? Raise your hand.

I'm going to speak to you from my personal experience on this idea of community...

And its role in mediating the Spirit.

I grew up in a Christian home like most of you.

I went to church every Sunday with my parents, like you.

I went to Sunday school (catechism) most weeks, like you.

When I graduated high school I went to a university about 2 hours from home.

I knew that the Lord was important to me...

And I wanted to keep that as a priority in my life.

But I was not intentional about it.

I did not attach myself to a community of believers.

It was a priority in my mind...

But it wasn't on my top list of to-dos when I got to school.

So, in this new-found freedom and transition I made some bad decisions...

I started compromising these values that I thought were important to me.

One of the first things I did was found a girlfriend...

I didn't date at all in high school, but I dove right in in college.

I thought for sure she was the one...

So my whole life was consumed by her.

It was bad relationship from the start...

It took me away from God and his people and really, I was miserable...

But I didn't have a community speaking sense into my life.

I also started going to parties and drinking too much, after not drinking at all in high school.

Somewhere in the back of my mind—

Or buried in my heart—

I knew that my faith was still important—

It's not like I turned my back on it—

But little decisions paved the way down a road I never intended to take.

You're going to be graduating soon—

Or heading into grade 12 which will go by really fast—

And you're going to have some new freedom in your life...

As you head to NAIT or university or start working.

It's an exciting time but let me warn you...

Being a disciple of Christ doesn't just happen.

Maturing in the faith doesn't just keep going on as it has for the last 17-18 years of your life.

You won't have built in structures keeping you accountable.

You have to be intentional about making decisions that keep you connected to the body of Christ...

Because this is where the Spirit lives and works.

Decide now that no matter where you live, finding a church—

A group of believers—

Is going to be the first thing that you do.

Decide that you're going to get connected...

You're going to hang out with people that draw you nearer to the Lord.

Decide now that you want this to be your priority...

Because, speaking from experience, it doesn't just happen.

Own the faith that God has given to you...

Make it your own, and fight for it.

Go to where God is at work...go to his people.

This goes for all of us.

Let's check ourselves:

Are you investing yourself in a community of believers (outside of our time on Sunday mornings)?

Are you going in your faith?

Growing as Christ's disciple?

I'd like to challenge you to connect this week.

Be intentional about connecting with God's people:

Come to our discussion group on John that meets on Thursday mornings:

We've been developing a good community studying God's word.

Come out to Community Corner on Wednesday night;

Invite a brother or sister in Christ, or a family over for dinner;

Schedule a coffee/tea time with someone just to connect.

God sent us another Paraclete...

He sent us the Holy Spirit so that we would never be alone.

He sent us the Holy Spirit to continue the work of Christ...

Leading us into being his mature followers.

And where the Holy Spirit is doing his work—

Where he is present—

Is in the community of God's people.

This is where growth happens.

This is where encouragement happens.

This is where fullness of life happens.