

The Gospel of John #10

by: Ronald L. Dart

Have you ever wondered why it is, that Christian people feel they are never alone? It's true, you know. We are never completely alone.

Another Comforter

On the night at the Last Supper (Passover), Jesus told His disciples in John 14, "If you love me, keep my commandments, {16} And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever".

Now there are a couple things curious about this, one is that Jesus says "I am going to send something to you, that is going to be with you, living with you."

That's what this 'abide with you' means, "forever." It is odd in a way that John calls it "another comforter," which implies that there's more than one. The Greek word that is translated 'comforter' here, basically means an 'advocate.'

John uses the same expression in his first epistle, he wrote and said, "My little children these things I write unto you, that you sin not, and if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous" (1 John 2:1).

So on the one hand, Jesus sends us an 'advocate' to be with us, and on the other hand, He himself is an 'advocate' for us with the Father. So Jesus is one advocate and the 'spirit of truth' is another, but it doesn't end there.

The apostle Paul in a section of his second letter to the Corinthians said something really curious, it is a play on words in the Greek that somehow gets completely lost in English. In the course of just five verses here, he uses the same Greek root 10 times driving a point home.

Paul says beginning in verse three of second Corinthians, the first chapter. "Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort, {4} Who comforts us in all our tribulation that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comforter, with which ourselves are comforted of God, {5} For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also abounds in Christ."

Now there is a really funny thing here, the King James translators, I guess got bored with putting 'comfort', 'comfort', 'comfort', and decided to switch to 'consolation', 'console', in the following verses, but the fact is, it is the same Greek word all the way through.

And Paul said, {4} "God comforts us. He encourages or advocates for us in all of our troubles, so that, we can encourage, comfort or console those people who are in any trouble by means of the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God."

Encouragement

In other words, we are dealing with an ancient Greek word and sometimes it's a little hard to get it into English, and when I went through this the first time and studied it carefully, the word that belongs here is 'encouragement.' He is the God of all encouragement. He encourages us in our tribulation, that we will be able to encourage those who are in any trouble by the encouragement wherewith we ourselves are encouraged of God, for as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our encouragement also abounds by Christ and whether we be afflicted, it is for your encouragement and salvation which is effectual in the enduring of the same sufferings that we suffer or whether we are encouraged, it is for your encouragement and salvation and our hope for you is steadfast. Knowing that you are partakers of the sufferings so shall you be of the encouragement."

So we fall back then into John 14 verse 16 again and He said, "I will pray the Father," Jesus said, "And He will give you another encourager, that he may abide with you forever."

Do you begin to get a grasp of what Jesus is saying, that Jesus urges the Father on our behalf and He encourages us and we encourage one another.

Jesus says, "We have an advocate with our Father, Jesus Christ the righteous," He says in John 14 verse 16, "I will pray the Father, and He will give you another encourager that he may abide with you forever, {17} Even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it doesn't see him, doesn't know him, but you know him, for he dwells with you and shall be in you."

I don't see any reason to assume that we are dealing with something brand-new here, far more likely it is that the 'spirit of truth' is the Holy Spirit, otherwise described as the 'spirit of truth' and there is a funny difference here too, Jesus said, "He dwells with you now, and shall be," in the future tense, "in you," as though there is a different relationship now that is going to be coming down and He implies that this new relationship is going to be because of, His going to the Father and becoming an advocate for us.

Orphans

John 14 verse 18, "I will not leave you comfortless," He says, "I'll come to you."

Now the word changes, the King James translators again left us high and dry, and the translators always struggle with these words. The word here, is the Greek word from which we get the word 'orphans.'

"I will not leave you orphans, I will come to you, {19} Yet a little while, and the world will see me no more, but you see me, because I live and you shall live also. {20} When we get to that place you'll know that I'm in my Father and you in me and I in you."

Blood Brotherhood

Now this is all sounds kind of complicated in a way and it is a little foreign to the modern Western mind, although I think it was probably pretty familiar in its tone to Jesus' disciples, because the relationship that He is describing here is blood brotherhood. It is like the sharing of a sacrificial meal. The cutting of oneself and letting blood mingle together or you cutting yourself and me cutting myself and drinking one another's blood to create a blood brotherhood.

"I am in my Father, you are in Me, and I am in you." In other words, it is a complete family relationship.

Jesus and the Father Will Move In

Jesus continues in verse 21 of John 14, ""He that has My commandments and keeps them, he it is that loves Me and he that loves me shall be loved by my Father, and I will love him and I will show myself to him." {22} Now Judas, not Judas Iscariot, but the other one, says "Lord, how are you going to manifest yourself to us but not to the world? How is it going to be possible for us to see You, to know You, to be aware of You, when the world doesn't even know that you are around?" {23} Jesus answered and said, "If a man loves Me, he will keep my words and my Father will love him and we will come to him and make our abode with him.""

Now that is really something. Consider what Jesus is saying here, if you love Jesus and keep His words then His Father will love you. Not only that but Jesus and the Father will come to you and move in.

You know if you're expecting house guests, you have certain responsibilities, you know, you have to get a room ready, you have to clean the floor. You want to clean the bathrooms, hang fresh towels up and cook some food and snacks and have stuff out on the countertop for your guests to have. You would make coffee in the morning for them.

Here Jesus is saying, that if you're going into this relationship with God, God and His Son Jesus Christ, will move in, and He says, "You will never be alone again."

"He that doesn't love me, well, he's not going to keep what I say, but the word you hear is not Mine, it's the Father's which sent me. {25} I have told you all this, being yet present with you."

And by saying that, Jesus implies that He's not to be present with them until sometime in the future.

"But the Comforter," that is the one Jesus has been talking about, He is going to send to them, {26} "which is the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, the Comforter will teach you all things and bring all things into your remembrance whatever I have said to you."

Jesus' Disciples Were Filled With God's Holy Spirit

So in the years to come, when Jesus' disciples sat down to write their Gospels, the Holy Spirit was in them. It was bringing to their remembrance all the things that Jesus said, so they could sit down, so they could write it out, for you and me.

Real Peace

Verse 27 of John 14, Jesus said, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give to you, not as the world gives, do I give to you."

Now I have thought a lot about that, because for me, real peace involves an image of myself on a riverbank somewhere, with a river flowing slowly by, lying in the shade of the trees, with the temperatures about 75 to 76 degrees, lying on green grass with a cane fishing pole, of course, with a fishing line in the water and a bobber, perhaps with no worm on the end, hoping that the fish won't bite, and taking a nap on a warm summer afternoon. That's my image of peace, when someone asks me to come up with one.

Jesus said in verse 27, "The Peace that I'm going to give you," is not like that. That is not what I'm talking about. I think you can probably understand it better as you make your way on through the New Testament and when we find a man like the apostle Paul who, having cast a demon out of the poor young woman, was arrested, beaten publicly with many stripes laid on his back and thrown in jail in the middle of the night and here he is, with his back bleeding, his feet in stocks, in a lot of pain and very uncomfortable, who at midnight, sings praises to God, along with Silas who is right there in the stocks beside him. They had an incredible peace of mind in jail, after a beating. This is the kind of peace that Jesus is talking about.

Jesus says in verse 27, "I leave my peace with you, it is not like the world's. Don't let your heart be troubled and don't let it be afraid."

Now that suggests that you're going to have a reason to be troubled and afraid, but you're not going to be.

Jesus Was Going To The Father

In John 14 verse 28, Jesus went on to say to His disciples on this occasion, "You have heard how I said to you, 'I go away and come again to you,' if you loved me, you would rejoice because I said I go to my Father, for my Father is greater than I am."

Jesus' disciples didn't understand what was coming down around them. They didn't really understand what was going to happen to Jesus, they didn't understand about the resurrection. He told them, but they didn't get it and candidly, if you and I had been there, we would not have gotten it either. We have their testimony to help us understand what was happening on this occasion.

Jesus, oddly enough, said, "If you loved me," implying that while they loved Him, they may not have loved Him all that much.

Jesus said, "If you really did love Me, you would rejoice." You would be happy because I tell you, "I'm going to my Father, but you're sad because I'm leaving you."

John 14 and verse 29, Jesus said, "Now I have told you before it comes to pass, so when it happens you will believe. {30} After this I'm not going to talk much with you because the prince of this world comes and has no power over me, {31} But that the world may know that I love the Father and as the Father gave me commandment, that's what I'm going to do. Come on, let's get out of here." And they began to walk.

Jesus Is The True Vine

Let's continue in John chapter 15 and verse one, and as Jesus and His disciples walked, He continued to speak, "I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman."

You have a vineyard out here, and Jesus said, "I am the true vine, and my Father is the one who manages this vineyard. {2} Every branch in Me that bears not fruit, He takes away and every branch that bears fruit He purges it, that it may bring forth more fruit."

Now after all this conversation that Jesus has been having with His disciples, about you being in me and I being in you, the comparison He's really drawing here is like a vine, that we are to be like branches in Him who is the root of the vine and then we share in everything in all the nourishment that is coming up through Him as it were, and we are all connected to Him and then along comes the Father and He looks at all these branches and the ones that aren't bearing fruit, He takes the clippers out and He cuts it off and the branches that are bearing fruit, well He prunes them down a bit too, so they will bear more fruit. In other words, He starts cutting off of us those things that are not productive, those things that are only for show and anyone who ever tries to manage plants in this way, whether it be grapes or be it even so much as roses on your back fence climbing, know what it means. You have to go out there and cut those things back. You have to prune them, you have to train them in the direction you want them to go and branches that absolutely will not go in the direction you want them to go, you cut them off.

I guess what Jesus is telling us is the same thing is true, that those branches that will not go the way He wants them to go, are going to be cut off and the ones that are all show and no produce are going to be pruned as well.

Now Jesus said in John 15 verse 3, "You are clean through the word that I've spoken to you. {4} Stay in me, and I in you, because the branch can't bear fruit of itself except it abide in the vine, no more can you, unless you abide in me."

You have to stay with me. You have to stay in me and I have to stay in you and if that doesn't happen, you're going to be barren and unfruitful and useless.

"I am the vine, you are the branches. He that stays in me and I in him, the same brings forth much fruit, for without me you can do nothing."

Not a little bit, not some good, nothing!

"If a man abides not in me," {6} "he is cast forth as a branch and is withered, and men gather them, and cast them into the fire and they are burned."

You know there's just no in-between here. One stays in Christ and bears fruit or one is cut off, dries up, withers away and burned.

Ask And You Shall Receive

John 14 verse 7, "If you stay in me and my words stay in you. You shall ask what you will, and it shall be done unto you."

This statement which kind of has a recurring theme through here, is so strong and it is hard for people to get their mind around, because they in their wisdom think that they have ask God for things and He hasn't done it, but you see what Jesus is talking about here, is an extremely close relationship, it is closer than close, it's one being inside almost the other. It is a family relationship and it involves a person who would know God so well, who would walk so closely with God, that he would never ask for anything that he shouldn't ask for, and that our requests that we make known to God are made in His will, not in ours, and the way that we walk is His way, not ours. And the relationship also is a mutual relationship. You can't go to God and ask whatever you want of Him unless He is able to come to you and ask whatever He wants of you. If you're not willing to let go. If you are not willing to enter into this relationship with God, this close covenant, whereby whatever you ask and whatever He asks, that's what we are going to do, then you can't claim this promise.

Then Jesus says in verse 8, "Here is my Father glorified, that you bear much fruit, so shall you be my disciples. {9} As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you, continue you in my love."

The way He puts this implies that you might not, that you have the option of not. What Jesus is telling you is "Stay close my friend, stay close. If you stay close you can ask what you want to of God and it will happen. My Father can be glorified by your staying close and bearing fruit and bringing about results, continue in my love."

Continuing in verse 10, Jesus said, "If you keep my commandments, you will remain in my love, even as I have kept my Father's commandments and I abide in His love."

W.W.J.D.

Now I think it's admirable to see kids wearing these little bracelets of 'W.W.J.D', What Would Jesus Do? I think that's a good thing to teach children, but in a way, we are speculating when we ask ourselves, 'What would Jesus do?' We are not speculating when we say, "What did Jesus say we should do?"

You know, this is really where the thing comes in. I can sit around all day and speculate on 'what I think Jesus would do?' It is very easy to confuse what I think Jesus would do with what I want Him to do. Whereas if I open up the Scriptures and I read what Jesus said, and I do what Jesus said I should do, I am on absolutely solid ground. You want to give that some serious thought.

Love One Another

Jesus went on to say to His disciples in verse 11 of John 14, "I said these things to you that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full. {12} This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you."

Okay, how much love is that?

"Greater love has no man than this," Jesus continued in verse 13, "that a man lay down his life for his friends."

You and I are supposed to love each other like Jesus loved us, which means that you and I have to be ready to lay down our lives for one another, and we might think we would be able to do that if we ever came right down to it in a time of persecution, but the real test is whether or not we will lay down a little bit of our lives for one another today.

Jesus said in verse 14, "You are my friends, if you do what ever I command you."

We are Friends of Jesus

It may be a little difficult, to get your mind around the idea of being a friend of Jesus, but the fact is, that's what He says.

Jesus said, "You are my friends if you're willing to do what ever I tell you to do" (John 15:14).

It's a stretch, I guess for some people to think that we can be a friend of Jesus. We like to think of ourselves as, a servant of Christ.

But He told them in verse 15, "I'm not going to call you servants any longer, for the servant doesn't know what his Lord is doing, but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard of my Father, I have made known to you."

And these fine gentlemen that Jesus was talking to on that night, have all taken in hand to pass down through the generations what He told them, and what He had made known to them. We have it in the four Gospels. We have it from Paul. We have it from John and in the book of Revelation, so we're not sitting here in the dark about what our Lord is doing. Oh we may not know some of the details about what He's doing, but we know where He's going and we know why He is going there, so He says, "I want you to be in a relationship with Me. It is like family. In some ways it's closer than family."

There is a proverb in Proverbs 18 verse 4 that says, "There is a friend that sticks closer than a brother."

You know in my lifetime, I love my sister, but she's a long way off from me and I don't see her that often. There are friends though, that hangs so close that no matter what happens, they will be there for you. No matter when it happens, they will be there for you and this is the kind of relationship Jesus called upon His disciples to have with Him.

"You are my friends, if you do whatever I ask you to do, and what I ask you to do, may turn out to cost you your life. Be ready, because I had to give my life for you."

Jesus continues in verse 16, "You have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you and appointed you that you should go and bring forth fruit and your fruit should last, that whatever you ask of the Father in my name, He may give it to you."

Love One Another

Now here's another interesting sidelight on that, the reason why Jesus is giving us what we are asking for is so that we will bear fruit, and our fruit will last, and the only way that works, is if we carry out what He has given us instructions to do.

"These things," Jesus said, "I command you, that you love one another."

Take care of each other, would you? Now you know, I can't get away from the fact that this implies a Christian community, that it implies that we are together, that we meet together on a regular basis, that we organize projects together, that we work together, and that we love one another.

Does The World Hate You?

"If the world hates you," verse 18 of John 14, "you know it hated Me before it hated you."

I think we would like to get away from that, we would like to think that if we really do things right, if we really show Christian love in the community, if we really live the life, that the world will love and respect us and appreciate us.

I'm sorry, Jesus said, "It just won't work," and if you are really faithful to Him, if you really do what He said to do, the world is not going to appreciate it at all.

"If you were of the world," verse 19, "The world would love its own, but because you are not of the world, well the world is going to hate you. {20} Remember my word that I said to you, the servant is not greater than his Lord, if they have persecuted me, they're going to persecute you. If they kept my saying, well, then they will keep your saying also."

But we know that they persecuted Jesus, didn't they? And they didn't keep His sayings, did they?

Jesus said, {21} "All these things they will do unto you for my namesake and they will do it, because they have no idea of the God who sent Me. No matter what they say, and no matter what they think. {22} If I had not come and spoken to them."

Now on this occasion, Jesus is speaking particularly of the leadership, the ecclesiastical leadership surrounding the Temple at that time.

"If I had not come and spoken to them, then they would have had no sin, but now they have no way of covering up for what they have done. {23} He that hates me, hates my Father also."

There just is no getting around it. If they have this hatred of Christ, they also hate the Father. And if you are out here doing what Jesus said to do, they are going to hate you too. You could wish that somehow it might be otherwise.

Jesus said, {24} "If I have not done among them the works that no other man had ever done, it might be one thing, but they have seen it, and they still hate Me and my Father."

What in the world are you going to make of that?

"This comes to pass," {25} "that the word might be fulfilled that is written in their law, "They hated me without a cause, but when the Comforter is come, that encourager that I'm going to send from the Father, even the spirit of truth which proceeds from the Father, he will testify, and tell the truth, {27} And you also will bear witness, because you have been with Me from the beginning."

So how about it? Would you like to be a friend of Jesus?

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