

“He Will Give You Another Helper”

John 14:12-26

Preached by Minister Jason Tarn at HCC on August 12, 2012

Introduction

- ❖ So like everyone else I've been watching a lot of the Olympics, so much so that I found myself even watching preliminary heats in track and field. I was watching the men's 100M but two or three races before the final race – the only one really worth watching.
 - ▶ But here I was watching this particular heat made up of racers from these random nations that I couldn't point to on a map. Now I realize it's part of the Olympic spirit to invite competitors from every nation across the globe to compete, but let's just be honest, most of these guys aren't winning any medals.

- ❖ There was one racer from a small island in the South Pacific. The announcers said there were more people in the stadium that day than the entire population of his island. But they talked about how proud he was to represent his country as a clear underdog. He didn't have the luxury of personal trainers and nutritionists and top-of-the-line training facilities. He's just a guy who loves to run, who happens to be the fastest man on his island. Given those odds, you can't help but cheer for the guy. He's all heart. He's going to give it his all.
 - ▶ But then the gun goes off and seconds later he's crossing the finish line dead last. By the time he's done, everyone else is already cooling down or congratulating each other. So, yes, he was all heart, but he could've used more legs. He had all the motivation to win, but he simply did not have the ability.

- ❖ When I saw the look of disappointment on his face, it was familiar because I've seen it before in the mirror. **There have been so many times in my life, as a Christian, when I had the motivation to do the right thing, but I lacked the ability.** I was all heart but no strength to do what I wanted to do.

- ❖ Have you ever read Romans 7? Whenever I hear someone say the Bible is irrelevant, I tell them go read Romans 7. Listen to **v18**. These are the words of the Apostle Paul, *“For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out. For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep doing.”*
 - ▶ How many of you feel that way? You delight in God's law in your inner being, but you don't have the strength to carry it out – to do what your heart desires to do. But instead, the evil you don't want to do is what you keep doing. Have you ever felt this tension?

- ❖ Or just consider what Jesus says in today's passage. Look at **v15** again. Jesus says, *“If you love me, you will keep my commandments.”* Those are tough words. They would've been easier had he said, *“If you love me, you will want to keep my commandments.”*
 - ▶ If his point is that love for him will translate into a desire to obey, we're okay with that. Sure, our motivation is never 100% pure, but a Christian can honestly say that *“I really do want to follow Jesus and keep his commands”*.
 - But Jesus is not just talking about right motives. He's talking about right actions. *“If you love me, you will keep – not just want to keep – my commandments.”*

- ❖ So we're back to same problem. We might have the heart, but we lack the ability. We want to do what is right but we don't have the power to carry through. Thankfully Jesus doesn't just leave us hanging. Read on in v16. *“And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever.”* He goes on to say he's referring to the Spirit of Truth.
 - ▶ Apparently if you love Jesus, you *will* keep his commands because he's going to pray to his Father to give you the Holy Spirit who gives you the necessary ability that you naturally lack.

- ❖ So the Holy Spirit is key. That was Paul's solution to the tension he raised in Romans 7. In Romans 8, he goes on to say how the power of the Spirit sets you free. The Holy Spirit is key.
 - ▶ **Brothers and sisters, could it be that the reason we struggle to faithfully follow Jesus is because we're unaware of the ability he supplies us through the Spirit?** Perhaps it's because we're not appropriating the Spirit's power in our lives.
 - So I want to walk us through this text and point out four ways in which the Spirit is given to help Christians in their walk: 1) By enabling you, 2) by advocating for you, 3) by indwelling you, and 4) by teaching you.

By Enabling You

- ❖ Now in the ESV the Spirit is called a Helper. The Greek word Jesus uses is *Paraclete*. Depending on your version, it might be translated as Counselor, Comforter, Encourager, or Advocate. These are all nuances captured in this Greek word. But in its literal sense, a paraclete is simply *“one who is called alongside to help”*. Well to help you do what?
 - ❖ **1) The Spirit helps by enabling you – specifically enabling you to do the very works of Jesus and more.** I see this in v12. Just consider the remarkable promise Jesus makes, *“Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes in me will also do the works that I do; and greater works than these will he do, because I am going to the Father.”*
 - ▶ Is he serious? He is saying that whoever believes in him – whoever is a Christian – will do the very works he does and even greater? Is he really serious?

- ❖ I believe so. Now it shouldn't surprise you when he says you'll do the works that he does, since, in the Gospels, we already see him enabling the disciples to share in his ministry (cf. Lk. 9:1-2). **Did you notice he calls the Spirit “another Paraclete”?** That implies they already have a Paraclete with them right now.
 - ▶ It's obviously him! **For the last three years, Jesus has been their Paraclete, the one sent by the Father to come alongside to help them do his ministry.** But now Jesus says he's leaving, but he'll ask his Father to send another Paraclete. And it's this other Helper who will enable them to do even greater works.

- ❖ Now it's unlikely Jesus means greater as in more spectacular. It's hard to imagine anything more spectacular than raising Lazarus from the dead or multiplying bread. None of the miracles performed by the apostles in the rest of the NT come close in terms of being more spectacular. ***So how will their Spirit-enabled works be greater?***

- ▶ The key is how he ends that sentence in **v12**, “*because I am going to the Father.*” Because of *that* we who believe will do greater works than what he and his disciples have been doing up to this point.
 - And implicit in *that* – in the simple phrase “*going to the Father*” – includes Jesus’ death and resurrection, which occur prior to his ascension.

- ❖ He was going to the Father, but along the way he would perform his unique work as Savior of the World. This is the one work Jesus does that we will not and cannot repeat. But the point is after he has done it – after Jesus has been crucified and resurrected – everything changes, including the kind of works we’ll now be doing in his Name.
 - ▶ **And what makes them "greater" is the clarity and fullness that we now have in the revelation of who Jesus is and what he came to do.** While he was on earth, his disciples preached and served in his Name, but it was not the name of the Crucified and Risen Christ. These events had not yet occurred. They didn’t know this name.

- ❖ But now, on this side of the Resurrection, we who believe in Jesus have the privilege of doing a greater work. **We get to preach in the Name of the Crucified and Risen Christ. And we get to proclaim this Name universally to every tribe and tongue.** In the days of his earthly ministry, the preaching of good news was limited in scope to the tribe of Israel.
 - ▶ But as Jesus was leaving and going to the Father, he commissioned the Church to an even greater task of taking this good news to the nations (Mt. 28:18-20). And notice what he says in **Acts 1:8** right before he ascends. He tells his disciples, “*You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.*”

- ❖ **So it’s the Holy Spirit – the other Paraclete – who will enable them with power to accomplish a greater work, namely the conversion of souls (the making of disciples) among the nations.** And starting in **Acts 2**, we see this happening. The Spirit fills the church. Peter preaches the first sermon in the Name of the Crucified and Risen Christ and three thousand souls are converted. Three thousand souls are born again by the power of the Spirit.

- ❖ **The whole point is that this Paraclete is the very source of power for effective ministry.** Without the Spirit of God enabling your teaching, your discipling, your serving, your caring – all of it is in vain.
 - ▶ **Nothing you do in your own power will make an eternal difference in the lives of others.** The only kind of works that are considered “greater”, that make such a difference, are Spirit-empowered works.

- ❖ That means I can raise my child to know her Bible. I can train her to respect authority. I can teach her to be kind and generous. I can protect her from unwholesome friends and bad influences. I can even raise her to love going to church and serving.

- ▶ But if the Holy Spirit is not actively empowering my efforts, then when it comes to the "greater works" in her life – the salvation of her soul and her sanctifying growth into a disciple in Christ – are not going to happen.
 - I can't do it. **I can plant the seed. I can water it. But only God gives the growth** (1 Cor. 3:6), **and he does so by the enabling power of the Spirit.**
- ❖ Perhaps we know this to be true, but we so easily forget and end up relying on our wisdom, our authority, our influence, our power. **But if you really want to see spiritual fruit in your life or the lives of those you care about, then the most significant thing you can do is to pray for the Spirit's enabling power to fall upon your efforts.**
 - ▶ After promising that we'll do "greater works", Jesus tells us in **v13** to ask anything in his name and he'll do it. If we pray to him asking for the ability to do these "greater works", he'll ask the Father to send the Spirit who comes alongside to enable you.
- ❖ Now if Jesus is serious, if all I have to do is ask and I receive such a Helper, then why am I not asking for this more often? **Have you been asking for the Spirit's help? Or are you so busy doing and exerting in your own strength that you forgot to ask?**
 - ▶ Take Jesus at his word and ask for the Spirit to be poured out like rain on all your efforts, in hope that spiritual fruit may abound and that you may see and experience the "greater works" Jesus promised.

By Advocating for You

- ❖ *But what about those times when you fail to keep his commands?* There is nothing like consistent failure to make you stumble on the path of following Jesus. You may have the heart, but if that heart is continually stricken with guilt and shame, then you feel like throwing in the towel. This is where we need to see how **2) The Spirit helps by advocating for us.**
- ❖ As I said, some bible versions use the word Counselor instead of Helper, and that's a fine translation so long as we're not imagining a camp counselor or a marriage counselor. A more fitting image is a legal counselor.
 - ▶ **In secular Greek, a Paraclete was a legal assistant or advocate – someone who would assist you in court.** That's why the word Advocate is sometimes used.
 - In fact, that's how most versions translate the only other instance of the word outside of John's Gospel. It's found in his First Epistle in reference to Jesus, which makes sense since he's the first Paraclete. **1 John 2:1**, *"If anyone does sin, we have an advocate (parakletos) with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous."*
- ❖ The imagery here is of a courtroom in heaven where God the Father sits as judge over all humanity. And the devil, who's called the Accuser, is a slimy prosecuting attorney accusing us of our sins, of our failures. Now he'll throw the book at us, and he'll present to the Judge hard fast evidence of our sin.

- ❖ **But for those who have received Christ as their Paraclete, he stands alongside as our Counselor, our defense attorney, advocating for us.** And I love how John calls him “*Jesus Christ the righteous*” because it reminds us that Jesus is the Righteous One to whom believers are united by faith through the agency of the Spirit. **That means we are one with Jesus, and just as he is righteous, we are righteous in him.**
 - ▶ So I can just picture our Counselor saying, “*Father, these disciples of mine should be declared righteous. Yes, the evidence of their sin is great, but my death on their behalf is greater. Because they are one with me, my blood has covered their sin and my righteousness now covers them. Your wrath has been exhausted in my death. Your justice has prevailed. So let my people go.*”

- ❖ This is what it means for Jesus to be your Counselor, and he always lives to advocate for you, to make intercession for you in the courtroom of heaven (Heb. 7:25). But you also have a Counselor on earth. The Holy Spirit has been sent to take on the role of Advocate on earth.
 - ▶ **He comes alongside and strengthens Jesus' disciples by advocating for them in what could be called "the courtroom of the conscience".** There are two courtrooms. In the courtroom of heaven God has already handed down a verdict, declaring you righteous in Christ.
 - **But if that objective verdict doesn't ring true in the courtroom of your conscience, then it won't make a difference in your daily walk with God.** You'll still be weighed down by guilt, shame, and regret. And the Accuser won't stop accusing you within your own conscience.

- ❖ **That's why you need a Counselor on earth, someone who speaks on your behalf in that inner courtroom.** Jesus says in the next chapter (15:26) that the other Counselor will come to bear witness about him. That means the Spirit will take these objective truths about Jesus' saving work and God's verdict over you, and he will witness to them in your heart so that you can subjectively feel the realities, so that your heavy conscience can be consoled and comforted with his peace.

- ❖ We need the Counselor to do this for us on a regular basis, not just when we first believe. We need his help to align the two courtrooms – to align the verdict in the courtroom of our conscience with God's gracious, unchanging, objective verdict in the courtroom of heaven.
 - ▶ So that means praying daily in Jesus' Name for the Spirit to advocate for you in your own heart that you might follow Jesus without stumbling over guilt and shame.

By Indwelling You

- ❖ There is a third way the Spirit is sent to help believers in their walk. 3) **The Spirit helps by indwelling us.** So not only is he another Helper who comes alongside the believer, the Spirit goes further and makes his home in us.
 - ▶ **Jesus is called Emmanuel, “God with us”, but the other Paraclete is “God in us”.** Let’s read vv16-17 again, “*And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, 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 tells his disciples, later on in **chapter 16:7**, that it’s actually to their advantage that he goes away because otherwise the Helper will not come. **He’s saying it’s better to have this other Paraclete in you than to have the first Paraclete with you.**
 - ▶ This might be hard for you to believe. How many times have you wished Jesus would just manifest himself in person right before your eyes? I wish he’d show up in the hospital room and comfort my sick child. I wish he’d show up in my small group and personally minister to each member. He can do such a better job. I wish he’d come with me next time I hang out with that old friend who is still skeptical about the faith.
 - But now you’re telling me it’s to my advantage that Jesus goes away? It doesn’t feel that way. I’d rather have him with me by my side.

- ❖ But just think about it. Let’s imagine that South Pacific runner somehow got Usain Bolt to mentor him. Bolt commits to training with him 24/7, helping him with his form and technique and strength training. Bolt never leaves his side, even runs alongside him at every meet. I’m sure it will help shave time off his personal best, but it still won’t be enough.
 - ▶ So you might push back and say, “Fine, then just let Bolt run your races for you. He’s right there next to you, right?” I don’t need to teach my small group or witness to my co-worker. If Jesus is by my side, then he can do it.

- ❖ **But here’s the disadvantage, if Jesus remained on earth, if he didn’t go to the Father, then he probably wouldn’t be by your side!** He would be living in Israel. You would have to travel thousands of miles to see him. And even if you managed to get close to where he was, there would always be long lines and great crowds around him. It would be nearly impossible to get within arm’s reach.
 - ▶ **But we have immediate access to the Holy Spirit and his help right now.** Unlike the Incarnate Son, the Spirit does not face the limitations of a human body. He can be anywhere and everywhere at any time.
 - **The Incarnate Jesus can’t be by the side of every believer helping them and enabling their efforts. But the Spirit of God can.** That’s the advantage. That’s why it’s better for Jesus to go away so that the other Helper can come.

- ❖ **As well, if Jesus remained on earth, you wouldn’t have the access and intimacy with God that you enjoy now.** Look at **v22** with me. Here one of his disciples, “*Judas (not Iscariot) said to him, “Lord, how is it that you will manifest yourself to us, and not to the world?” Jesus answered him, “If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him.”*
 - ▶ This is the only place in the Bible where the Father and Son are said to indwell believers. **This verse is actually saying the Three Persons of the Trinity – Father, Son, and Spirit – will take up residence in you.** They’ll make their home in you! Can there be a more glorious thought?

- ❖ **That means, for the Christian, there is never a moment when you are on your own.** When you have to walk into that hospital room, you're not on your own. The Trinity is in that room. When you show up at small group, you're showing up with the Trinity. When you sit down with that old friend, the Trinity is right there with you.
 - ▶ Having this truth really sink in is transforming. It truly is to our advantage that the Incarnate Jesus go away. **Because now, through the Person of the Spirit, the Father and Son can manifest themselves everywhere a Christian goes.** This is only possible because the Spirit indwells those he has been sent to help.

By Teaching You

- ❖ Let me conclude with a final way the Spirit helps you. **4) The Spirit helps you walk faithfully with Jesus by teaching you.**
- ❖ Look with me at vv25-26, *“These things I have spoken to you while I am still with you. 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 that I have said to you.”*
 - ▶ The primary focus of Jesus’ promise here is directed towards his original disciples who would eventually be authorized and enabled by the Spirit to write down God-breathed Scripture (2 Pt. 1:20-21).
 - We all know Jesus never wrote a single verse of Scripture. Every word of his in this chapter was written down by the Apostle John decades later. He didn’t have the luxury of a tape recorder. *So how do we know if what John recorded is accurate? If it’s really what Jesus taught?*
- ❖ **There are a number of good reasons to have confidence the reliability of the Gospels, but the bottom-line clincher for Christians is the Holy Spirit.** When John finally sat down to write his Gospel, the Spirit brought to remembrance all that Jesus taught that night. This Paraclete helped him record reliable, God-breathed Scripture. So you can go home and read your Bible with full confidence.
- ❖ But the Spirit’s teaching ministry didn’t stop there. **He continues to teach Jesus’ disciples, not by providing new revelation apart from Scripture but by illuminating and shedding light on the meaning of the Scripture they’re reading or hearing preached.**
 - ▶ That’s why you’ll always hear me pray, before I preach, for the Spirit to give understanding to listeners. Because I realize it’s not about my ability to exposit Scripture or to illustrate a point. It’s not about how creative I can be with my teaching. **The only way anyone will be blessed by my teaching – or by your teaching – is if the Spirit of Truth gives the understanding.**
- ❖ There is also another way the Spirit teaches. If God gives you an opportunity to teach Scripture, or to speak a word of encouragement, or to explain the Gospel, **in that moment you can lean on the Spirit of Truth to teach you what you ought to say.**

- ▶ Jesus told his disciples that when they are brought before synagogues and rulers and authorities, they should not be anxious about how they should defend themselves or what they should say, “*for the Holy Spirit will teach you in that very hour what you ought to say.*” (Lk. 12:12).
 - So again, whether you're walking into a hospital room or a small group or a lunch appointment with an old friend, you don't have to be anxious about what you should say. Your Helper will teach you in that hour what you ought to say. What an amazing promise!

Conclusion

- ❖ I am so thankful that this church is filled with believers who love Jesus and want to keep his commandments. There are so many who have a heart to serve in church, in small groups, on missions trips. There are many who desire to disciple and be discipled.
 - ▶ **But I am most of all thankful that Jesus promised to send another Helper who supplies us with the power and ability and words that we need.** I am so thankful Jesus didn't leave us as orphans but is with us always in the Spirit, another Paraclete just like him.