

“Paraclete” - John 14:15-17; 26 ¹

Fellowship question: (Use *one* of these to break the ice, to begin some discussion, and to lead into the study):

1. Who is someone who has “walked alongside” you in a difficult time?
2. Imagine you are going to take a long, leisurely walk. Who would you like to walk with you?

Information

I was the executor of my mother’s estate. I had not performed this role before and did not want to mess up in some way that was unknowingly illegal. I wanted to fulfill my duties transparently. But as honest and open as I wanted to be, I had to acknowledge that I did not know the laws. So, I hired a paralegal to walk me through each step. She was a wonderful guide to me as I wandered around in this “new world” of estate law.

John 14 begins and ends with Jesus saying, “do not be afraid.” It was not that the disciples had no reason to fear - Jesus would soon be taken from them. As close associates of Jesus, they could also be arrested, tried, and punished. But Jesus did not say, “You have no reason to be afraid.” They did! What Jesus did say was, “Trust in me. Remember what I have done and taught. Be faithful in spite of the temptation to fall away.” One way they would be spiritually reinforced was by the inner presence in their lives of the Holy Spirit of God.

- Have a class member read John 14:15-17.

“In pre-Christian and extra-Christian literature *parakletos* means ‘mediator, intercessor, helper...Because it is difficult to find an adequate English translation, the term is often simply transliterated as ‘Paraclete’ though ‘helper’ or ‘advocate’ could serve well.”²

Here’s a mnemonic device to help you remember the word. Paraclete means, literally, “walk alongside.” So think of a “pair a’ cleats” that help you stand on slippery ground

“Jesus’ promise that the Father will send ‘another’ Paraclete assumes the presence of a previous ‘Paraclete.’ Although Jesus is never called ‘Paraclete’ in this Gospel (cf. 1 John 2:1), He has served in this capacity. Jesus and the Spirit serve as advocates for the disciples, bearing witness to the truth, in the face of the world’s opposition...The Paraclete, the Spirit of truth, will abide ‘with you’ and be ‘in you forever: that is, the Spirit will never leave or depart from them. The Spirit both accompanies them and dwells within them.”³

¹ This lesson is copyrighted by Dr. Rick Jordan, Great Bible Teachers, Inc, 2024. More lessons may be found at greatbibleteachers.com.

² Marianne Meye Thompson, *John: A Commentary*, The New Testament Library (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2015), 318f.

³ Thompson, 312f.

“The term ‘Comforter’ is misleading to modern ears. It does not mean ‘sympathizer’ so much as ‘advocate,’ one who is called in to defend against accusation and to represent a client in court or to transact business for him. The only use of this word outside of the Fourth Gospel occurs in 1 John 2:1, where Christ is called an Advocate.”⁴

“The most straightforward way of understanding the Spirit is as the shared, distributed, indwelling presence of the crucified and risen Jesus, who is also at one with the Father.”⁵

“The Holy Spirit is God dwelling in [people] in a new, spiritual, and permanent way... While Jesus was with [people] in the flesh, however inspiring a Teacher and Companion, He was still external to His disciples. He was Emmanuel, God *with* [us]. He could not be *in* [us] until He had been glorified by His death, resurrection, and ascension. Once He was glorified, the Spirit could be given (John 7:39).”⁶

Five passages in the final discourses describe the work of the Holy Spirit. Let’s look at these passages to answer the question, “What is the Paraclete’s role in the believer’s life?”

- Have class members read the following passages one at a time. Then address the question above and put answers on the board: (1) 14:16-17, (2) 14:26, (3) 15:26-27, (4) 16:1, 7-11, (5) 16:12-15

“The Spirit’s two-fold work looks backward, calling to mind what Jesus said to the disciples while he was with them, and forward to things yet to be disclosed (see 16:13: ‘the Spirit will guide you into all truth’),. Presumably ‘all things’ include the meaning of Jesus’ words and work, done or spoken in the past, but understood only after his death and resurrection and the coming of the Spirit (2:22 rebuild temple in 3 days]; 12:16[Palm Sunday]; 13:7 [Jesus washing feet]; cf. 1 John 2:27; 4:1-2).”⁷

“The function of the Spirit is to make the reality of God convincing to all [people] in the same way that Jesus did to His disciples. Had He remained upon earth, He would necessarily have been restricted by space and time as are all [people]. The indwelling of the Spirit in the hearts of Jesus’ followers would provide a fellowship with God even closer than they had experienced in the physical presence of Jesus.”⁸

Transformational Exercise

If we believe that God is living within us, how is the Holy Spirit, helping us as followers of Jesus Christ? Let’s come up with five answers or more to this statement: The Holy Spirit helps me to...

⁴ Merrill C. Tenney, *John: The Gospel of Belief: An Analytic Study of the Text* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1948), 220.

⁵ David F. Ford, *The Gospel of John: A Theological Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2021), 283.

⁶ George Appleton, *John’s Witness to Jesus* (World Christian Books, No. 8. London: United Society for Christian Literature. 1955), 83.

⁷ Thompson, 316.

⁸ Tenney, 220.

[Some suggested answers might include: believe, trust, discern, follow, learn, remember, abide, etc.]

“[Jesus] did not bequeath to them a fixed system of propositions to be memorized in order to insure their perception of His truth. Instead, He promised them the presence of the active living Spirit, who could speak with convicting power...Such teaching is direct and appeals to the inner consciousness of the believer rather than to his outward ear. It creates a spiritual sensitivity that the world does not possess.”⁹

“*Receiving truth, being taught, and remembering are how disciples are indwelt by the Spirit.*”¹⁰

“The encouragement undergirding the whole Gospel is to read and reread this Gospel: *through it the Holy Spirit will let you trust that you are loved by the Father and the Son, will inspire your learning and loving, and will guide you deeper and deeper into an inexhaustible divine abundance of truth and love.*”¹¹

Close in a prayer something like this: *Walk alongside us, Holy Spirit. We make space in our souls for you to fill us and live within us. Teach us, inspire us, live through us. Amen.*

⁹ Tenney, 223f.

¹⁰ Ford, 284. Author’s italics.

¹¹ Ford, 287. Author’s italics.