Jesus Promises the Holy Spirit

John 14:15-31

Key Verse:14:16,17a “And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever---the Spirit of truth.”

The Bible says that two are better than one. If one falls down, the other can help them up. (Ecc 4:9,10) Last Thursday I had a chance to visit Marion Ill with my friend. Even though it took only two hours of driving, I was hesitant to go there driving by myself. I had no confidence in driving by myself. But my friend joined me. While I was driving, he talked with me, kept me awake, and drove in my place when I was tried. My trip to Illinois was safe and pleasant. In today’s passage Jesus’ disciples were anxious and fearful because Jesus told them that he would leave them soon and go to a place where they couldn’t follow. Jesus also predicted Judas’ betrayal and Peter’s denial. The disciples were like children who were left alone without their parents. But Jesus encouraged them by promising them the Holy Spirit, who would help them and be with them forever. They would not be alone, but the Holy Spirit would be with them forever. Today let us study about who the Holy Spirit is, what the Holy Spirit is going to do for us, and how we can receive and have fellowship with the Holy Spirit. May the Holy Spirit come into our hearts and teach us and help us to understand what Jesus says. Amen.

Look at verse 15. “***If you love me, keep my commands***.” These words are repeated a few times, like a melody theme in music. If we love Jesus, we must obey his commands. What were Jesus’ commands? Jesus commanded us to love one another as he had loved us. (13:34). We must not be troubled, but believe in God and also believe in Jesus. (14:1) Loving others and trusting in Jesus as his disciples is not optional, but essential. Those who love Jesus are those who are loved by God. We experience Jesus’ forgiving love and his humble service. How can we express our love for Jesus? Some may repeat by saying, “Jesus, I love you!” They are good! Others may do many things in church for God’s ministry. They are good, too. According to Jesus, those who love Jesus keep his commands. Jesus said that obedience is better than sacrifice. If we love Jesus, we must listen to him and obey his commands by washing other’s dirty feet and forgiving their sins. If we love Jesus, we must trust in him and believe in his promise of protection and provision. Do you love Jesus? Keep his commands.

Jesus gave his disciples not only commands, but also promises. Jesus promised to send the Holy Spirit to his anxious disciples. Look at verses 16, 17a. “***And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever---the Spirit of truth***.” Jesus said that the Holy Spirit would come from the Father God at his request. Jesus is the way for the Holy Spirit to come to us. Jesus named the Holy Spirit as another advocate. Other versions describe the Holy Spirit as ‘Another Counselor’ (NIV), or “Another Comforter” or “Helper.” In Greek, the Holy Spirit is “*paracletos*” (*para*: alongside + *cletos*: being called), which means ‘a legal assistant, advocate’. He is called to defend his clients and intercedes for them in court. Jesus sent the Holy Spirit to defend his disciples, protect them, and be with them in his place. Here the word, “another”(*allon*) means another of the same kind, not of a different kind. Jesus is the Wonderful Counselor in his incarnate state. (Is 9:6) The Holy Spirit is the Another Counselor in his spiritual state. As Jesus was with his disciples for three years by walking with them, talking with them, and eating with them, so the Holy Spirit will walk with them, eat with them, and talk with them in spirit. Jesus’ presence with them was confined because of his physical limitations, but the presence of the Holy Spirit with them would be limitless in time and space. He will be with them anytime and anywhere. This is reason why Jesus said that it would be better for him to leave them, for their sake.(28)

Jesus introduced the Holy Spirit as another counselor who would replace his role and position. Who is the Holy Spirit? Some think of the Holy Spirit as an agent who provides wisdom and strength for them when they are in need. Others expect the power of the Holy Spirit to be a tool to help them. They are partially right. But the Holy Spirit is not an agent or a tool, but God himself. God the Holy Spirit is one of the Holy Triune, the Holy Trinity along with God the Father and God the Son Jesus. The Holy Spirit has a personal essence and unique role in his perfect unity with the other two. God the Holy Spirit participated in the creation of the world in the beginning. Genesis 1:2 says “*Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.*” (Ge 1:2) Genesis 2:7 says, “*Then the Lord God formed a man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life and the man became a living being*.” (Ge 2:7) God the Holy Spirit also participated in the confusion of a human language (Ge 11:5-9) and in the unification of human languages (Ac 2:4) The Holy Spirit made the whole Bible, all 66 books, through his inspiration with peoples’ dictation. (2Ti 3:16) “*All Scriptures is God-breathed…”* The Holy Spirit is co-existent, co-equal, and co-eternal with God the Father and God the Son. He is another independent essence who takes over the role and mission of Jesus, God the Incarnate.

Jesus called the Holy Spirit ‘the Spirit of truth.” (17) Paul equated the Holy Spirit with the Spirit of Christ. (Ro 8:9) Jesus is the truth. So the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Christ. Those who have the Spirit of Christ belong to Jesus Christ. In verse 26 Jesus speaks about the role of the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of truth. “***But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.***” (v.26) The Holy Spirit would teach all things and remind them of everything Jesus had taught them. In fact, his disciples did remember the words of Jesus’ death and resurrection after Jesus was resurrected. The work of acknowledgment and understanding is the work of the Holy Spirit. We often suddenly remember Bible verses and message when we are in need. This is the work of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit reminds us of Jesus’ words and his teachings so that we may overcome the world. Jesus said in Luke 12:12, “…*do not worry about how you will defend yourselves or what you will say, for the Holy Spirit will teach you at that time what you should say*.” Jesus also promised his disciples to provide words and wisdom at the end of the age. (Lk 21:15) “*For I will give you words and wisdom that none of your enemies will be able to resist or contradict*.”

This is the reason why messengers and Bible teachers must depend on the help of the Holy Spirit when they deliver messages and teach the Bible. No matter how wonderful and well-written messages and Bible notes are, if the Holy Spirit does not work for us, our messages and Bible studies may lose spiritual power. So Paul said in 1 Corinthians 2:4, “*My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit’s power so that your faith might not rest on human wisdom, but on God’s power*.” We must pray sincerely for the work of the Holy Spirit before we preach and teach.

The Holy Spirit also works for assurance of our faith. The Holy Spirit testifies that we are children of God. In Romans 8:16 Paul says, “*The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children. Now if we are children, then we are heirs-heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ*…” When we become weak and fearful, the Holy Spirit helps us to come to the throne of God with confidence and freedom, like children coming to their father. The Holy Spirit helps us to come to God. Paul continues to talk about the work of the Holy Spirit in Romans 8:26-27. “*In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans. And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for God’s people in accordance with the will of God.*” In these verses we learn how the Holy Spirit works as an advocate for us. He intercedes for us when we are weak. Indeed we sometimes do not know how and what to pray when we face tremendous problems. We cannot but groan with tears. At that time the Holy Spirit intercedes for us by bringing our requests to God the Father. He pleads for us to God with our requests. In this way the Holy Spirit encourages us, intercedes for us, and even prays for us.

Above all, the Holy Spirit works for our salvation, especially for our regeneration. The work of conversion and regeneration is the work of the Holy Spirit through our repentance and God’s forgiveness of sin. How could the selfish tax collector Levi be changed into a sacrificial disciple of Jesus Christ? This is work of the Holy Spirit. How can a proud sinner like Saul be changed into a humble servant like Paul? This is the work of the Holy Spirit, too. Sunny said that he was lazy and reluctant to attend Sunday worship service when he was in Springfield Illinois. So Dr. John Lee visited him to wake him up every Sunday morning. But now Sunny is willing to come to church to worship God every Sunday from O’Fallon Missouri. This is the work of the Holy Spirit. Titus 3:5 says, “*he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit*.” We are born again by the work of the Holy Spirit. We can see and enter the kingdom of God when we are born again with water and the Holy Spirit. (Jn 3:5-6) We can grow into the divine character of Christ Jesus through the work of the Holy Spirit.

But this world cannot see or know the Holy Spirit. Jesus said in verse 17b, “***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.***” The world indicates unbelievers, those who do not believe in Jesus Christ as the Lord and Savior. They do not know the Holy Spirit or see him because the Holy Spirit comes and is revealed through Jesus Christ. Faith in Jesus Christ is a prerequisite for the presence of the Holy Spirit. One young man was eager to experience the Holy Spirit in his life, but he couldn’t because he didn’t repent of his sin and wouldn’t believe in Jesus Christ as his Savior in his heart. But Jesus’ disciples not only knew the Holy Spirit, but also lived with him. After God poured out the Spirit on the day of Pentecost, they were filled with the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit began to abide in them, and they were in the realm of the Holy Spirit.

In verses 18-20 Jesus repeated this to remind them of his impending crucifixion, resurrection, and even second coming. “***I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. Before long, the world will not see me anymore, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live. On that day you will realize that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you.***” After he is resurrected from the dead, Jesus will come again to visit them. As he promised, Jesus visited his disciples and spent time with them forty days before he ascended into heaven. Jesus who was ascended into heaven will come again to see us now. He will come again to bring his people, those who follow him, back to heaven. On that day we will be resurrected as Jesus was. On that day we will rise again as he rose. On that day we will be glorified as Jesus was. On that day we will be united with God the Father and with God the Son Jesus Christ.

Jesus again urged his disciples to keep his commands. “***Whoever has my commands and keeps them is the one who loves me. The one who loves will be loved by my Father, and I too will love them and show myself to them.***” (21) “***Anyone who loves me will obey my teaching. My Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them. Anyone who does not love me will not obey my teaching. These words you hear are not my own; they belong to the Father who sent me.***” (23-24)

Why did Jesus emphasize the importance of loving others in his upper room dialogue? It is because the power of love will make them overcome the impending persecutions and trials. As for them, it is an hour to be united with love, not be divided with hatred. The more difficult times come to them, the more they had to rely on each other and love one another. Jesus knew that they were weak in the time of his trial. Jesus encouraged them to be one, to be united by loving each other. In the same way we must love each other when hardships come to us. Two are better than one in all situations. This is why Jesus sent the Holy Spirit to be with us and help us. The Holy Spirit works through our fellowship. When we love and are united, the Holy Spirit works mightily. The more love we give, the more work of the Holy Spirit we experience. When we have hatred and anger in our hearts, the Holy Spirit cannot work. When we forgive and love sinners, the Holy Spirit works in us and among us. This is the reason why we pray for fellowship with the Holy Spirit among believers.

Lastly, Jesus gave peace to his disciples. Look at verse 27. “***Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.”*** Jesus said that he would give peace to his disciples, which is different from the peace this world gives. What is the difference between peace which this world gives and peace that Jesus gives? Peace from the world is situational, whereas peace from Jesus is relational. Peace from tranquilizers and yoga are conditional and temporary. It does not last long. But peace from forgiveness of sin and peace from the Holy Spirit last long, even forever. Peace is the fruit of the Holy Spirit which comes from reconciliation with God and justification through faith in Jesus Christ. (Ro 5:1) When we have peace with God through the forgiveness of sin, we have real peace in our hearts. When his disciples trusted in God and believed Jesus’ promise, they enjoyed real peace. Besides, Jesus promised the Holy Spirit, Another Advocate, who would be with them and help them. The Holy Spirit will defend them, intercede for them, encourage them, protect them, fight for them, and guide them.

When I came to realize that my friend could drive for my sake, I could drive to Illinois without any anxiety. When we realize that the Holy Spirit is with us and in us and helping us while we are traveling toward heaven, we have peace in our hearts. Let us thank God the Father who sent the Holy Spirit through Jesus. Let us exalt the name of Jesus, who asked the Holy Spirit for our sake. Let us praise the Holy Spirit who came to be with us to help us. May God bless this coming International Summer Bible Conference in Louisville Kentucky with the power and baptism of the Holy Spirit so that our children may prophesy, our young men may see visions, and our old men may dream dreams! (Joel 2:28-32, Ac 2:17) Amen!