

Series: The Gift of the Holy Spirit

The Comforter

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The Guarantee. It is part of the job description of the Holy Spirit to confirm or ratify the covenant. The metaphor of an “earnest” is used of Him in speaking of Him as the guarantee or seal of the covenant of grace through faith in Jesus Christ alone. 2 Corinthians 1:22; 2 Corinthians 5:5, Ephesians 1:13, 14, e.g. This confirmation ensures the consummation of the covenant. The operation and presence of the Holy Spirit in the believer supplies proof that God has made a covenant with that person and it is ordered in all things and sure. The Holy Spirit implants faith to enable the believer to endure “as seeing Him who is invisible.” (Hebrews 11:27)

The Inheritance guaranteed. The Holy Spirit as “earnest” guarantees successful completion. (Philippians 1:6). Therefore, we reach forth to the inheritance of which the Spirit is the “earnest.” What is that Inheritance? It is God Himself. Today we have the Holy Spirit as an “earnest.” Some day we will have the fullness of the Holy Spirit enabling us to enjoy God to the max. Today, we taste, but the Holy Spirit, proceeding from the Father and the Son, has been sent into the believer’s heart to both assure and comfort.

Crosses and Caresses. “amid all the strange domestic crosses I had to bear, I might be drawn away. But Thou, by Thy goodness and love, gave it quite another turn. By these redoubled strokes Thou didst draw me to Thyself, and by Thy crosses effected what Thy caresses could not effect.” Madame Guyon (1648-1717) Autobiography

We turn now to look at the Holy Spirit as Comforter. Psalm 94:19. The saving work of the Holy Spirit in a believer’s heart is a gradual and progressive process. The burdensome sense of sin prepares us for Christ as Lord and Savior. We looked at that convicting move of the Holy Spirit last time.

We talked about the process of calling, conviction, convincing to the point of confession out of godly repentance leading to a repentance unto life, and of conversion. We talked about the conscience being informed by truth and acknowledgment of truth by effectual illumination. Since it is the Holy Spirit who brings a person from death unto life, causes one to be born-out-of God through regeneration, shines into their minds, applies the light to their consciences by effectual conviction, wounds and breaks hearts for sin, and moves the will to embrace Christ in faith for salvation, it is the Holy Spirit who also comforts in the process.

The Comforter. As the Holy Spirit comforts the believer with the comfort of God in Christ, He is weaning the heart forever from the comfort, pleasure, satisfaction, or joy to be found in sin, or in any creature, or in the world, or in things satanic. The believer will be drawn to find comfort and satisfaction in Christ alone, in God alone. Thus creature comforts will be marred and spoiled, and so, we must seek comfort in the Lord. (Hosea 2:14, 15) We will go through trials and wilderness experiences and hard times until we

come into a place barren and devoid of all comforts until we find comfort in the Lord.
(Hosea 2:6-13)

Hosea 2:6-15: I encourage you to read this, and even better, Hosea chapters 1-3.

The Holy Spirit as Comforter supports the fainting heart, reviving drooping saints and keeping them from sinking in abject despair. The Holy Spirit has been assigned the task of making us as God declares us to be in Christ: holy, blameless, and without reproach. So He moves us to cry out to the Living God for mercy. Acts 14:22.

So in first entering into the kingdom of grace we will have this turmoil of heart and soul, the “crosses” before the “caresses”; and along the way we have trials and tribulation before the ultimate entrance into the kingdom of glory.

We will feel our lack of power and come to know God’s power. We will come under the weight of Satan’s accusations and oppression that we might know the completeness of Christ’s atonement on behalf of those for whom He died.

The Holy Spirit as Comforter gives us “time off,” time to recover, times of refreshing, a rest day, as it were. We think we have arrived, that we got the message, and then sanctification goes strong again. God disciplines us as sons. He puts in us the spirit of a son. We must learn. We must align to Truth. We must grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ. We must be prepared to live with a holy God forever in His Presence.

“**It’s the end of me.**” When our son was about four years old, he experienced something so terrible in his four-year-old perspective that he cried and cried. I said to him, “It’s not the end of the world.” He quickly retorted, “No, but it’s the end of me!”

Now the thing is, when the true God takes a soul in His hand, He brings him to the end of himself. Not only are we convicted of the worthlessness of our own works, but convinced of our inability to do God’s will in our own strength. We are stripped of any and all self-righteousness and emptied of all self-sufficiency. We move into an impasse.

Romans 7:18: NKJV: For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells; for to will is present with me, but how to perform what is good I do not find.

Believers want to trust in the Lord, etc. but “how to perform that which is good” he “finds not.”

Romans 5:6: For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. NKJV

We come to the conclusion that without Christ we are lost forever. We are brought to dust until we truly believe that any adequacy comes from God alone.

2 Corinthians 3:5: Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think of anything as *being* from ourselves, but our sufficiency *is* from God, NKJV

Even mature Christians can only cast their care upon the Lord by the Holy Spirit’s gracious enablement; so a sinner “in the gall of bitterness and the bond of iniquity” certainly cannot get anywhere by his own will.

Enter the Holy Spirit. Miracles take the love of God. We must fall to the grace and mercy of God the Holy Spirit to graciously grant enablement. We must lay hold of Christ by faith until the Holy Spirit moves in power. It takes a miracle, and miracles take the love of God. Without the Holy Spirit coming alongside, helping, comforting, we would sink in despair and fall victim to the malice of Satan. And we must never be presumptuous to dare the devil.

A pastor years ago at an area church delivered this strong sermon. He himself became full of zeal and puffed up presumption. He was leaving on his two-month vacation. Suddenly, he challenged the Devil to “give us your best shot!” That summer a child drowned in the lake on the grounds of the church. Someone fell and sued the church. Two others sued the church with other accusations. More happened. This senior pastor wasn’t there. Thank God my husband and I knew not to make such bold challenges coming out of a presumptuous heart. We both said at the same time, “Not us!” We went through that summer spared from great hardship and trials.

The Holy Spirit does not leave His work half done. He is the Life-Producer, the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus, the one who quickens, the Spirit of truth, the Spirit of faith (2 Cor. 4:13). And it is the Holy Spirit who shows us that all of our conviction of sin, confessions, deep repenting, utter helplessness, crying, weeping, using our helplessness as an excuse, is NOT our ground of acceptance with Christ or God the Father.

Titus 3:3-7. For at one time we too were foolish, disobedient, misled, and enslaved to all sorts of desires and pleasures—living in malice and envy, being hated and hating one another.

⁴But when the kindness of God our Savior and His love for mankind appeared, ⁵He saved us, not by the righteous deeds we had done, but according to His mercy, through the washing of new birth, ¹or regeneration, and renewal by the Holy Spirit. ⁶This is the Spirit He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior, ⁷so that, having been justified by His grace, we would become heirs with the hope of eternal life. Titus 3:3-7 BSB

All of **that** is consciousness of truth, acknowledging truth experientially. Repentance is necessary to put us into a position where we can RECEIVE what Christ is willing to give.

Why did Jesus send the Holy Spirit as Comforter, as the Paraclete? Jesus sent the Holy Spirit as Comforter, *Parakletos*, to make Jesus always present to us. Jesus was going away, but Jesus promised comfort to His disciples. They would have One in whom His presence should be restored to them. Jesus is our Advocate before the Father. The Holy Spirit is an Advocate as well, called in and given by Jesus to represent HIM, to make HIS presence real to them, and to reveal and impart all that Jesus is to His disciples.

The Meaning of the Word “Paraclete.” Now let’s consider passages like John 14:15-21, 26, 27; John 15:26; and John 16:5-7. Counselor, advocate, encourager, helper, comforter, the One who refreshes, the Summoner, the One who breaks off, the One who makes one free, are all in the definition and meaning of the word “Paraclete.” And there’s more. Have you ever been orphaned? Jesus fulfills Psalm 68:5; Psalm 146:9;

Psalm 10:14, 18; Psalm 82:3; Lamentations 5:3; Proverbs 23:10 with the sending of the Holy Spirit. These verses tell us that God will not leave us as orphans. God makes a home for the lonely.

Jesus speaks of the Holy Spirit as “another Paraclete,” implying that Jesus is the first (1John 2:1, 2), given by the Father to obtain and communicate His blessing. Jesus mediates the Divine life and love to us, as Mediator of the Covenant and High Priest of the New Covenant in His Blood.

The Holy “Spirit mediates with Christ, revealing in our hearts, as a present and continuous experience, in the power of the endless life, all that Christ’s advocacy secures to us.” (Andrew Murray)

All that Jesus was to His disciples, the Holy Spirit now is to the Church, abiding forever.

When Jesus promised another Paraclete, another Comforter, the disciples were facing that sorrow of being orphaned, of Jesus’ presence with them going away. Again, Andrew Murray gives us insight.

“The comfort to be given was the restoration, in greater power, of the presence of Him, their Divine Advocate. It is because the Spirit is the indwelling representative of Jesus as the Advocate in heaven, making Him always present in the heart, that He is the other Advocate or Comforter.” (Andrew Murray)

The Comforter as advocate. “Parakletos” [G3875] comes from “Para” which means “from close beside” and “kaleo” which means “make a call.” This refers to a legal advocate who makes the right judgment-call because of being close to the situation. His advice or judgment stands up in court. Charles Spurgeon talks about the Holy Spirit as one called to and as one calling to, called to come, suggest, advocate, help, and guide, and one calling to us to our benefit, as a monitor, Teacher, One who puts us in remembrance, Incentive, and Comforter.

Jesus Christ, as our Divine Advocate, made sure that His own would not be left as orphans. The Holy Spirit is sent by the Father and the Son as another Comforter to come alongside to guide us into all truth. He lets us know that we are not alone. As we abide in Christ and His Word abides in us, our relationship with the Lord deepens. We find the One True God to be trustworthy. We can trust Him, even if and when we do not trust ourselves.

May we never be presumptive. May we treat this relationship as fragile and yet absolutely secure, a relationship of love that will not let us go.

May we always remember that this relationship is to be holy, pure, honest, perfectly good, and do no harm. We are admonished:

The Holy Spirit can be tempted/tried/tested, grieved, insulted, quieted, vexed, limited, resisted, quenched, lied to, defrauded, despised, disobeyed, blasphemed against, refused, or received, obeyed, followed, and yielded to. Know Him.

“When we can’t see God’s hand, we can trust His heart.”

https://www.preceptaustin.org/the_hand_of_the_lord

Amen.

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