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# The Helper Who Comes

John 14:12-31

*Russ Kennedy*

In the international ministry, I use translators most places I go. These people are critical to the ministry we do. They must stand between our world of English (it is more than just language) and their world. So they must understand both. As some have discovered it is not just a matter of knowing another language; it is a matter of understanding a language's different world of reference. God's gift to me are the translators I have in both Asia and Europe. They not only hear my words, meanings, nuances, idioms, but they have to hear my heart, my love, my care, my passion. Then they must translate all that. And sometimes it goes the other way. I have to really hear and understand what a national is saying. They must translate that back as well.

Well, Jesus was God's first personal translator. He lived here as One in both heaven and earth. But now, He is gone back to the homeland. So, who will translate for us in His absence? Who will understand God, heaven, Christ and His work so well that He can accurately translate that into our feeble, sense-bound, earthly frame?

That is what our text is about this morning.

## What Believers Do

(v.12-14)

Jesus declares to us what future believers will do. Meaning, us...

<sup>12</sup> "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. <sup>13</sup> Whatever you ask in my name, this I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. <sup>14</sup> If you ask me anything in my name, I will do it.

## Greater Works

(v.12)

Continuing his theme of showing us true saving belief, John focuses on the marvelous things to come. Those who believe will do even greater works. These will be greater because they are the works and powers of the new age to come. The power and presence of the New Covenant age will arrive with the resurrection of Jesus and the giving of the Holy Spirit. Believers will do greater works through the Spirit. The Spirit is given as the power of the resurrection in and to believers.

The works believers are given to do, through the power of the Spirit who is coming, *after* Jesus' glorification, are set in the context of Jesus' death and triumph. They will therefore more immediately and truly reveal the Son. This phrase *greater works* is set within salvation-historical realities. As a result many more converts will be gathered into the new covenant community, the budding church, than were drawn in during Jesus' ministry. The contrast itself, however, turns not on raw numbers but on the power and

clarity that mushroom after the old age is ended and the new day has dawned. (Adapted from D.A Carson, p. 496)

### **God-Centered Praying**

**(v.13-14)**

Our praying in this the new covenant age is different in quality from the old covenant. It will be a God-centered praying.

#### **We pray in in Jesus' name.**

This is not just a tag-line at the end of our prayers but is the spiritual reality of our talking with God. Jesus' name is the authorization and the foundation for our praying. Who Jesus is and what He has done makes it possible for us to have full and open access to God. And, we must be intentional about coming that way. We come, not in our own merit, goodness, standing or "having a good day"; we come solely in the name of Jesus. We are praying based on all that Jesus is and stands for.

#### **We pray aiming for the Father's glory**

This simply means that what we pray for must bring God glory. It must result in boasting in God. Now, not everything we think will bring God glory will He then do for us. But nothing that we ask that is self-focused and self-centered will be granted us except as He chooses to glorify Himself in chastening us.

#### **We pray according to what Jesus is doing**

Here is a more difficult aspect of this sentence. We are not to think of prayer as a magical incantation to get anything we want. Prayer that asks is to echo the purposes of God in Christ. We read in the Bible what God's purposes and plans are for His people and then we pray along that trajectory.

The contrast is not finally between Jesus' works and his disciples' works. It is between the works Jesus himself performed during ministry here, and the works that He performs through his disciples after his death and exaltation. What Jesus did then through His own humanity He is now doing through believing, Spirit indwelt, praying, working believers.

### **Whom Jesus Sends**

**(v.15-17)**

To make all that He has described possible, Jesus tells us whom He will send. Wonderfully, we are living in the age of the unfolding fulfillment of this promise.

<sup>15</sup> "If you love me, you will keep my commandments. <sup>16</sup> And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, <sup>17</sup> 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.

### **The New Covenant Ethics**

**(v.15)**

Those who love God do obey Jesus commands. Don't turn this into a command. This is a description of what believers will be like. They will be lovers of God who will obey Jesus' commands. This is the framework for New Covenant ethics. It has always been about loving God and people. But now, it is no longer about Law, it is about life. Obeying God is not to gain life but because we have life.

New Covenant ethics is still about obedience. It is obedience to Christ. It is His commands that we will seek to obey. We will seek to do so because, loving Him, we want to be pleasing to Him.

### **The New Covenant Helper**

**(v.16-17)**

But we cannot do this alone. So Jesus is going to ask the Father to send us a Helper. He is going to send us the Spirit. Now this has already happened. Jesus ascended to heaven and was given the right to send the Spirit upon His people. What was future for the disciples in this text is history for us. The Spirit came on the day of Pentecost. So this reminds us that this not what we pray for now. We do not ask to receive the Spirit – He has already come into the world. If we are believers, He has already come into our lives.

The phrase *another Helper* probably should be understood in the legal sense. He is not a nurse nor a nice quilt nor even an aid to doing better. He is sent as our lawyer, our legal advocate. He does in us here on earth what Jesus is doing for us in heaven. He is the Father's advocate for the Son's work. He is enabling love, obedience, and good works, not only as a Divine power but as a Divine presenter. He is reminding and arguing in us for the completed work that Jesus has done on the cross and through the resurrection.

Note that the Spirit is connected with and characterized by "Truth". He is the Spirit of Truth. Once again, here is the clear union of Word and Spirit. Where there is no truth, there is no Spirit of God. Where God send His truth, where the Scriptures are truly given, the Spirit is there as well.

So Jesus goes to heaven to present His completed work before the Father so that we will be accepted by the Father. The Spirit comes to earth to present Jesus' completed work in us so that we will access all that work has accomplished for us. Do you see it? Jesus is our heavenly lawyer to the Father. The Spirit is our earthly lawyer to our hearts. So we have the person of truth in heaven, Jesus. We have the person from truth in us, the Spirit.

### **The New Covenant Indwelling**

**(v.17)**

When the Spirit comes, where will He dwell? When the Son of God came, He dwelt in a human body. But what about the Holy Spirit?

He will neither be received by nor dwell in the world. Verse 17 is clearly referencing John 1:12-13, "But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God" and John 3:2-15 where the person who has not been born by the Spirit of God cannot *see* nor *enter* the kingdom of God.

But he will indwell believers. He will make His home, His permanent dwelling place, in the inner person, the heart, the soul of believers. The Spirit then is not only in us, but is also with us. His presence in us is the fulfillment of Jesus' promise to be with us to the end of the age.

**What this Means****(v.18-24)**

Well, what does all this mean? What John writes now I think confirms our interpretation of the last paragraph.

<sup>18</sup> "I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. <sup>19</sup> Yet a little while and the world will see me no more, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live. <sup>20</sup> In that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you. <sup>21</sup> Whoever has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me. And he who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and manifest myself to him." <sup>22</sup> Judas (not Iscariot) said to him, "Lord, how is it that you will manifest yourself to us, and not to the world?" <sup>23</sup> 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. <sup>24</sup> Whoever does not love me does not keep my words. And the word that you hear is not mine but the Father's who sent me.

We come upon a piece of John's writing that doesn't outline like we as westerners think. So I am going to trace four themes that are the strands of an interwoven cord here.

**Never Left Alone**

Though we do not have the physical presence of Jesus here, we are never left alone. God has provided the Spirit as His Presence in us as individuals and in us as the body of Christ. The intra-dwelling of God and His people is accomplished through the Spirit. He is the instrument of our union with God and His union in us.

**Mutual Sharing Love**

The bond that holds this all together is a mutually shared love. It is the thread that runs through the Godhead and the church that holds us together. This love is a living thing. It is a whole thing – it is not merely emotions, it is ever so much more. It is a deep flow of life that runs like a river between the persons of the Godhead and overflows His eternal, infinite banks and inundates His people. It sweeps over the church in a pure passion of Divine pleasure.

**Receiving the Father's Revelation**

Judas is asking about what Jesus said in verse 17. How will God reveal, disclose, openly declare Himself to His followers and not to the world? (By the way, because Judas addresses Jesus as Lord, John is careful to be sure that we know this is not the betrayer of Jesus.) So a method question is asked, "How will it be done?" The answer is in what Jesus has already said. God's love experienced as He dwells in His people will be how God manifests Himself to His people. The loving obedience of Spirit-indwelt believers will manifest God in the church.

**Obedying the Father's Word**

All through this section Jesus highlights the connection between love and obey. It seems here (and in other passages as well) that God's love in us is a Person, the Holy Spirit. Yes, it encompasses all that love involves. But God has incarnated His love in this age through the Spirit. The Spirit in us is God's love to us. He is how we experience and express the love of God. This is one of the radical newnesses brought about by the death

and resurrection of Jesus. In this new covenant age, obedience and love are deeply connected through the Spirit who lives in us.

What is the key to all this? The New Covenant era is not about rules and regulations, but about loving a God in such a way that we always want to please Him. He gives us Himself in love through the Spirit so that we will do so.

## **What He will Do**

**(v.25-31)**

What then will Jesus do for us since He has gone away?

### **He Sends a Teaching Helper**

**(v.25-26)**

<sup>25</sup> "These things I have spoken to you while I am still with you. <sup>26</sup> 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 Spirit will come to teach the apostles what they do not yet know. He will also help them to remember what He had taught them and was going to teach them before His ascension. The Spirit now teaches us what He gave the apostles. He will do so through the Scriptures. They are the written down, inerrant, infallible God breathed deposit of the apostolic teaching. The Spirit worked directly in them, bearing them along as the breath, the Spirit of God so that they left His Words for us. The Spirit works through the Scriptures to teach us all we need to know.

### **He Grants a Comforting Peace**

**(v.27-29)**

<sup>27</sup> Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid. <sup>28</sup> You heard me say to you, 'I am going away, and I will come to you.' If you loved me, you would have rejoiced, because I am going to the Father, for the Father is greater than I. <sup>29</sup> And now I have told you before it takes place, so that when it does take place you may believe.

Why does He grant His people peace? Because there are many storm driven waves that are disturbing and distressing to us. For them, it was the news that He was going to go away. This was not going to end like they expected. So, in their perplexity He grants peace.

This peace comes in a different way than the world gives. The point here is that it is not a different kind of peace; the focus is on how it comes. This peace comes through hearing what Jesus says in such a believing way that our affections, our emotions, respond with joy. Do you see that in verses 28-29? Here is how God gives His peace - believe what Jesus says. Rejoice in what it means. Do what it requires.

**He Serves/Obeys the Father's Will****(v.30-31)**

<sup>30</sup> I will no longer talk much with you, for the ruler of this world is coming. He has no claim on me, <sup>31</sup> but I do as the Father has commanded me, so that the world may know that I love the Father. Rise, let us go from here.

Jesus speaks to His own situation. Satan, this world's ruler, is coming to kill Him. He has no legitimate, legal claim to do so. But, in spite of this, Jesus is going to submit. He does so because He loves the Father and will do what the Father commands. In obeying the Father and doing the Father's will, Jesus' love for His Father is put on public display. He is doing before us what God requires from us.

Here it is: He loves and therefore obeys - it is what he does...

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**Reflect and Respond**

So much here that is easy and so much here that is incredibly deep. Yet, it is all food for the soul.

We live after the death and resurrection of Christ. We live in the New Covenant age. You and I, all believers today, are experiencing the ongoing fulfillment of what Jesus promised here. What an incredible thing.

We have the Spirit of God indwelling in us. He is the life, light and love of God in us. He has brought us to life. He has illuminated the Word and thus enlightened our souls. He is the love of God poured out in us. This is both an individual and a corporate reality. The Spirit is in here (me). And the Spirit is in you (personally). And the Spirit is in you (corporately).

Many of you are struggling and are troubled. You crave peace. You want your soul to lie down in rest. You want quietness of heart. Jesus gives you peace. He does not give it by taking away your troubles. He does not give it by escaping to a different place. He does not give it through drugs, alcohol, sex, things, however the world gives it. Jesus gives us peace through believing in Him in an obeying way that is infused with joy. May you believe so that you will have peace.

To some, this whole talk has been foreign. You have felt like an outsider listening to a talk that is not about you. It is not your experience. But, maybe you want this? Maybe you are ready to believe and in believing experience the love of God and have the peace God gives. May it be so today.