

2. Jesus Promises an Advocate

John 14:15-26

Daily Bible Meditations

Jennifer Lewis-Berg

Sunday

Jeremiah 8:18-22

Jeremiah was deeply troubled by Judah's captivity and the sinful waywardness of God's people. God had basically declared His complete frustration with Israel. The prophets, the priests, all of them, did not know how to behave because it seems they did not understand what God required of them. Jeremiah could find no comfort from their seemingly hopeless situation. Once again, God saw their miserable idolatry and unfaithfulness. And God, through Jeremiah, wondered if there could be anything to soothe, to heal, and, ultimately, to cure Israel of their sin.

Monday

Lamentations 1:17-21

Israel was lamenting her suffering. She was reaping the consequences of her actions that had so disturbed and frustrated God. Now His people were perishing. God had commanded that Israel's enemies surround her, attack her, and bring her great misery. And God's people knew that they were getting what they deserved. But they still cried for relief from their distress. In their complete alienation, Israel wondered who would come to their aid and comfort. If we got what we deserved, God would turn His back on us forever. It is our great blessing that God has sent His Comforter to us and that, in our alienation, we are not alone.

Tuesday

Isaiah 40:1-10

And now for the good news: God was declaring to His people that their comfort was finally coming. What followed is poetic and essential. After all the sin and all the punishment, God was giving His people not what they deserved, but what His love for them meant to Him—a clean slate, stamped "paid in full," from God's own hands, doubly generous and gracious. The crookedness of their sins were being made straight, the roughness of their sinful lives would be made smooth. And, best of all, the glory of God would be shown to all His people. Despite the death, the frailty, and the inconsistencies of man, God and His promises go on forever. God wants His power, His mercy, and His love to be declared from the top of every mountain.

Lesson 2

Sabbath, March 7, 2015

13

Wednesday

Psalms 119:49-64

There is great comfort in living within the guidelines of God's law. God clearly shows His love for us through His law and His commands. The great desire of our hearts must be to follow Him. The world tries to tear us away from God's desires for us, so it is essential that we keep our focus on God and promise to obey His words. It really does take conscious and deliberate practice to keep obeying God—to keep our attention directly on Him. As long as we live, we must keep learning how to follow God—always walking the straight path that He has set for us.

Thursday

Psalms 23

The metaphor of God as a shepherd is a perfect fit. David's poem reached out directly from his own experience and the life he knew. What better picture could come from that world—the Great Shepherd caring for the lowly sheep? David's words painted a clear picture that we can identify with today. God is our shepherd and He protects us, provides everything for us, brings us to calm and still rest, and even restores and heals us. No matter what may come into our lives, God protects us from all evil. God's commands and words comfort us and guard us. God has chosen us as His special people and His goodness and mercy towards us know no limits.

Friday

John 15:18-26

God sent Jesus to us to prepare us for a relationship in eternity with the Father. Likewise, Jesus came to show the world that He was the only Way. By denying Jesus, the world has been made aware of its sinfulness. By hating Jesus, the world has also hated God. So we are to choose God and not the world. By following God, we have to turn away from the world. Fortunately, God sent His Spirit to us when Jesus ascended into heaven. The Spirit advocates for us in a way that the human Jesus could not.

Sabbath

John 14:15-26

It is still essential that we keep God's commands. Thankfully, God has sent His Holy Spirit to be with us forever. The Holy Spirit comforts and guides us from within. Because we love God, we want to follow His teachings and obey Him. God speaks to us through His Holy Spirit. Because of the Spirit, believers have God the Father and Jesus the Son living within them. Imagine God making a home within every individual believer! Fortunately, the Spirit will continue to teach us about God's love and His desires for us.

StudyJohn
14:15-26**Background**John
14:15-26**Devotional**Psalm
23**Key Verse**

“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 said to you” (John 14:26).

Heart of the Lesson

There are times when people know what is right, but they struggle to follow through as they should. What motivates one to make the right choices? Jesus said that He would send the Holy Spirit to help His followers love God and live according to God’s commandments.

Questions for Studying the Text

1. What causes us sometimes to choose the wrong when we know what is right? What motivation do we as Christians have to make choices we know that God wants us to make?
2. Based on the teaching in this passage (v.15,21,23,24), what is the relationship between love and obedience? How can we justify Jesus’ teaching here about keeping commandments with Paul’s teaching that we are no longer under the law (Romans 6:14; Galatians 5:18)?
3. How does the Holy Spirit help God’s followers to love and obey Him? Describe, from this passage, how the significance, power, and guidance of the Holy Spirit in the area of obedience impacts our discipleship. In what specific ways has the Holy Spirit impacted your obedience?
4. The Greek word “parakletos” is translated, “Helper” in the New American Standard Version. How do other Bible versions translate this word? Now read the other “Paraclete Sayings” of Jesus (John 15:26-27; 16:7-11, 12-15). What do these verses and titles teach us about the role of the Holy Spirit in the lives of believers?
5. How are believers described as being different from the world? In what ways should we strive to stand out? Are there ways of being different that hinder rather than enhance our witness? How can the Holy Spirit help?

Understanding and Living

Norman Fearon

What next

After spending approximately thirty three and a half years on earth, it was now time for Jesus to return to His Father in Heaven. The last three and a half years of His earthly life were spent preparing twelve men who would later continue the mission that He had started. On several occasions, He tried to explain His mission to them, but they were unable to understand what it was about because they had other things on their minds. Finally the reality hit them—Jesus’ mission on earth was coming to an end; He would be leaving soon; “My children, I will be with you only a little longer” (John 13:33, NIV). Their world seemed like it was about to turn upside down. What would they do? What would become of their dreams? Would the mission that was started end here?

In an effort to console His troubled disciples, Jesus, in John 14 started to pour out words of comfort and hope upon them. This was needed encouragement for these men as they would be relied on to continue the mission when Jesus went back to heaven. His very first words of comfort were, “Do not let

your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me” (v.1, NIV). Jesus continued to comfort them with words of assurance. This time He told them about His plan to prepare a place for them so that they could be with Him (v. 3). All of that was wonderful, but what should they expect in the time when He would be away? Would they be left alone or would there be a support system for them?

Jesus knew these men well enough to know that, although they seemed willing and sometimes very zealous, they would never make it on their own. The mission, on the other hand, was one that surpassed their ability. In fact, this mission was one that required much more than human muscle and ingenuity. This called for real help and, sure enough, Jesus promised to send them the help they needed—the Holy Spirit.

Receiving the Helper

In the lesson this week, Jesus promised to send another Helper (v.16) to assist His disciples in accomplishing the mission He left for them to complete. However, Jesus also made it clear that the promise of the other Helper would be fulfilled only if they kept

His commandments (v.15). It was also important that the disciples understood that keeping the commandments of Jesus was their proof that they loved Him. This, I believe, is an appropriate message for Christians of this age. If we consider ourselves disciples of Jesus, we should be willing to adhere to His commandments.

Adherence to His commandments will foster a healthy relationship with Jesus. We can never truly say we love Jesus while we blatantly ignore His commandments. I think it is also ironic when Christians claim to be filled with the Holy Spirit but refuse to live by Jesus' commandments. Whoever claims to be a disciple of Jesus must live by His commandments—they are not optional or negotiable. It is easy for us to say we have the Holy Spirit, but where is the proof? Is our claim supported with the evidence of fruit?

How often do we get upset with the world for not recognizing how important we are? We are “salt and light” (Matthew 5:13-14). How often do we get frustrated because the world does not understand our purpose? God has called us to be “instruments of reconciliation” (2 Corinthians

5:18-20). It does not matter what role we play; the world cannot see our significance because the world does not have the Holy Spirit. It will take the Holy Spirit in the life of an individual to accept the ways of God or to live the way God wants him to live.

Jesus made it clear that the Holy Spirit would be with His disciples because they knew Him. But the world cannot accept Him (the Holy Spirit) because the world “neither sees Him nor knows Him” (v. 17, NIV). Often times we value ourselves according to what the world has that we may never have, but I believe it should be the other way around. We should value ourselves according to what we have that the world can never have—that is the Holy Spirit.

Role of the Helper

We are privileged to live in an era where we have technology on our side. We have all sorts of electronic gadgets, tools, and machines to help us do our work. Sometimes this makes us feel like we really did a great job all by ourselves, when in truth we would have messed up if we did not have the appropriate help. The disciples really did not have a clue what this mission would be throwing at them.

They could not even begin to imagine the various challenges that would come their way. But those challenges ahead served as reminders that they had to rely on their “Helper,” the Holy Spirit, to carry them to the end of their mission.

Jesus told His disciples that the Holy Spirit would teach them all things (v.26). There were a few instances when some of Jesus' teachings were not understood instantly but were later explained to them (Mark 4:14; 9:32; Luke 2:50). I imagine there were other times that the understanding came later through the Holy Spirit's teaching. The Holy Spirit would also teach them things they did not know before (John 16:12-13). In addition to teaching, the Holy Spirit would remind them of everything Jesus had already told them (v.26).

It seems to me that Jesus' intent was that the disciples would be in total reliance on the Holy Spirit. Should it be any different today? How much do we really rely on the Holy Spirit? So many times we are guilty of going through our church rituals that fail to produce the desired results because we refuse to receive the help of the “Helper”—the Holy Spirit.

Hints for Teaching

Lesson Goals

1. Understand the significance of the Holy Spirit.
2. Recognize the power available through the Holy Spirit.
3. Pray for the guidance of the Holy Spirit in decision making.

Teaching Activity

Have groups of 2 or 3 role play one or more occasions when it is good to have someone “at your side” (i.e. a time of grief, a major decision, etc.). Compare these occasions with the role of the Holy Spirit as Advocate, Counselor, etc. Brainstorm various ways the Holy Spirit guides believers. Are some of these ways more customary than others are? Develop a checklist or other instrument by which the participants can ensure they are leaving room for the Spirit to work in their decision-making process.

Looking Forward

Having studied the role of the Holy Spirit as our Advocate, we next examine Jesus' promise that the Spirit of Truth would be present with His followers in His absence.