

The “Paraclete”

Ezekiel 36:22-29a Romans 8:1-11 John 14:15-17, 26-29

August 8, 2021

Pastor Dave Bolte



During Jesus’ life, He came *alongside* the disciples to walk with them, protect them, and teach them the things of God. After His death and resurrection, He ascended into Heaven ... but He did not abandon His Disciples. Jesus sent them the Holy Spirit to continue to walk *alongside* of them, just as He promised.

I will ask the **Father**, and He will give you another **Helper**, to be with you forever, 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. John 14:16-17 ESV

The Holy Spirit is the *Third Person* of the Holy Trinity; equal to the Father, and just as powerful as the Son¹. The Holy Spirit now walks with God's people: protecting them, and teaching them the things of God. He comes *alongside* of us just as Jesus did with the disciples!

One of the names that Jesus gives the Holy Spirit in the Gospel of John is **Paraclete**. That is a Greek word that means to *come alongside* somebody, to *comfort* them, to *help* them. In English, this word gets translated in many different ways, including *Helper, Comforter, Defender, Counselor, and Advocate*. All these words help us to understand the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives. The Holy Spirit is our *Helper, Comforter, Defender, Counselor, and*

¹ Note that this passage is Trinitarian! The Son prays to the Father to send the Spirit! Jesus is teaching us about the 3 Persons of the Holy Trinity! There is One God in Three Persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Advocate. Just as Jesus *came alongside* the Twelve disciples, so now the Holy Spirit *comes alongside* of you, and remains with you throughout your life².

The presence and work of the Holy Spirit in your life is a gift of grace that God has given to you; it is one of the blessings of salvation that are freely given to you through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Since your Baptism, where you were **Born Again** with water and the Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit has remained with you and has been at work in your life.

It is the Holy Spirit at work in you that motivates you to live a holy life of good works; the Holy Spirit sanctifies you in the Christian faith. He leads you to worship the Lord, to pray to your Heavenly Father, and to assure you that your sins are forgiven. The Holy Spirit strengthens you when you are tempted; and helps you when you are weak. The Holy Spirit gives you patience endurance under every burden, pain, and suffering; and He comforts you with the Word of God. The Holy Spirit was given to you in Holy Baptism, He sets you apart as holy, and He remains with your throughout your life.

One of the key things that Jesus emphasizes about the Holy Spirit in the Gospel of John is that He works through the Word of God. In order to highlight that, Jesus gives Him another name: the “*Spirit of Truth*.”

But when the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, **the Spirit of Truth**, who proceeds from the Father, **He will bear witness about Me**. John 15:26 ESV

When **the Spirit of Truth** comes, **He will guide you into all the Truth**, for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak, and He will declare to you the things that are to come. John 16:13 ESV

Jesus is the *Truth*, and His Word is *true*. The Holy Spirit is the “*Spirit of Truth*” because He works through the *true* Word of God to bear witness to the *truth* of Christ as the Savior of the world.

² In 1 John 2:1, Jesus Himself is described as our Paraclete who is working for us in Heaven; and from Heaven, Jesus has sent us the Holy Spirit to be our Paraclete here on earth (John 15:26)! You have a Helper, Comforter, Defender, Counselor, and Advocate both in Heaven (Jesus!) and here on earth (Holy Spirit!)

These promises gives us the confidence that the Holy Spirit was at work in the Apostles, and you can trust that their words are *inspired* by the Holy Spirit and therefore *inerrant*. The words of the Apostles are what we know today as the New Testament. The New Testament is the Holy Spirit teaching us the *truth* and bearing witness to Christ³. This is crucial for us as conservative Lutherans, because we focus on Christ and His death and resurrection in our preaching and teaching.

The Spirit would guide the Apostles to write down their Word, and God would preserve it in the New Testament Scriptures for us to read today. In this way He would build His church

This is exactly what Jesus said the Holy Spirit would do: “*He will bear witness to Me.*” There are so many churches that have abandoned this Gospel focus on Christ, and in many and various ways their teaching focuses on man’s own good works and human effort. But that is not what Jesus teaches!

The Holy Spirit worked through the Apostles to write the 27 books of the New Testament --> and those Books are invaluable to us⁴! In those Books, Jesus continues to teach us through His Spirit about God the Father and His Kingdom. The Bible is the Word of God; the teachings of Christ given through the Holy Spirit of Truth!

Once again we are reminded of the importance of being *biblically literate and doctrinally sound*. The Holy Spirit has written the words of Jesus down for you so that you can learn and study them. *The Bible is not a novel to be read; it is a sacred text to be studied.* Bible Study is one of the most important aspects of the Christian faith and life.

³ Jesus promises the Paraclete (the Holy Spirit), who will cause the disciples to “*remember*” what Jesus had said and lead them into all Truth (14:26, 16:13). That is, the Paraclete would be the interpreter of the Scriptures for the Church, guiding her to a Christological understanding of the Scriptures. John 1:1-7:1, W.C. Weinrich, Concordia Commentary Series, p. 751

⁴ The Holy Spirit not only caused the Apostles to just speak by inspiration, but also to write by inspiration! The New Testament is the Word of Jesus given by the Holy Spirit! And the central teaching of the New Testament is the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins! Remember 1 Corinthians 15:3-4. As conservative Lutherans, we hold to this central teaching that we have learned from Christ and His Spirit in our theology, doctrine, preaching, teaching, and counseling.

By studying the sacred text of Holy Scriptures, your faith is strengthened and you are renewed in the Holy Spirit. This is how the Spirit works in your life. He works to convict you of your sin, lead you to repentance, and then assures you that your sins are forgiven because of the Lord Jesus Christ. From there, you learn to respond with a holy and godly life. As you grow in biblical literacy and doctrinal soundness your faith grows and strengthens as well. Christ and His Word become the solid rock that you stand on; the cornerstone of your life. It is so very important to be *biblically literate and doctrinally sound* as a disciple of the Lord Jesus.

Bible study is also how you defend yourself from the temptations of the world and the assaults of the devil and his depraved demons. As you mature in the faith and increase in your understanding, you are fortified in your struggle with sin. You learn of the struggles of Christians who lived before you, you study the truths that God has written down for you, and you see the importance of keeping the cross of Christ and His love and forgiveness always in front of you. *Bible Study is one of the most important aspects of the Christian faith and life.*

Soon all of our Bible studies **here at Trinity** will be starting; and you and your family are welcome, invited, and encouraged to join with us in studying Scripture. Trinity Lutheran Church is a teaching congregation; this is a place where you will hear the truth of God's Holy Word with a focus on the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. Places like this are getting harder and harder to find. Our teachers are themselves students of Scripture who have a passion to teach Scripture to others. There are many opportunities for you to get involved in a Bible Study; make it a priority in your life. Plan to carve out time now; it has to be intentional, otherwise it will never happen. There is no need to be intimidated, because we are all students of the Holy Spirit. Plan now to study God's Holy Word! Find a study that you would like to go to and make it a priority in your weekly schedule. *It's that easy! And it's that important!*

The Crucified, Risen and Ascended Lord Jesus has sent the Holy Spirit to be your **Paraclete**. The Holy Spirit *comes alongside* of you to help, comfort, and defend you throughout your life. He is the *Spirit of Truth*, who strengthens your faith and gives you assurance through the Word of God.

Amen