

JOHN 16

Help, I Need Somebody

Since chapter 14, Jesus has spent time the upper room and in Gethsemane providing final words of encouragement to his Disciples. His execution is eminent. One of his main messages is that his death does not mean abandonment. As chapter 15 demonstrated, the True Vine will sustain and bless believers. We now turn to the continual work of the Holy Spirit.

The term Jesus uses to describe the Spirit is “Helper” (vs. 7). First introduced in chapter 14, the Greek term for “Helper” is difficult to translate but beautiful in its meaning. Some translations use “Helper” (ESV, NKJV, NASB), “Advocate” (NIV, NLT, NRSV, NET), “Comforter” (KJV), and “Counselor” (CSB). There is no perfect English equivalent and each option is insightful. It literally means “one who comes alongside.”

The point is not the art of translation, but the beauty of what Jesus proclaims. The Holy Spirit comes upon believers following the ascension of Jesus and is the presence of God. Christians are not and cannot be abandoned by their Creator-Redeemer.

He will first come to convict the world (vs. 8-11). There can be no repentance without conviction. It is not the job of Christians to convert the lost. That is the priority of the Spirit. Christians are called to faithfully proclaim the good news and consistently live it out.

He will also proclaim truth, beginning with the Disciples and down to us. Verses 12-15 serve as a key passage for our understanding of Scripture. The Spirit of truth utilized the biblical writers when penning each book of the Bible. More than that, the Spirit of truth directs believers to the truth. And Jesus, as we have discovered (John 14:6), is the truth. No wonder some translations use “Advocate.”

Finally, the Helper delivers comfort. As the Disciples realize Jesus was going away, they naturally began to grieve. However, the Spirit will turn their “sorrow” into “joy” (vs. 20). Directing us to Jesus, the Spirit brings comfort amid loss. No wonder translators use “Comforter” and “Counselor.”

This all culminates with the gift of peace – the offspring of truth and love found in Jesus. The Helper reminds us “I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world.” (vs. 33)