

Title: Holy Spirit is our Comforter

Object: Teddy Bear or Stuffed Toy

Scripture: “Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, ⁴who comforts us in all our affliction so that we will be able to comfort those who are in any affliction with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. (2 Corinthians 1:3-4)

Have you ever gotten hurt? Fallen down or got a cut? When you got hurt did you run to your dad or mom? They were able to pick you up and hug you and rock you and kiss you. That made you began to feel better, didn't it?

The Bible says God is our comforter so even when we get older and become dads and moms God will comfort us when life hurts us. As we grow in our faith in Jesus He comforts us so we can comfort others when they get hurt. Doesn't that sound good? God comforts us and we comfort others.

You do not have to grow up to be able to comfort others. As children you are able to bring comfort to other children and even to grownups. Let me tell you a story. A little girl came home from a neighbor's house where her little friend had died. "Why did you go?" questioned her father. "To comfort her mother," said the child. "What could a small child do to comfort her?" She looked at her daddy and replied saying, "I climbed into her lap and cried with her."

Jesus comforts us and we are to give comfort to others. As you get older you will be able to know Jesus and He will be your comfort.

Let's pray. Father we reach out to You in prayer and seek Your comfort for the hurts in our lives. Father, help us be sensitive to the hurts of others and reach out

to them to give them comfort. Help us care and pray for those we know who are hurting. Thank You Father for being the best comforter of all. Amen.

John 14:18-24

Four Assurances

As parents we all have had opportunity to comfort a child when they have gotten hurt. As adults we understand offering comfort to someone who has been hurt either physically or mentally. This experience will enable us to understand our study passage this morning in John. Imagine a child comes to you to be comforted after being hurt. The fact the child has chosen to come to you tells us a great deal. First, the child trusts you. Secondly, the child knows by your presence they will be comforted. You are then able kiss, hug, hold them in your arms and speak comforting words to them. You can assure them things will get better and the pain will become less. The child is indeed comforted because they know and trust you.

This is what the Lord is doing in this passage for His disciples. He had just announced that He would soon be leaving and returning to God the Father in heaven. This had distressed the disciples and would certainly have been upsetting. Jesus begins to give them information to reassure and comfort them. Jesus gives them information to help them understand that they will need to carry on His work and even do greater works than He. Jesus assures the disciples that He will listen and answer their prayers. By their prayers they will be able to maintain a relationship with Him even while is He in heaven. Jesus tells them He and the Father will send the Holy Spirit to them and their Spirit will live in them forever.

In the verses that now follow, the verses we will study this morning, Jesus gives

the disciples four more assurances. These assurances relate to His relationship in the future with both the disciples and you and me.

The first assurance is His resurrection. The second is the resurrection will give all believers assurance that Jesus is who He claims to be. The third is the assurance of further revelations of who He is and the work He has given them to carry on. Lastly, the reason that believers will be able to have further revelations is because His Spirit will live in the disciples specifically and all believers for all time.

Let us pray in thanksgiving for the assurance of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

All of us want assurance Jesus is who He said He is. We are all plagued with doubts and fears. Those who do not believe often attack our faith. The world makes it difficult as times. It reminds me of the elderly man who wanted assurances of Jesus and of his faith. This man said to his pastor, "I do not want to die unless I know I am saved – or else - to know it is hopeless for me to seek assurance of Jesus as the Christ. I want a definite sign, something that will give me complete assurance, hope and faith." The pastor replied, "Suppose you had a vision from an angel who told you your sins were forgiven. Would that be assurance enough?" The man eagerly replied, "Yes, that would do it!" The pastor then added, "But suppose on your deathbed Satan came to you and said, 'I was that angel, transformed to deceive you.' What would you say to that?" The man was speechless. The pastor gently said, "You see, God has given us something more dependable than an angel or an angelic voice. God has given us Christ, His Son, who died for our sins. If we believe in Jesus all our sins are gone. Why should we trust this? Because the Word of God has been proven to be true - over and over and for century upon century. In addition, God gives His Spirit to dwell in our heart and soul that we might understand the truth of His Word." The man

understood and the Spirit of God gave him assurance. Let us now go to the assurance found in the Word of God.

Assured Resurrection x 2

The first of Jesus' assurances comes from verses 18 and 19, ¹⁸ "I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. ¹⁹ After a little while the world will no longer see Me, but you will see Me; because I live, you will live also." Even though Jesus will return to the Father in heaven He "will not leave you as orphans." In fact after He leaves He "will come to" the disciples and Christ comes to us today. We will explore this more in verse 23. Jesus continues in verse 19 saying in, "a little while the world will no longer see Me." Jesus is speaking of His impending death by crucifixion, after which the rest of this world will no longer see Him. The disciples currently see Him in the flesh and they will continue to see Him after the resurrection because Jesus will indeed be resurrected and live for eternity. This is what Jesus meant by saying, "you will see Me; because I live, you will live also."

If we look more closely at the last part of verse 19, "you will see Me; because I live, you will live also" Jesus is not speaking of Himself alone. He says, "because I live, you will live also." He is clearly speaking of their and our resurrection also. I believe Jesus is speaking of more than the resurrection after death to eternal life. Jesus goes on to speak of the knowledge they will have of Him after the resurrection and that He will come to dwell in them. Jesus is saying that because He will be resurrected and lives they will enter into and experience the resurrected life now while they still live physically on earth. The disciples will come spiritually alive in a new sense once Jesus is resurrected. This is true for us as well.

If we can place ourselves in the frame of mind the disciples would have been in we will see why Jesus was saying what He did. These men had placed their faith in Jesus as the Messiah sent by God for the salvation of His people. However, during their three years with Jesus they had never come to understand the purpose of the cross. They understand Jesus is saying He is leaving, but how could the true Messiah be put to death, especially if God sent Him? Had not God done miraculous events throughout the history to protect the Jewish people? Surely God could protect His Messiah. The hopes of these men were being dashed and they were disillusioned. Doesn't this make it easier to understand the men of the Emmaus road? As the resurrected Jesus asked them about their conversation concerning Him they said, "But we were hoping that it was He (Jesus) who was going to redeem Israel." (Luke 24:21) Does this not give us a better understanding when Thomas said, "Unless I see in His hands the imprint of the nails, and put my finger into the place of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe." (John 20:25) These statements came from disappointment and disillusionment. But, it was the very same men when they saw the resurrected Christ and began to preach His gospel with passion and they were later put to death. Would they have died for a lie and for a Messiah who did not prove who He was by rising from the dead? After Jesus was raised the Holy Spirit brought back to their minds all the sayings of Jesus enabling them to teach and preach the gospel with power. Jesus made the disciples and the Jewish people this promise earlier in His ministry, "Truly, truly, I say to you, if anyone keeps My word he will never see death." Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, I am." (John 8:51 & 58) By His resurrection He kept this promise. Just as the disciples and the early believers were able to live resurrection lives as they lived by their faith in Jesus Christ so too we are able this

day. Do you believe this?

Assured Knowledge

The second assurance is the promise of assured knowledge of Christ based upon the double resurrection. First, because Jesus was resurrected from the dead and lives and secondly, because we have been given new life by God's grace and by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit we know without doubt who Jesus is – the Christ. This is what verse 20 is saying, **“In that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you.”** Because Jesus is in God the Father and we are in Jesus and Jesus lives in us we know that Jesus was not only a good man, but also God in the flesh and He is divine. If Jesus had not risen from the dead He would have died a good man, a wise teacher, a prophet, but faith would have died with Him and we would not be here today. This is what the world would have people believe about Jesus – He was like Gandhi a leader changing things by teaching and peacefully opposing the wrong in His country. Paul made clear this was not the case in the opening of his letter to the Romans writing, **“... concerning His Son, who was born of a descendant of David according to the flesh, who was declared the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead, according to the Spirit of holiness, Jesus Christ our Lord.”** (Romans 1:3-4) Both the scriptures and history have shown Jesus is the Christ. Further, when we experience the miracle of being transformed from spiritually dead people into people who are spiritually alive – we know, we know Jesus is the Christ. Here is a verse I grabbed a hold of and clung to when God saved me. **“Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.”** (2 Corinthians 5:17) My friends did not want me to change, my boss did not want me to change, the world did not want me to change and Satan did not want me to

change. They threw every stumbling block they could find in my path. But Christ did change me He made me new with new desires and hopes. Is this how you found your early days as a believer?

Assured Revelation

The third assurance is one that I find important and I think it is important to you as well. It is Christ's continuing revelation of Himself to those who the Father has called and who belong to Him through the work of Christ. This assurance comes from verse 21 where Jesus says, "He who has My commandments and keeps them is the one who loves Me; and he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will disclose Myself to him." This takes us past the assurance of the knowledge found in verse 20. Jesus is telling us that once God has called us we will live His commandments because we love Him. How will we live Jesus' commandments? By the study of His holy Word, which will transform our lives. How does the Word of God transform our lives? It transforms who we are because we have the Spirit of God living in us that gives us the spiritual power and wisdom to understand the Word of God and it becomes a living Word growing in us and transforming us. As this process of sanctification grows we love Christ more and more and we realize that Christ loves us as does the Father. As the love of Christ and the Father grows in us the Spirit of Christ discloses Himself to us. We cannot know Christ unless He reveals Himself to us and this is why the world does not know Christ.

The Lord promised to manifest Himself to the disciples and those who believe in Him. In what ways does the Lord do this? Jesus did not say he would reveal Himself bodily – this is the whole point of what He is teaching the disciples. He is physically leaving the earth. We just looked at how He reveals Himself to us

through the Word and Spirit. Will He reveal Himself through visions? We see this at times where there is no church and there is no Bible. But as soon as the Bible is translated into the people's language and there is a church to teach the scriptures the visions dissipate. Is Jesus revealed by some unknown spiritual language that only God knows? No, this is not the case and not what the scriptures teach. Visions, tongues and miracles are not about the person but they are about the glory of God. Once there is a church the glory of God is found in the Bible, the Word of the living God living in and through His people.

Look at verse 21 again, "He who has My commandments and keeps them is the one who loves Me; and he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will disclose Myself to him." There are two conditions here for one to be given more of Christ or for Christ to disclose Himself to believers. The first is keeping or living His commandments and the second is love. Let me ask you, my brothers and sisters and let me ask myself, "Have we met these two conditions?" Some might believe that since they are justified by faith they can enjoy the blessings of Christ without being obedient. However, this is not true and verse 21 as many other verses refutes this idea. The Apostle James wrote, "Even so faith, if it has no works, is dead, *being* by itself. But someone may *well* say, 'You have faith and I have works; show me your faith without the works, and I will show you my faith by my works.'" (James 2:17-18) This is straightforward. The Apostle John wrote in his first letter, "For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not burdensome. For whatever is born of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith." (1 John 5:3-4) Christ is evident in those who truly love Him. Not by displays that bring attention to themselves, but by submission to the will of God. I want you think about my next statement – is it true? The Lord does not

give special revelation of Himself to those who are disobedient. To keep the commandments of God is to keep the heart of God that He has revealed to believers. If you keep the commandment of God and live the teaching found in the Bible I assure you – you will grow in both knowledge and grace of God. If you keep the commandments of God – Christ will reveal or disclose more and more of Himself in your life and this process that He begins here on earth will continue for all eternity.

Assured Christ

Christ final assurance in this passage is found in verse 23. It is Jesus' assurance of His personal presence in Christians through the Holy Spirit. Jesus says, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our abode with him." The meaning here is a follow up to verses 16 and 17, "I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper (*Holy Spirit*), that He may be with you forever; *that is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see Him or know Him, but you know Him (the Holy Spirit) because He abides with you and will be in you.*" This promise and concept was completely new at the time Jesus gave it. The concept of the Spirit of God would be with God's people was not new for this had been recorded and taught throughout the Old Testament. The Spirit of God was with the people during their wandering in the wilderness. David prayed, "Do not cast me away from Your presence and do not take Your Holy Spirit from me." (Psalm 51:11) David prayer was appropriate since it predated Christ but would be wholly inappropriate today. Prior to Christ the Holy Spirit was with the people, but now the Holy Spirit resides in every believer. We need not cry out to God that the Holy Spirit be given, for God has given His Spirit to every believer, but it is for us to

recognize God's gift and indwelling and then allow God's Spirit to have His way with our lives.

Conclusion

In John 14:18 to 24 we find four great assurances given by Christ. As believers we are made alive spiritually because Jesus was raised from the dead and lives. We are made new creations and brought from spiritual death to life first by Jesus' resurrection and secondly by our resurrection in Christ. If one believes and is faithful to obey God's commandments Jesus assures that He will disclose more and more of Himself in their life. There is additional condition that really precedes the last and that is we must love God for if we truly love God then we will surrender and obey.

Christ – Judge or Savior

But we do not want to overlook verse 24 because of these great assurances given in the verses before by Christ. For verse 24 gives an assurance also. As Jesus closed this paragraph I will close this teaching, **“He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine, but the Father's who sent Me.”** To neglect this would undermine the great assurances just given. To not love Christ is to exchange the privilege of spiritual birthright for the mess and filth of this lost world. Christianity is an all or nothing belief. Either we believe, love and obey or we are lost.

If you do not know Christ beware in the scriptures Jesus speaks of an age to come. The warning is clear, **“For you yourselves know full well that the day of the Lord will come just like a thief in the night. ³While they are saying, ‘Peace and safety!’ then destruction will come upon them suddenly like labor pains upon a woman**

with child, and they will not escape. ⁴But you, brethren, are not in darkness, that the day would overtake you like a thief; ⁵for you are all sons of light and sons of day. We are not of night nor of darkness; ⁶so then let us not sleep as others do, but let us be alert and sober.” (1 Thessalonians 5:2-6) If you will not now see Jesus as Lord and Savior you will see Him as Judge. If He is your Lord these great assurances are yours. If you are of the world and do not see Him then you will receive just punishment for your sins. Delay not the time is neigh. Run to Jesus, confess your sins and ask Him to be the Lord of you life. Amen!