

As priest he is ordained for men to make intercession. As king he is authorized by the Father to execute judgement.

Therefore, this blessing will be a continuing one "abide with you forever, with you as long as you live." You shall never know the want of a comforter, nor will he ever depart from you.

Most people have some idea of the meaning of comforter. In our present English it has a very narrow range of meaning but it means a great deal more than just a consoler. We think of comfort in terms of consolation. But in its rich meaning it means not only one who administers consolation in sorrow, but one who in any circumstances, by his presence, makes strong. The word in the Greek translation is significant in that it means one who is called to the aid of another as an advocate in a court of law, but it means further as a helper in any form whatsoever. And that is the idea that Jesus is giving his disciples, a comforter who makes strong by his presence, who is our advocate, helper, guide and instructor.

THE ABSENT PRESENT CHRIST

John 14:16 - 19

In the preceding verses we were given the consequences of keeping his commandments, and this is a continuation in obedience. The first step on the ladder was believe, the second love, the third obey. These steps lead to the highest reward and to larger gifts. We might somewhat picture it as two telephone lines across a great valley separating us from Christ. One says, "If ye ask anything in my name I will do it". The other says, "If ye keep my commandments I will ask". Therefore, love on one side sets in motion love on the opposite side. If we ask he does, if we do he asks.

I. The Praying Christ and the Giving Father, verse 16

I will ask and he will give. This ties in with the statement, "believe in God, believe also in me". Jesus, who is a perfect revelation of God says, that he will petition the Father and that he will give. This is a matter of intercession in behalf of the believer. We discovered that this is a great part of the activity of Jesus in his present exalted and glorious state. It may

seem mysterious to us but he is before the Father and the Father will grant the blessings requested. This because of his great work upon the cross; the great high priest passed within the veil bearing in his hand the offering which he had made, and by reason of that offering he had power before the mercy seat. I will pray and he will give is but one way of saying we have a great high priest over the house of God.

Jesus here, with quiet confidence without hesitation says, that this prayer is certified; I will ask and he will give. The Father will act in pledge to us. All of this seems to come as an outcome of the obedience of the Christian man. He will obey, the Son will pray and the Father will send. This is not merely a case of "to him that hath shall be given", but this is a reality of those in obedience who will receive this supernatural power.

II. The Father's Gift Is An Abiding One

This is the great New Testament promise of Acts

1:4. A promise that is designed to meet the present (distress) of the disciples.

The blessing promised we translate as (advocate). I John 2:1. "You shall have another advocate". The office of the spirit was to be Christ's advocate with them and others to plead his cause and take care of his concern on earth. When Christ was with them he spoke for them as there was occasion, but now that he is leaving them they should not be run down. The spirit of the Father shall speak for them. Matthew 9:19.

He meant, you shall have (another exhorter). While they had Christ with them he exhorted them to their duty but now that he was going to leave he would send another that would both instruct and protect them.

He meant that another comforter would come as he had comforted his disciples when he was with them, and now he was leaving them, in their great need he promised them another. The giver of this gift included Jesus from the Father to the believer.

This gift was to be secured by the (intercession) of our Lord. I will pray, he says. As he said in verse 14, I will do it. This represents him as king and priest.

making the kind of impact which they should make upon modern life. Could it be that the world leaders are not paying attention to this work. Is the world following the leaders of the church or do we discover the opposite. Is the church changing the Christ of culture, is it because we lack unity. A missionary this week said that many things would take place in 1960. That a great Catholic cathedral would be completed in Washington, and the great move of that church would be to dominate the political as well as the religious life of this nation and that a candidate for president would be promoted, and that great powers would converge upon the U. S., because the U. S. uses in other countries the forces of Catholicism to combat the powers of Communism, and that Communism is in rebellion against the form of Christianity that it knows, that both are striving for the leadership in world domination. So the great battle is between the

(Communists) and the (Roman Catholics). *Some ask about the thing of the two - the if it had 2 principles in the field it would let them fight & then about the summer -*

So we go back to the Bible and we think of the days when people were building the Tower of Babel and finally sought to dethrone God. The unity in the Old Testament church, symbolically speaking, often became so united that

Here is a divine person who will be by our sides on condition of our faith, love, and obedience, to be our strength in weakness, our defense in all trouble, our wisdom in all darkness, our guide in every perplexity, our righteousness when sin is strong, our champion over our temptations.

We think of the personal influence that will be given as described in the Bible. He comes as fire which melts, which warms, which cleanses, and which quickens.

He comes as the mighty rushing wind which breathes gently an irresistible power which sweeps over the individual. He comes as the gentle oil to nourish. He comes as the water of life to refresh and to quicken growth. He comes as the dove of God, the bird of peace to hover over our hearts. He is the spirit of holiness, the spirit of truth, the spirit of wisdom, the spirit of power, the spirit of love, the spirit of a sound mind, the spirit of son-ship, and a great many things beside.

Jesus said, he comes to replace me and to carry on my work. Jesus is telling them that his strong influence

will continue and that he will be a permanent companion, he will abide with you for ever. He was comforting these disciples upon his departure. Here is an abiding guest that nothing but your own sin will ever cast out from your heart.

The world will be blind. ^{V. 17} How can this great spirit do his work? In verse 17 the spirit of truth gives us a revelation of his work. The multitudes of men are (incapable) of receiving the spirit. The world cannot see him, neither knoweth him, and there is something of the world in all of us, but there are men who are wholly under its influence and dominion. And Jesus said these men are incapable of receiving the reaching of the divine comforter.

Of course, there are other (operations) of the spirit. He works to convert the world of sin, righteousness, judgement, but what our Lord is speaking of here is the work that the spirit comes to do in response to his prayer. He is talking about the work that he will do in response to obedience and the world cannot see or understand this work. As a (savage) looks at the stars, and

the sunshine and sees nothing but glare, so the divine spirit moves in the midst of people and many are blind to this work. We might even look out upon the history of the church and discover that there have been times when the organized church lost sight of the work of the spirit. A man might check his eyesight but physical eyesight will not aid in spiritual understanding.

III. Those Who Were To Receive This Comforter, vrs. 17.

The world cannot receive because it does not know. The disciple knows because he receives. So knowledge is possession and possession is the only knowledge. These disciples knew Christ. He had been telling them about the events in the future, what is going to take place, and he is pointing them to the time of Pentecost which will last on through the ages to come. So the abiding spirit is the gift of Christ to every Christian soul and is to be found in connection with believe, love and obey.

The great concern in (Protestant circles) today is church union, the seeking a merger of all denominations to present one big united front. Several things emerge. Can it be that the churches realize that they are not

winds and tongues of fire. However, some very strange things have been done by people who have tried to reproduce Pentecost by means of emotional and mystical experience.

But that is not what we mean when we speak about being spiritfilled. Pentecost can not be repeated, no more than the sacrifice on the cross can be repeated. There could be only one outpouring of the spirit upon the church. The means by which we receive the Holy Spirit today is through the inspired and infallible Word of God. The Holy Bible is the work of the Holy Spirit. Look at the miracles it has wrought in the hearts of men. Nothing in all the world compares with it.

A spiritfilled church is one that is made up of people who are filled with the Word of God, the Holy Bible. They know it, they believe it, they teach and obey it. They are even born again by the spirit. They are new creatures in Christ. Only a church where the membership is made up of spiritfilled Christians will his word exercise real power.

it had to be broken up. There was unity in the religion that crucified Jesus and later persecuted his followers. There was unity in the Christian church until the 16th century when it finally became so corrupt that there simply had to be a Protestant Reformation. This was a reaction against one big church. The big danger in one big church is that it requires a sacrifice of destructive truth which always results in a loss of spiritual power, the basis of cooperation in which all members subscribe is quantity and not quality. It is not what you believe but how many people believe it. It is the organization which is measured in strength in terms of numbers, not in terms of truth. Churches always lose spiritual power when they compromise their faith. The word of God is replaced by the word of man. The Gospel of Christ is replaced by the gospel of works. The divine mercy is replaced by divine merit. The church becomes nothing but a worldly institution.

Therefore, church union is not necessarily a good thing; it can be a very bad thing and it will not solve the problems of the modern church for the problem is not external but rather of spiritual nature. A big

organization may capture the attention of men, but it will not reach the souls of men and if we want a powerful church today we must not make this mistake of putting our trust in a mere institution.

When we go back to the time when this promise which Jesus makes here was fulfilled, the church did not have a large organization but it had received deep spiritual power and it left its marks upon the world. It was a true unity of faith in Jesus Christ. No wonder the world took note of this church. Acts. 2:4. How well does this describe the churches of today. The early church was spiritfilled. Therefore it was powerful. It spoke with a united voice and yet it spoke in different languages proclaiming the Gospel to a variety of people. We are told that the number increased daily.

Do you know why that church was filled with the spirit? Luke tells us (every one) of the disciples was included in this great outpouring. Not one of them missed it. They were a small group but they made a strong church. They were all spiritfilled. The church could have been only half filled with the spirit, and if only Peter who

preached on that day had been filled with the spirit this power would have been limited. But when we think of a church today in which only one-third of the people come to services, and that is supposed to be a high percentage, when there are many members who have little to do with the church, they not only ignore it on Sunday but also during the week. They have no place in their lives for worship. They are filled with the spirit of the world. Thus it

is r The man drove his sleek, powerful car into the filling station. "Fill 'er up," he called to the attendant. After awhile the attendant called to you him, "Better shut your engine off ... you're gaining on me." explained why they do power.

Jesus said, (He will dwell with you). What does he mean. How is this to happen? How are we to be spirit-filled? Some people think it must be a very dramatic and sensational event. That it must be something like the outpouring of the spirit at Pentecost when there was a sound of a mighty rushing wind filling the house, and there were tongues of fire and a big demonstration. But we know there was (only one Pentecost.) It can not happen again in that way, and yet the same spirit can be given to churches in the same measure. There will be no rushing

THE INVISIBLE SHOULDER

3. An Indian chief, for years a Christian and a minister of the Gospel, coined the phrase, "the invisible shoulder". A younger man had been chosen missionary bishop, meeting the newly consecrated bishop one day he said, "Bishop, I pledge you my invisible shoulder".

What a noble conception of cooperation and service. "The Invisible Shoulder", helping to carry our burdens and pushing beside our own at the obstacles in the way of progress for the Kingdom work is indispensable. Beyond the seen is the unseen. Back of the tangible is the intangible, the cooperation that strengthens, the sympathy that comforts. Life would be poorer and service harder in Kingdom affairs if it were not for the invisible shoulders. The sympathy of many friends over the state, pastors, S. S. superintendents and many others has enabled your Superintendent to "carry on" when the going was hard. It is a wonderfully fine figure of speech for all of those who are charged with the responsibility of leading the march and ordering the battle, signifying identification and cooperation with him and backing for him. Every pastor needs this kind of support continually. He has a right to expect it and no church has a right to withhold it.

It was at the Metropolitan Tabernacle, London. It was Sunday morning and the time had arrived for the worship hour to begin. The church was filled with eager worshippers, presently a door in back of the pulpit opened, Mr. Spurgeon led the procession as he and his deacons filed out and took seats on the platform. As plainly as if it had been written in glowing letters they were saying by their presence, "pastor you have our invisible shoulder". The invisible had become visible in this instance. Our Home in its present state of development needs the active sympathy and support of all friends.

Therefore, one of the basic problems in our churches today is our attitude toward the Word of God which is the power of the spirit. The spirit will give utterance. While we are busy with new and old methods we must go back to the Bible and allow the Word to permeate our hearts. How comforting these words were to the disciples who were full of fear. That they would know the purpose of his going, where he went. They had an interest in his departure. They also had a prospect of reunion. There was much that they would like to know about during his absence, and he will send a great gift that will reunite their hearts. (Though absent he will be present.) Though unseen he will be visible, though dying he will be forever with them.

IV. The Absent Christ Is The Present Christ vs. 18-19

"I will not leave you desolate" which means orphans.

This is a good definition of the term. It describes a relationship that these people are familiar with. They thought they would be like fatherless and motherless children in a cold world. And what is there to hinder it? Only one thing, I will come to you and you will not be orphans. How what is this coming? It means I am coming

So. Norfolk Feb 8, 1959 P.M.

and immediately I will be with you. It is true that he will depart for a season. His bodily presence will be removed and yet he was saying, -being absent I was present in all generations. I am present in every single heart. It means that in the very act of his going, "I am with you unto the end of the ages". The average Christian misses the great happiness and calm which comes from the assurance that we are never alone but we have Jesus with us. We need to believe this that his presence is real. The presence of Christ brings peace and joy.

This coming of Christ is identified with the spirit. He is sending the comforter, God's gift. These disciples but he promises them that being absent he will be with them for ever.

How do you think these disciples felt after the crucifixion? Why was it they did not follow the example of John the Baptist's disciples and dissolve and disappear saying, it is no use holding together any longer. The process of separation began on the very day of the crucifixion. Only one thing could have stopped it and

that is the presence of the risen Christ in power in their midst. And they are set on fire by his presence even though he is absent in body he is present in spirit. They are not orphaned, they are not desolate children.

The unseen Christ is also the seen Christ. He said, "Yet a little while" in verse 19 and that takes up the time between his crucifixion and his ascension. It took in the forty days of his earthly life.

Faith is the sight of the soul and it is far better than that of the physical, it is more direct. These disciples said, we have seen him with our eyes, but later on they were instructed, "blessed are those who have believed and yet have not seen". So, absent, Christ is always present and we shall live as long as he lives for he says, "because I live ye shall live also". This is his pledge and guarantee of immortality. As long as Christ lives your life is secure. We shall not even cease when death comes. Therefore, we shall not die. Man's lives have been prolonged by transfusions, but when we come to Christ our lives are not only prolonged but they are extended because he is the life and without him we are orphans in this world, verse 19.