

Monday, May 25, 2026

The Holy Spirit as Comforter

Acts 9:31

As you enter your time with God today, take a moment to quiet your mind. Breathe this prayer: "Come, Lord Jesus, come. Fill me with your Spirit. Open my heart that you might share your words of life with me."

We read today from Acts 9:31. Read the passage now or at the end of this devotion. What does this passage teach us about the Holy Spirit as Comforter?

Kristin has a cousin named Joy who lives with her husband Dell near the border of Iowa and South Dakota. It's a beautiful spot where they have built a house on a bluff overlooking the Little Sioux River and the surrounding valley. We haven't visited them recently, but for several years, we would regularly stop by for a day or two on our cross-country road trips. One visit in particular stands out in my memory.

We had just completed one of my seminary internships and the summer had been very, very difficult. Several situations in the church were fraught with brokenness and sin. We had not felt embraced by the community and our kids were desperate to leave. Our housing situation was not ideal, and we had not felt a sense of comfort and belonging in a couple of months. Some leaders in the church had attacked me verbally because I did things differently than they thought I should. We were weary, worn down, and wounded.

We had asked Joy if we could spend a couple of days with them before we headed back to Michigan. They quickly said yes and said they were looking forward to our visit. When we finally arrived there, we understood just how much preparation they had done in anticipation of us coming.

Because they have lots of land, they had groomed the quad trail that went over their property so our kids could ride four wheelers for miles through the fields and forests. They had food and snacks ready for children coming in hungry from chasing dogs through the wilds, swimming in the local pond or wading in the river looking for tadpoles. The s'mores supplies were plentiful for campfires at night and on a couple of occasions, we looked outside to see Joy leading Kamryn and Troy on lightning bug hunts just after sunset.

We napped, ate and drank comfort meals generously prepared by our hosts. We visited some family and Dell even arranged to borrow an extra Harley Davidson so I could join him on a long ride on the picturesque back roads of the county.

We only spent 3 or 4 days with them, but it felt like forever. We relaxed. They made us feel at ease and that gave us the comfort we had been missing. The summer was exhausting but that short visit refilled our tanks in ways that went beyond just taking a little break. We knew a sort of Sabbath in that visit.

If you asked any of us if we wanted to go for a visit to Joy and Dell's, we would all jump at the chance. We are so grateful for Joy and Dell for the ways they have given us the gift of comfort and hospitality.

As we enter a week of considering how the Holy Spirit is our comforter, I would like us to consider how we have experienced Christ as a shelter, a comfort, when the storms have raged around us.

“Then the church throughout Judea, Galilee and Samaria enjoyed a time of peace and was strengthened. Living in the fear of the Lord and encouraged by the Holy Spirit, it increased in numbers.”

On its own, this verse may strike us with how the Spirit equips the early church for growth and empowers them for the work ahead. But when we read it in context, we understand that the Spirit is doing greater work especially for Saul/Paul and those surrounding him.

In verse 23, some Jews are conspiring to kill Saul, but some friends help him escape by basket over the city walls. In verse 26, the believers of Jerusalem reject Saul believing him to be a danger. Barnabas steps in and vouches for him. In 29, we read of another plot to kill Saul that forced him to relocate to Tarsus back to his family.

Saul is living in chaos. He is surrounded by danger, rejection, and conflict that had to sink in to trouble his heart and mind. Those around him must have wondered if friendship with Saul was worth the danger.

And then the Spirit comes and brings comfort; comfort to Saul in his disquiet and fear, and comfort to his friends that the Spirit’s hand is on this man and they would do well to protect and support him.

The Spirit’s comfort comes to a place that is dangerous and unsettled, and the church “enjoyed a time of peace and was strengthened.”

I know I need that sort of comfort today. The world is unsettled. Violence, either physical or verbal, ideological or political, seems to be the currency of the day. Our world is marked by spiritual struggle and as believers, we feel that tension. We wonder about the future and we are concerned, wondering if it is all going to be okay.

The same comfort known to Saul and his friends is known to us. God has got this. He is king and remains on his throne. His plan for the redemption of all things remains on track. His power is not diminished. His victory over sin and death is written in the blood of Christ.

Receive then the comfort of the Holy Spirit. Be reminded of the end of the story even though our present chapter is not so easy. Remember that we have been through seasons like this before and God has been faithful. He will continue in his faithfulness.

The Spirit’s comfort is offered. Let’s accept and receive it anticipating the peace that his comfort brings.

May the Lord bless you and keep you. May the Lord make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you. May the Lord turn his smile towards you and give you his peace.

In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen.

I love you all. Blessings.

Feel free to share this devotion with others.

To contact the author, please email: elgersma@therivercrc.com