Small Group Guide

The Holy Spirit as Comforter | John 14:15-27

Before You Meet

Encourage group members to read John 13-17 on their own before gathering. This is the full context of Jesus's farewell discourse and will enrich the discussion.

Opening Question

Think about a time when you felt genuinely comforted during a difficult season. What made that experience meaningful? Was it words, presence, action, or something else?

Key Takeaways

1. The Comforter Makes God's Presence Personal The Holy Spirit is not simply the means by which we experience God's power. He is the means by which we experience God's presence. Jesus promised his disciples, and us, that he would not leave us as orphans. The Spirit is sent as one of the same kind as Jesus, to represent Christ to us in the same way that Christ represented the Father.

2. The Comforter Makes God's Presence Perpetual The Spirit's role is to continually remind us of the truths of God's word and the reality of Christ's presence. As the pastor noted, Charles Spurgeon said that the comforter is the instructor and Jesus is the lesson. The Spirit is constantly at work, helping us interpret our circumstances through the lens of God's word rather than through fear or anxiety.

3. The Comforter Makes God's Presence Participatory The Spirit does not work in our lives for our benefit alone. He equips us to participate in what God is doing in the lives of the people around us. Spiritual gifts, including the gift of encouragement and comfort, are supernatural solutions to practical problems, and they are meant to build up others.

Discussion Questions

Getting Into the Text

1. In John 14:18, Jesus says he will not leave his disciples as orphans. What does the image of an orphan communicate about how the disciples might have been feeling? How does that image connect to your own experience of feeling spiritually alone or abandoned?

2. Jesus uses the word "another" when describing the advocate he will send, meaning one of the same kind. What does it mean to you that the Holy Spirit represents Jesus to us in the same way that Jesus represented the Father? How does that shape the way you think about the Spirit's role?

3. In John 14:27, Jesus says he leaves his disciples a gift of peace that the world cannot give. What is the difference between the peace the world offers and the peace Jesus describes? Where do you see people around you searching for peace in ways that ultimately fall short?

Going Deeper

4. The pastor said that what should differentiate followers of Jesus from the world is not that we avoid difficulty, but how we engage with it. Do you agree? What does it actually look like to respond to hardship differently because of the Spirit's presence?

5. The pastor made the point that God is not primarily in the business of making better people, but of taking dead people and raising them to life. How does that reframe the way you think about spiritual growth and the fruit of the Spirit?

6. The pastor described the gifts of the Spirit as supernatural solutions to practical problems. How does that definition challenge or expand the way you have previously thought about spiritual gifts? Can you think of a time when an ordinary act of encouragement or presence felt unmistakably like God moving?

7. The pastor suggested that some people who are gifted encouragers may actually be operating in a prophetic gift without recognizing it, because they are bringing the word of God to bear on a person's moment of need. How does that land with you? Does it change the way you see your own role in the body of Christ?

Personal Reflection

8. The pastor asked two questions toward the end of the sermon. Take some time to sit with them as a group:

    - Where do I need to become more dependent on the Holy Spirit?

    - Where does the Holy Spirit want to work through me?
9. The pastor confessed that he does not always hold fast to his peace, and that when he feels anxious or afraid it is often because he has forgotten the truths of God's word. Can you relate to that? What truths do you find yourself most prone to forget in difficult seasons?

Practical Applications

This Week, Choose One

- **Awareness Practice:** Each morning this week, before you begin your day, take two or three minutes to simply acknowledge the presence of the Holy Spirit. You do not need a formal prayer. Just pause and remind yourself that you are not navigating the day alone.

- **Act on a Name:** During the closing prayer time in the sermon, the pastor encouraged people to pay attention to names that came to mind. If someone came to mind for you, reach out to them this week. A text, a call, a visit, or a note can be the means through which the Spirit ministers comfort through you.

- **Scripture Meditation:** Read Galatians 5:22-25 slowly each day this week. As you read through the fruit of the Spirit, ask the Lord to show you which of these he is most actively developing in you right now, and which one he is inviting you to lean into more intentionally.

- **Honest Inventory:** Identify one area of your life where you have been trying to manage things in your own strength rather than depending on the Spirit. Write it down, bring it to God in prayer, and share it with a trusted person in your group for accountability.

Closing Prayer

Close your time together by praying specifically for one another. Ask each group member to share one thing they are carrying that they need the comfort of the Holy Spirit to meet. Pray over each person by name. If your group is comfortable doing so, lay hands on one another as you pray, as a tangible reminder that the Spirit often ministers through the presence and touch of other believers.

Looking Ahead

Over the next three weeks, the sermon series will continue exploring additional roles of the Holy Spirit: the counselor, the helper, and the empowerer. As you go through your week, pay attention to moments where you sense the Spirit working in one of these ways, and come ready to share what you noticed when your group meets again.