

Telling Others about Jesus
John 15:26-27

We have been on a journey from the upper room to Gethsemane with Jesus and His disciples. They are making their way to that fateful place where Jesus would pray earnestly to His Father and would ultimately submit Himself to the Father's will, giving Himself into the hands of lawless men to be mocked, tried, spit upon, beaten, and crucified. That is the setting of our text today. Christ has told His disciples that they must continue to abide in Him if they want to bear fruit. He used the image of the vine and the branches, likely taking a vine into his hands to show His disciples how they could not do anything apart from Him. He has told them that they are His friends if they do what He commands. What a reassuring thought that must have been for these fearful men. He told them that they must love one another as He has loved them. They were about to learn the deepest lesson of His love as He would lay down His life for them.

Then, last week, on Easter Sunday, we listened as His discourse turned on a dime from the love they would have for one another to the hatred they should expect from the world. He told them plainly that they would be persecuted. "A servant is not greater than his master," He said. This is a heavy load to bear, isn't it? Basically, the promise here is that as we love one another more and more, the hatred and hostility of the world will grow more and more violent against us. What do you think the disciples felt as Jesus described the hatred they would encounter. Fear. Jesus, knowing their fear, reassures them that they will not be alone in the conflict.

²⁶ "But when the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness about me. ²⁷ And you also will bear witness, because you have been with me from the beginning. (John 15:26-27)

This is now the third time thus far in chapters 14-15 that Jesus has given this name to the Holy Spirit. I just want to refresh our memories of the first two. The first was in 14:16. Jesus said,

¹⁵ "If you love me, you will keep my commandments. ¹⁶ And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, ¹⁷ even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you. (John 14:15-17)

You see the context there? He had said, "If you love me, you will keep my commandments." As if He knew that was too high a bar for them to ever attain on their own, He immediately added the promise of another Helper. In the first instance, the Holy Spirit was promised to them to help them in their obedience that would be fueled by their love. Remember, love is the first in the list of the fruit of the Spirit. Paul said, "God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us." (Romans 5:5b) First, we need the Helper to help us obey. Next, a few verses later, He said this,

²⁵ “These things I have spoken to you while I am still with you.²⁶ But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you. (John 14:25-26)

This second mention of the Helper is connected with the need of a teacher. Do you ever forget things? I am constantly forgetting things. We probably forget more information than we retain, right? How many things had the disciples heard Jesus say in the years that they spent with Him that had just been washed away by the sands of time? But the Helper doesn't ever forget a word. He knows everything Jesus has ever spoken. He knows every last word of the Scriptures perfectly, and He knows the right and true interpretation of every last word of Scripture because He's the one who inspired it. He helped the disciples remember what Jesus said, which is why we can rely on their testimony. That's the second way Jesus said He would help the disciples. First, he would help them obey. Second, he would help them as an inner teacher and bring to their remembrance all that Jesus said to them.

Here at the end of chapter 15, He is telling them the Helper will bear witness about Jesus, and through His power, the disciples, too, will bear witness about Jesus. This is connected with what He just said because the disciples were probably shaken to the core by the promise about being persecuted and hated for His name. They didn't want to be hated any more than you or I want to be hated. Jesus knew their fear. He knew their weakness. The Helper is in us to overcome our weakness and fear. He is in us to help us.

The enemy is always trying to silence us with fear. Do you remember what the disciples did until the Holy Spirit came? They hid in fear. ¹⁹ On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being locked where the disciples were for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, “Peace be with you.” (John 20:19) After Jesus' death, they locked themselves up in the upper room for fear of the Jews. They were terrified that they would suffer the same fate as their Master. I don't know about you, but that gives me some consolation. I am grateful to know that I am not the only one who struggles with the fear of men. It has been my Achilles' heel in life. So many times I have failed to do what I know God wants me to do simply because I am afraid. Well, it's good to know I'm in good company. It doesn't mean I'm off the hook, but it gives me encouragement to know that the men who would eventually courageously spread the good news of the gospel and be imprisoned and martyred were just as powerless over their fears as I am.

I think Jesus knew their weakness better than they did. Which is why He told them this: ⁴ And while staying with them he ordered them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, he said, “you heard from me; ⁵ for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.” (Acts 1:4-5) He told them to wait, don't do anything, until they were baptized with the Holy Spirit. He knew they would never have the strength and courage to do what they needed to do without the Helper.

Just a few verses later, He told them this, ⁸ But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to

the end of the earth.” (Acts 1:8) You see that word power? That’s the Greek word *dunamis*. The power Jesus is speaking of there is not just human strength. Don’t think of Goliath with his size, stature, and musculature. This is power of an entirely different category. This is divine power. This is the power of God! I like how HELPS Word studies helps unpack this word, “Power through God's ability” is needed in every scene of life to really grow in sanctification and prepare for heaven (glorification).” Talk about help! This word is used 120 times in the New Testament. 38 of those usages are found in Matthew, Mark, and Luke, the synoptic gospels, referring to the divine power of Jesus. The *dunamis* of God was inherent within Him because He is the second person of the Trinity. He is divine; thus He naturally possesses *dunamis*, divine power, which He displayed countless times in His miracles.

The promise of the Father concerning His Son is that the Son would baptize others with the same power. The power with which He baptizes us is not just an impersonal force. It is a Person. The Divine Helper, the Holy Spirit, the third person of the Holy Trinity, makes His abode within on account of the finished work of Jesus Christ. He is One with the Father and the Son in the same exact way in which the Son is one with the Father, such that by His presence within us, Jesus could say, “If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. (John 14:23) That is said in connection with the sending of the Helper. When we are baptized with the Holy Spirit, when He comes to dwell within us, all three Persons of the Trinity are present within us through the Spirit’s presence. We cannot wrap our minds around this, but Jesus wants us to grasp the miraculous power of the Holy Spirit’s presence in the inner man. This is the great and central promise of the New Covenant.

The prophet Ezekiel had written about this many centuries earlier, as had Jeremiah. Here is what the Lord said through Ezekiel. ²⁶And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. ²⁷And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules. (Ezekiel 36:26-27) That is exactly what Jesus was telling His disciples He was about to do for them when He returned to His Father.

Notice that in all three instances of mentioning the sending of the Helper, Jesus mentioned how the Holy Spirit would come to us. He stressed the importance of the Father’s and the Son’s work in making the Holy Spirit available to us. He obviously wanted the disciples to take careful note of this. Anytime a teacher repeats the same thing three times, you can be sure He wants you to hear it. This is so important because it reminds us that this is entirely dependent upon God’s action, not ours. All three Persons of the Godhead are involved in baptizing us with the Holy Spirit. When we place our faith in Christ, God the Son asks the God the Father to send God the Spirit, God the Father sends God the Spirit, and the God the Spirit goes as He is sent. This makes it clear that this is God’s action, not ours. We didn’t earn this, and we don’t deserve, but from His fulness, we have received grace upon grace. It is because of the finished work of Jesus Christ that anyone can be baptized with the Holy Spirit.

That brings us to the specific help Jesus promised the Holy Spirit would provide for His disciples. Again, in this instance, He said, ²⁶ “But when the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness about me. ²⁷ And you also will bear witness, because you have been with me from the beginning. (John 15:26-27) We see that there are two sides to this work of the Helper. First, His work within the disciples, and second, their outward work as a result of the inner witness of the Spirit. Let’s take these two sides of the same work separately.

First, we have the inner witness of the Holy Spirit. He bears witness about Jesus Christ. If you wanted a good summary of the Holy Spirit’s work, you have it right there.

As a case in point, when the Holy Spirit came upon the disciples on the day of Pentecost, everything came into clear focus for them. They finally understood Jesus’ work in the flesh. They understood why He had come. They grasped within themselves for the first time the meaning of the Scriptures. The Word came alive to them, and they finally understood everything God had spoken about His Son in the Old Testament. The Old Testament was foundational to the Apostles’ teaching. They quoted it and referenced it tirelessly, showing how it was all pointing to Jesus. They did this because of the Holy Spirit’s inner witness. He taught them. He, as the living God who inspired the living Word, showed them the living Christ in the Scriptures. This should come as no surprise since Jesus said the Scriptures point to Him. To the unbelieving Jews He said,

³⁹ You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness about me. (John 5:39)

He also showed a couple of His disciples how the Scriptures bear witness about Him after He rose from the dead. Do you remember His encounter with two despondent and downcast disciples on the road to Emmaus? They did not know that He had risen from the dead, and they did not recognize Him when He appeared to them. They still thought it was over. Jesus was dead and gone, and their hopes that He was the Messiah were dead and gone with Him.

²⁵ And he said to them, “O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! ²⁶ Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?” ²⁷ And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself. (Luke 24:25-27)

That is exactly what the Holy Spirit did for the Apostles when they were baptized with Him on the day of Pentecost. Jesus did for those two disciples what the Holy Spirit would do within all who believe in Him. The Holy Spirit interprets to us in all the Scriptures the things concerning Jesus Christ come in the flesh. That is the inner witness. That is what Jesus meant when He told His disciples the Holy Spirit would bear witness about Him.

That leads to the second work of the Helper. He helps us bear witness to others about Jesus. This is the end result of the inner witness. We see it clearly on the day of Pentecost, when Jesus

first asked the Father, and the Father sent the Holy Spirit to the Apostles. What did Peter and the other disciples do as a result of the baptism of the Holy Spirit? They bore witness about Jesus. Peter stood up with the eleven and boldly declared,

²² “Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs that God did through him in your midst, as you yourselves know—²³ this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men. ²⁴ God raised him up, loosing the pangs of death, because it was not possible for him to be held by it. ²⁵ For David says concerning him,

“I saw the Lord always before me,
for he is at my right hand that I may not be shaken;
²⁶ therefore my heart was glad, and my tongue rejoiced;
my flesh also will dwell in hope.
²⁷ For you will not abandon my soul to Hades,
or let your Holy One see corruption.
²⁸ You have made known to me the paths of life;
you will make me full of gladness with your presence.’
(Acts 2:22-28)

What we just read right there is the *dunamis*, the power and the demonstration, of the Holy Spirit. Peter could not have done that without the Helper. Neither can you or I. We all stand in desperate need of divine assistance if we want to bear witness about Christ. I wonder if that right there is the first and greatest reason we so often fail, simply because we don’t recognize our need for God’s assistance. We have not because we ask not. How often do you ask God to help you bear witness about His Son? Are you trying to do it in your own power? That is so often the reason for our failure. We simply lean on ourselves rather than the Helper.

Our flesh is too weak. We are too fearful. We have too great an adversary. He is too terrifying. The hatred of the world is too intense. That’s why we need the Helper. That’s why John declares, **“⁴ Little children, you are from God and have overcome them, for he who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.”** (1 John 4:4) How have we overcome them, that is all the false spirits who seek to destroy the testimony of Christ come in the flesh? Because we are from God, and thus His Spirit is within us and is greater than he who is in the world. Think about Peter, who on this very night was going to deny that he even knew Jesus. How mighty a change swept into his life on the day of Pentecost, when he stood and boldly bore witness about Jesus.

In closing, Jesus said the reason His disciples would bear witness is that they had been with Him from the beginning. Just let those words “because you have been with Me” sink in for a moment. Have you been with Jesus? Obviously, we didn’t get the privilege of living with Him while He was here on earth like His disciples did. That’s what makes them big-A Apostles, able to compose Scripture, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. They were unique in that regard. There are no more big-A Apostles today, and the Scriptures are completed. We don’t need any

more revelation. The full and final revelation was provided to the Apostles. But in some ways, we have the greater privilege of being with Him without having seen Him. Remember Jesus' words to Thomas immediately after he finally saw the resurrected Lord and declared, "My Lord and my God!"

29 Jesus said to him, "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed." (John 20:29)

That's us today, Christians! We are blessed to have not seen and yet have believed. We believe on account of the *dunamis* of God, by which the Apostles bore witness about Him. Here, we have their witness. This (hold up the Scriptures) is the foundation of the Church. Let there be no other foundation laid than that which has been laid by the Lord Himself. The church is built upon the foundation of the Apostles. Having heard their testimony and believed every word, we, too, have been baptized with the Holy Spirit. We have the Helper today, just as they had Him. That means He is with us. That means we can be with Him. And He can overcome our fears. He can overcome the enemy. He has overcome the enemy. The Word of God is the sword of the Spirit, by which we slay our adversary. Let's let it loose!

We have to be with Him. We have to draw close to Him day by day if we want to be His witnesses. We must abide in the vine! Apart from Him we can do nothing. We must ask Him to help us today because the battle is only getting fiercer day by day. The opponents of God's Word are clearly amassing themselves for battle. The enemy wants to muzzle us with fear. But we need not be frightened, for the battle belongs to the Lord. With the help of the Spirit, let's bear witness about Jesus Christ and leave the results in His hands.

Do not be afraid. Be strong and courageous for the Lord is with you. Go, tell others about Jesus today!

Let's sing this song together one more time as we close.

**O Holy Spirit, move in our hearts
Send us with power into the world
O Holy Spirit, move in our hearts
Fill us with fire and love for the world**