

THE COMFORTER

May God bless you on His Sabbath day!

Even as Christians, the full measure of the Holy Spirit can be hard to grasp. Sometimes we miss the incredible connection with Jesus Christ because we tend to think of it solely as the power of God. It is so much more in ways that bring us great strength and wonderful blessings.

JOHN 14:26 “But the **[Comforter] [parakletos], the Holy Spirit**, whom the Father will send in My name, [that one] will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.

Only Jesus Christ called the Holy Spirit a *Comforter* (four times in John 14:16, 26; 15:26; and 16:7). Look at the meanings of the Greek word *parakletos* that Jesus used for the Holy Spirit:

- One called near (to give help).
- An intercessor (one who entreats on behalf of another).
- A comforter.

Compare this to Paul’s description of the Holy Spirit:

ROMANS 8:26 Likewise **the Spirit** also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but **the Spirit makes intercession for us** with groanings which cannot be uttered.

Paul says the Holy Spirit is an intercessor so why is it translated *Comforter* in John 14:26? And why did Jesus Christ use the word *Comforter* in the three chapters of the book of John when everywhere else He referred to it as the Holy Spirit? There is a point being made here about the Holy Spirit that is hidden in the English translation.

The Greek word for *intercession* is *huperentugchano*. Like many Greek words, it is a concatenation of two primitive words: *huper* and *entugchano*. *Huper* means “superior to” or “more than” while *entugchano* means “confer with” or “to entreat”. Together, they mean much more than the English word *intercession* which is generally regarded in more of a legal and uncompassionate sense. Consider the four possible meanings when these two Greek words are combined:

- Superior conferring.
- Superior entreating.
- More than conferring.
- More than entreating.

From this there is a definite sense that whatever the Holy Spirit is doing is much more than just conferring or entreating. Sadly, the English word intercession is a rather stoic and weak explanation of what the Holy Spirit is doing. When a person intercedes, they are intervening on behalf of another but there is no depth of involvement. On the other hand, *entreat* expresses an emotional connection that is completely absent in *intercession* because *entreat* means to *ask earnestly* or *anxiously* on behalf of someone. So how can the Holy Spirit's function be "more than entreating"? Notice the next verse:

ROMANS 8:27 Now **He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is**, because He makes intercession for the saints according to *the will of God*.

The Holy Spirit does two things: it conveys to us the mind of Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 2:16; Philippians 2:5) and Jesus Christ is *searching* us by means of the Holy Spirit (Romans 8:27). Specifically, He is searching our *hearts*. The Holy Spirit not only conveys to us the mind of Jesus Christ but by it, Jesus Christ knows the innermost parts of our hearts. That helps explain why Paul said what he did in the next verse:

ROMANS 8:28 And we know that **all things work together for good** to those who love God, to those who are called according to *His [God's] purpose*.

Isaiah 53:5 says that Jesus Christ was "wounded for our transgressions [*sins*]". The Hebrew meaning of *wounded* is to *bore*. When He carried the sins of the world just before His death, it was more than holding a heavy burden. He fully experienced the terrible pain and unbearable suffering that sin produces and, as a result, knows our infirmities (Hebrews 4:15) in ways not possible for any man or woman. This is why Jesus referred to the Holy Spirit as the Comforter in John 14-16. Jesus knew He was going to experience human suffering like no man ever endured but He did it willingly so that Jesus Christ might truly know our sufferings.

Likewise, the Holy Spirit makes *huperentugchano* (intercession), which is not just making intercession but something much more; more than entreating. Through the Holy Spirit Jesus Christ *comforts* us as one who truly knows our pain and suffering because He not only carried the sins of the world but has an intimate understanding of grief (Isaiah 53:3). As our Savior, He continuously looks deep into our hearts through the Holy Spirit. As a man, He wept out of love and compassion when He saw Mary crying beside the grave of Lazarus. Imagine the depths of His agape and compassion now that He has personally experienced the sorrow, agony, misery, torment, and affliction that we bear. This may be what inspired Paul to write:

EPHESIANS 3:13-21 Therefore I ask that you do not lose heart at my tribulations for you, which is your glory. 14 For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, 15 from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, 16 that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, **to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, 17 that Christ may dwell in your hearts** through faith; that **you, being rooted and grounded in love, 18 may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and**

height– 19 to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. 20 Now **to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us**, 21 to Him *be* glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

Pentecost was the day the Holy Spirit was given but it is much more than the power of God. It connects us to Jesus Christ and Him to us. With it, Jesus Christ knows the depth of our sorrows and we know His agape love for us. When trials come, know that the tears in your heart are shed in heaven for Jesus Christ to see. Out of His mercy, He gives us strength and comforts us with an agape love that surpasses all human comprehension. Spending time with someone allows us to come to know the other person intimately and deeply. Imagine how well Jesus Christ knows us since He dwells in our hearts through the Holy Spirit. He will not let us faint nor suffer alone. Believe in these promises in the times of trials and let our Elder Brother, Savior, and King, help us through our burdens, trials and sufferings. He is there for us—always—never fainting, never forgetting, and never leaving us.

May God's grace and peace be upon you!

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