

## THE PROMISE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

John 14:15-31

Key verse 14:16,17

"And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever - the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you."

In the first part of John's Gospel chapter 14 verse 6, Jesus testified, "I am the way and the truth and the life; no one comes to the Father except through me." Throughout history, so many philosophers and thinkers wanted to know and say what is the way to God, to true freedom and to a fulfilled happy life for human beings. But they could not give a clear answer. Unfortunately, their hypotheses and theories only complicated the world of people's thoughts. Then, where can we find this path through which we can experience the absolute meaning of life, true freedom and the fulfilled happy life? John 14:6 gives us the clear answer: Jesus is the way. The answer is Jesus. In Him alone we may and can find the way; the way to the source of all existence, to true freedom and to a truly happy life. That's why Hebrews 10:20 says, "by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body."

In today's text, Jesus is talking about the nature of the Holy Spirit and His work. Jesus knew that his disciples were in uncertainty in light of his announcement of going to God. The Holy Spirit is first mentioned in today's text as "another Counselor" or "Spirit of truth." (16,17,26) The Holy Spirit will come as "another Counselor" or "Spirit of truth" to abide with His disciples always and everywhere, reminding them of all that Jesus had taught them. May God grant us today His wonderful grace to personally encounter the Holy Spirit as the Counselor, the Spirit of Truth. With the comfort of the Holy Spirit and peace of God, we can over-

come all kinds of temptations and attacks of Satan and be confident and steadfast and lead a victorious shepherd life according to the counsel of God.

### 1. He will give you another Counselor (15-24)

There was a tense atmosphere in Mark's upper room because of Jesus' announcement about His departure and because of the betrayal of Judas Iscariot. Jesus encouraged his disciples to believe in him: "Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me!"(1) He promised them that through faith they would do even greater works. Nevertheless, they could not imagine a life without Jesus. They lived so close and bonded with Jesus that they were now full of worry and fear because of their uncertain future.

Let's look at verse 16 again: "And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever-." Jesus promised His disciples that He would send them a Counselor who would be with them always and encourage them. However, Jesus realized that his disciples would not understand if he said to them that he would send a Holy Spirit. Therefore, Jesus first called the Holy Spirit a Counselor. The questions of Thomas and Philip showed how immature his disciples still were to receive the way of Jesus, including his departure. His disciples kept secretly demanding from him that Jesus should show great signs and wonders to the world according to

their imagination. They were not yet ready to hear Jesus' farewell message and believe him, the Son of God. They were still very fixed with their human thoughts and expectations towards Jesus. It is surprising that Jesus patiently carried these immature disciples and even promised to send them the Spirit of counsel. Jesus encouraged his disciples with the promise of the Holy Spirit that he would remain with them, unrestricted by time and space.

In history, there was no one who made such a wonderful promise to his disciples. It is said that Socrates is the father of philosophy. When he had to drink the cup of poison, he asked his disciples to sacrifice one more rooster to pay his debt. In this way Socrates conveyed a high moral standard, but he could not show the way to the true origin of life, to true freedom and to fulfilled eternal life, nor could he comfort his disciples. He himself was in despair because he did not know how his life would continue with the cup of death, like many popular philosophers and thinkers of all times. But Jesus was different and unique. He promised that he would send his disciples another Counselor who would accompany them in his place at all times and in all places, comforting and guiding them so that they would experience true blessedness in the Kingdom of God.

Jesus did not describe the Holy Spirit in a complicated way, as some theologians do, but referred to Him very understandably and simply as the Counselor. The term "another Counselor" was much more understandable for the disciples, because at that time they needed a best Counselor and best "Comforter". In such an uncertain situation, not only Jesus' disciples at that time, but also we would have needed a true Counselor and comforter. I know a young man of faith who, after his victorious Master's degree, struggled spiritually by faith to live as a man of faith in those sinful and apostate times. However, contrary to his expectation, he experienced an unexpected fiery attack from the devil just at that time that his decision of faith would be in vain. He often felt

very lonely and desolate. It seems as if no one in the world understood him and he was abandoned. Often he did not know what to do. Just like him, sometimes we don't know what to do in this or that situation. But we know that we are not alone. Sh. Peter Schweitzer knows that he is not alone. That is why he always remains confident, because the Holy Spirit dwells in us, comforting us by His Spirit and guiding us by His word of wisdom.

Let's look at verse 17: "the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you." Jesus described the Holy Spirit as the Spirit of truth because it is through the Word of God that one can receive true comfort. Jesus said that the world cannot receive the Spirit of truth because it neither understands nor receives God's plan of salvation through Jesus' shameful death on the cross and resurrection. Because the world does not take God's sovereign way of salvation through Jesus seriously, it can neither experience God's work nor receive the Spirit of comfort. The electronic waves of television are always around us, even though they are invisible. If you want to make a certain program visible and see the program content, you must tune in to the channel with the appropriate wavelength. In the same way, if we want to receive the Spirit of comfort and truth, we must tune our "inner channel" to the spiritual wavelength of God's sovereign counsel.

The disciples of Jesus who know Him, who have tuned their inner channel to the spiritual wavelength of God's sovereign counsel, can receive the Spirit of truth. He remains with them and will be with them for eternity. He would carefully counsel his disciples at all times and in all places as to what they would do. When the disciples would be in the midst of afflictions, he will comfort and encourage them through his word so that they can understand the unjust world and overcome everything that happens in their lives, that they can look at everything from God's perspective and receive

God's comfort. We will learn about one man's faith story today through M. Monica's talk and see how powerfully God's Spirit works in His people, even through a word from God: "It is finished!" Horatio Spafford was encouraged by the Holy Spirit and became strong in the grace of Jesus' forgiveness, so that even in a desperate situation he praised God and gave his life even more determinedly for the work of God.

Verse 18 says, "I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you." Jesus actually came to His disciples after His resurrection and after His ascension as the Holy Spirit. The Christians who are mocked by the world because of their faith seem to be an absolute minority in human terms. But in fact, they belong to the exceedingly great host of God. They are unshakable and invincible because of the presence of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit fights for them together with countless heavenly hosts and represents them to God with inexpressible groaning. He gives them His strength, wisdom, and all they need that they may ever be comforted and give their lives as holy stumps for God's work of salvation.

The father of the modern mission, William Carey, walked steadfastly to the end on the path of the mission in India, even though his beloved son became ill and died in India and his wife threatened him several times with a knife to return to England. He was always comforted and encouraged by the words of John 14:6: "I am the way and the truth and the life; no one comes to the Father except through me." He steadfastly fulfilled his mission and led numerous Indians to the truth of salvation and eternal life. The Counselor, the Spirit of truth, also encouraged us in the time of challenge in recent years through His word from Philippians 1:21, helping us to overcome all afflictions and increase in the work of the Lord.

The long-lasting pandemic period was a time of afflictions for us. During this time, not a few people of the world became fearful of the power of death. Many Christians are also frightened and live fearfully, alt-

hough they are born again to living hope. But there is a young woman through whom God is writing a history of faith in this pandemic time, and who has taken a great leap of faith to suffer cheerfully with Christ. She was baptized by the Holy Spirit and allowed her new life to be guided not by her ego, but by the Spirit of God. She started to study actively for school. Sh. Anja was very surprised that she sat at the table and studied almost all day and all week. Yes, it is really a miracle with her through the Counselor. The Counselor kept encouraging her through His Word and gave her His strength and wisdom to overcome her human limitations and temptations. She was allowed to turn in an excellent art subject paper on time last week. That was not all. She is always the very first among us to write an authentic testimony and is actively involved in the Discipleship Ministry by taking on various tasks. She gained the sense of priority in her life and also in the work of God. The Counselor will continue to encourage her through His Word to move forward in faith.

We thank the Lord for accompanying Sh. Christoph and encouraging him again and again through His word Ezekiel 37:10, with the broken shepherd heart to serve the students at the University of Koblenz through the Bible study and leading them to the online worship service. God will surely raise up an Abraham of faith and a Sarah of prayer among the young students in Koblenz this year through Sh. Christoph's one-on-one Bible study.

Apostle Paul says in 2 Cor. 1:3-5, "Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God. For just as the sufferings of Christ flow over into our lives, so also through Christ our comfort overflows." Let us warmly encourage one another out of love, making the pains and sufferings of others our own and praying warmly for one another with the spirit of comfort we ourselves have received. It is the vessel of love

that pleases our God. May God guide us to hold fast God's grace and God's word in this pandemic time, and with the spirit of consolation actively mobilize many students on campus that they may mature into the holy stumps for His revival work in Europe.

Let's look at verses 20 and 21: "On that day you will realize that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you. Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves me. He who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love him and show myself to him." Now a question remains, with whom does the Holy Spirit abide? What is the condition for us to receive the Holy Spirit? In verses 15, 21 and 23, Jesus repeatedly said that the only prerequisite is practical obedience to the Word of God, in short, practical love for Jesus. Jesus revealed His love to us through His divine humiliation and humility in a manger of an animal pen and through His substitutionary death on the cross for our sin. As Jesus showed his redeeming love in his practical obedience, our love for Jesus may be shown through obedience to the Word of God alone. By gathering knowledge of God and God's love without practical obedience, we only become gnostics. Our love for Jesus and for our neighbors may be exercised practically out of obedience. Then the Holy Spirit can remain in our lives and we will be comforted by Him. Love for Jesus and obedience to His Word are not separable. In the same way, the life of faith and obedience are not separable.

Earlier, John had competed to death with Peter to secure the position of prime minister in Jesus' messianic kingdom. But after Jesus' death and resurrection, he repented and learned to cooperate with Peter in love. Later, Apostle John encouraged the early Christians to abide in the love of God no matter what the cost. He said in 1 John 4:7-10, "Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. This is

how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins." With repentance and faith, Jesus' disciples formed the vessel of the Holy Spirit. When they obeyed Jesus' command with all their heart, they could be full of the Holy Spirit. Let us also with repentance and faith form an influential spiritual headquarters for world mission, like the first Christians.

Let's look at verse 22: "Then Judas (not Judas Iscariot) said, "But, Lord, why do you intend to show yourself to us and not to the world?" Judas could not understand that Jesus did not want to reveal Himself to the world, but only to His disciples. He could not put aside his false expectation of Jesus. According to his hidden desire, Jesus was to reveal himself publicly to all the world as the Messiah who would free his people from Roman rule. Judas loved Jesus very much, but he loved him with his false expectation. It was very difficult for him to take hold of Jesus' new commandment and allow himself to be changed. Therefore Jesus said to him, "If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him."(23) A person can be fundamentally changed from the essence if he lets the Holy Spirit dwell in his soul. The work of change is the work of the Holy Spirit. When we keep God's word out of love for Jesus and make the change of dominion, the Holy Spirit comes to us, takes up residence with us and works in us. If someone does not want to give up his own expectation, the Holy Spirit cannot come and dwell with him. Those who remain in disobedience because of their own human expectations cannot experience any power of change. Let us accept Jesus' spiritual reign and invite Him into our lives that He may work in us and change us. It should be the first priority for Jesus' disciples to make the spiritual change of lordship. The change of lordship is more important than anything else, such as accomplishing something through dili-

gent work. Life without the change of lordship is like the life of an orphan.

In the last forty years, I was privileged to serve the work of the World Campus Mission in Germany and Europe together with M. Sarah Chang and with many mission co-workers. It was the wonderful grace of God for us to experience the work of the Holy Spirit through this missionary work. But we experienced the unexpected painful challenge of the devil the year before last, that a house church broke up and so our mission work was suddenly discredited. It was a turbulent time. But God, through His word in Philippians 1:21, "For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain." helped us to give thanks in all things and to accept Jesus' lordship. The Counselor encouraged us to participate gratefully in Jesus' remaining suffering and to follow His leading. God changed us and strengthened us to suffer cheerfully with Christ and overcome all the attacks of Satan. By the power of the Holy Spirit, we were allowed to form a new vessel of love and cooperation under the leadership of Sh. Peter Schweitzer, so that we may now comfort young students on campus, Next Generation workers, and mission workers, whether through the Discipleship Evening, Leadership Seminar, Leadership Master Course, and especially through daily life fellowship. May God help us to faithfully follow our annual motto this year and experience the transforming power of God.

## 2. He will teach you everything (25-31)

Let us look at verses 25 and 26: "Convinced of this, I know that I will remain, and I will continue with all of you for your progress and joy in the faith, so that through my being with you again your joy in Christ Jesus will overflow on account of me." Here Jesus was speaking to His disciples that the Holy Spirit would teach them all things and remind them of the words of Jesus. This is really a great promise for the disciples who had strong expectations and were so forgetful. Jesus' disciples must have thought that without Jesus, they would have to start their lives all over again alone

like orphans and go through all difficulties and tribulations. But that was not the case. The Holy Spirit would teach them everything and remind them of all Jesus' words. The Holy Spirit actually made Apostle John know all the meaning and application of Jesus' teaching and reminded him of all Jesus' words so that he could write down the fourth gospel, the Gospel of John. With this promise, we may patiently serve our sheep and children with God's word and pass on God's word to them through Bible study, even though they do not seem to want to understand and absorb it.

For example, Peter ignored Jesus' words about his denial, claiming, "I will lay down my life for you." (John 13:37) But he did in fact deny his Lord Jesus three times, even in front of a little maid. Then the rooster crowed twice. It was at that moment that Peter remembered Jesus' words, "before the rooster crows, you will disown me three times!" (13:38b) It was no accident. The Holy Spirit reminded Peter of Jesus' words. Peter went outside and wept bitterly in repentance for his unfaithfulness. He then became a new man of God's hope and one of the most important spiritual leaders of the early churches, serving the redemptive work of God until the end of his life. He was no longer fearful. He encouraged the first Christians who were in fiery persecution that they might rejoice to suffer with Christ. (1 Peter 4:13) He himself later went to Rome with the gospel. When he was crucified upside down there, he was full of the peace and hope of God through the presence of the Holy Spirit.

Through the work of the Holy Spirit, Olaf too will surely one day realize all the meanings of Jesus' words and remember all that he received through Bible study with Sh. Jochen. He will work as an excellent Bible teacher like Apostle John and write down a great missionary history of Sh. Jochen. We were privileged to learn the profound meaning of ecclesiology through M. Peter's lecture and factual study on the Epistle to the Ephesians. We were allowed to see how powerfully the Holy Spirit worked in him, not

only using him as an eye doctor, but setting him up as one of the most influential Bible teachers and leaders for this generation. I saw this work of the Holy Spirit last year with the Gideon and Ezekiel teams and this year with Andrea and Ezra. Let's continue to mobilize campus students and next-generation workers through Bible study that they may experience the work of the Holy Spirit and mature into the outstanding Bible teachers for this generation.

Let's look at verse 27: "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid." The peace of God is quite different from the peace the world offers us. The peace of God is different from the instantaneous superficial peace that comes from the good situation or improved conditions. Rather, it is an inner and true peace that is independent of the external human conditions, situations and circumstances, but comes solely from the love relationship with Jesus. The peace that Jesus gives us is like an undercurrent of the deep sea. This peace from God endures everything, believes everything, tolerates everything despite the terrible consequence or loss of human relationships in the crisis time of life. The peace of God also overcomes own weakness and failure even repeated sins, because Jesus said on the cross: "It is finished!". The peace of God has a rock solid foundation in Jesus. The Holy Spirit works in us and fills us with such inner peace that overcomes the world. When we accept His spiritual rule from the love relationship with Jesus, we have such peace of God to overcome all devilish powers of the world. May God fill Noah with such unshakable peace of God and use him very preciously as one of the holy stumps for His world mission work.

Let's look at verses 28 and 29: "You heard me say, 'I am going away and I am coming back to you.' If you loved me, you would be glad that I am going to the Father, for the Father is greater than I. I have told you now before it happens, so that when it does happen you will believe." In these verses,

Jesus emphasizes that nothing prevents the counsel of God. Everything happens according to the will of God, even if for a short time the prince of the world seemed to have power over Jesus. This gives us the victory confidence that according to the counsel of God we may do His great work. Satan also has no power over us because Jesus' power is much stronger than the devil's power. Like our Lord Jesus, let us move on for the fulfillment of God's counsel with the confidence of victory: "Arise, and let us depart from here!"

In today's lesson we learned about the nature of the Holy Spirit and His work. Although Jesus is no longer visibly with us, He dwells in our souls through the Holy Spirit. He comforts us in all incidents and reminds us of His words so that we may live a victorious life according to His counsel. Through love for Jesus and obedience to the Word of God, let us prepare our hearts so that the Holy Spirit may dwell within us and guide us for His eternal work of salvation.