

## ***Another Helper***

Jesus gives great promises in our text for today – but to appreciate them even more – it’s helpful to understand what is going on when He says such things.

It’s Holy Week. Jesus and His Twelve disciples are gathered in the upper room to celebrate the Passover – and in the midst of that sacred meal – He institutes the Lord’s Supper. Take and eat ... take and drink ... for you ... for the forgiveness of sins.

Soon they will leave that upper room – heading to Gethsemane for prayer – and then, a betrayal, arrest, trials – and a crucifixion. Jesus is “going away” as we heard last week. He is going to His death and burial – and after His resurrection, an ascension – “going away,” ascending to the right hand of God the Father almighty.

That’s what lies ahead, and Jesus know it. His disciples do not. And so Jesus takes the time to teach them – to prepare them for His going away – to enable them to live in that time between His ascension in to heaven, and His return on the Last Day. And so, He speaks these words of our text.

“If you love me, you will keep my commandments.” This is not just a call to obey – but the word for “keep” has the influence of “treasure, guard” – “keep” in that sense – regard my commandments, my words, as a good and precious thing.

“And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper.” The word used here for “Helper” is Paraclete – literally, “one called to the side of another.” It was often used in a legal sense – a helper, a counselor, called to the side of the guilty one, in order to defend them.

When Jesus promises “another Helper” – He’s promising that the Father will send them the Holy Spirit – God the Holy Spirit will be called to their side – to help them. But, help them with what? Jesus lays that out for His disciples – once again, preparing them for His going away.

Just as Jesus promised, God the Father sends the Holy Spirit to all of His disciples – the Holy Spirit is called to your side, this very day – “to be with you forever.” Remember, Jesus is going away – to a crucifixion – and in His death, He gives up “the Spirit.”

From the crucified One the Holy Spirit proceeds – to do His work – to call, gather, enlighten, and sanctify the whole Christian Church on earth. God the Holy Spirit works through the Gospel – so that you may believe in this One who is crucified in your place, for your redemption, and for your salvation. From the Crucified Christ the Spirit proceeds – to gather the Church back to this Crucified and Risen One.

When the Resurrected Jesus appears to His disciples hiding behind locked doors – He breathes on them, saying, “Receive the Holy Spirit.” When Peter preaches his Pentecost sermon and the hearers are cut to the heart, the Gospel is proclaimed: “Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”

God the Holy Spirit, breathed out on you this day – proceeding from Christ’s Word and Sacraments – to help you – to gather you to Jesus in faith, trusting in His blood, His sacrifice – for you, for the forgiveness of sins.

That is why He is called “the Spirit of truth” – because He “truths” you. The world lies to you. The devil deceives you. Your own sinful flesh doesn’t treasure Christ’s Word. And so the Holy Spirit goes to work – helping you by showing the truth of your sin and the damnation it deserves – and helping you with the only hope you have, Jesus Christ the Crucified.

You are baptized into Christ – united to Him in His death and resurrection. You have received the gift of the Holy Spirit – and living in your baptism, you SEE and KNOW the Spirit of truth – “for He dwells with you and will be in you,” Jesus promises.

Indeed, as the Scripture says – “don’t you know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you?” God the Holy Spirit dwells with YOU. He lives IN you. Doing His work – helping you – pointing you, in faith, to Jesus. And, as Jesus promises, He will “be with you forever.”

For three years the disciples had been with Jesus, day in and day out – following Him, listening to Him – seeing His miraculous signs, and seeing the love and hatred of others directed at Him. But soon, they would see Him no more.

“I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you,” Jesus promises. Orphans are locked behind doors in fear. Orphans are left all alone, to fend for themselves. Orphans have to endure the brokenness of God’s “good” creation (a creation that He “still takes care of”).

But Jesus comes to them, just as He promised. And He will come to you as well. He has not left you as orphans. He will come again on the Last Day – and you will see Him with your own eyes. You will see with your eyes what you only see now by faith – and as the Holy Spirit teaches you – the Lord still takes care of you.

Indeed, He is the life-giving Spirit. “Because I live,” Jesus says, “you also will live.” God the Holy Spirit comes to you in these days – not just pointing you in faith to Jesus – but pouring out Jesus’ life into you. Just as Jesus “lives and reigns to all eternity” – so you live, because you have been given the life of Christ.

It is a life you now live, already. A life lived in communion with the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Dearly beloved, all of these promises of Jesus are yours – the promise of ANOTHER Helper – because Jesus Himself is your Helper.

God the Son has been called to your side – to defend you from the accusations of the evil one. Jesus at your side – to redeem you with His holy, precious blood. Jesus, with you forever – to help you and save you.

Christ is risen! He is risen, indeed! Alleluia!