

The Word Gives Peace

Bible Background • JOHN 14:15–31

Printed Text • JOHN 14:15–29 | Devotional Reading • JOHN 6:1–14

Aim for Change

By the end of this lesson, we will EXPLORE the relationship between God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit; BE ENCOURAGED that Jesus offers us peace in the Holy Spirit, and COMMIT to obeying Christ rather than the prince of darkness.

In Focus

James and Trina had been experiencing tension in their marriage ever since their youngest had left the nest. Trina seemed less joyful lately. James asked if everything was OK. Trina insisted that she was fine. One night, James awoke to discover that Trina wasn't in bed. He noticed a light in the hallway. He listened closer and could hear muffled sobbing coming from their guest room. James' heart sank. He wanted to help fix it, but he didn't know how.

On his drive to work the next day, James prayed for Trina. James prayed that the Holy Spirit would show him what to do. That afternoon, James remembered the deep feeling of love and appreciation he had for Trina on their wedding day. I wonder if she knows that? he thought. He knew what he needed to do.

That night at dinner, James told Trina how much he still appreciated and loved her. "I want you to know that I see you. I see how you've always made sure the kids know they can still come by to be loved on by their Mama. I see how you work so hard at your job. I was thinking just this afternoon how lovely you were on our wedding day, and I think you're just as lovely today."

Trina's eyes filled with tears. "I didn't know you felt that way." Trina explained she'd been sad because it seemed that James loved her less now. They talked about how they could show love toward each other more often.

How have you felt the Holy Spirit communicate with you?

Keep In Mind

"And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever." (John 14:16, KJV)

Words You Should Know

A. Comforter (John 14:16) parakleton (Gk.) — One of the names of the Holy Spirit; one who is called to another's aid

B. World (v. 17) kosmos (Gk.) — The entire universe; the inhabitants of the earth; the unsaved

Say It Correctly

Paraklete. PARE-uh-kleet.

Thaddaeus. THAD-ee-us.

KJV

John 14:15 If ye love me, keep my commandments.

16 And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever;

17 Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.

18 I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you.

19 Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me: because I live, ye shall live also.

20 At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you.

21 He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.

22 Judas saith unto him, not Iscariot, Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world?

23 Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.

24 He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings: and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me.

25 These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you.

26 But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.

27 Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.

28 Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away, and come again unto you. If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father: for my Father is greater than I.

29 And now I have told you before it come to pass, that, when it is come to pass, ye might believe.

NLT

John 14:15 "If you love me, obey my commandments.

16 And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, who will never leave you.

17 He is the Holy Spirit, who leads into all truth. The world cannot receive him, because it isn't looking for him and doesn't recognize him. But you know him, because he lives with you now and later will be in you.

18 No, I will not abandon you as orphans—I will come to you.

19 Soon the world will no longer see me, but you will see me. Since I live, you also will live.

20 When I am raised to life again, you will know that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you.

21 Those who accept my commandments and obey them are the ones who love me. And because they love me, my Father will love them. And I will love them and reveal myself to each of them."

22 Judas (not Judas Iscariot, but the other disciple with that name) said to him, "Lord, why are you going to reveal yourself only to us and not to the world at large?"

23 Jesus replied, "All who love me will do what I say. My Father will love them, and we will come and make our home with each of them.

24 Anyone who doesn't love me will not obey me. And remember, my words are not my own. What I am telling you is from the Father who sent me.

25 I am telling you these things now while I am still with you.

26 But when the Father sends the Advocate as my representative—that is, the Holy Spirit—he will teach you everything and will remind you of everything I have told you.

27 "I am leaving you with a gift—peace of mind and heart. And the peace I give is a gift the world cannot give. So don't be troubled or afraid.

28 Remember what I told you: I am going away, but I will come back to you again. If you really loved me, you would be happy that I am going to the Father, who is greater than I am.

29 I have told you these things before they happen so that when they do happen, you will believe.

The People, Places, and Times

The Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is called by many names: the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, the Spirit of Truth, the Comforter or Counselor, and simply, the Spirit. The Holy Spirit is God. He is not a part of God, an influence from God, or an agent of God. He is God. God is Spirit (John 4:24). The distinction between God and “His Spirit” is an artificial one. It is our way of talking about God in motion. Strictly speaking, God does not move. He is everywhere. Therefore, He cannot go anywhere because He is already there. God does not move, but God moves things as a magnet draws things to it. When God causes motion, we speak of this power to move things not simply as God, but as God’s Spirit. To distinguish between our human spirits and evil spirits, we speak of God as the Holy Spirit.

Background

The disciples were upset. Jesus’ disciples were becoming both sad and scared. They were sad because over the past two to three years, they had come to love Jesus. True, they had not understood many of the things He had said and done, but through His love for them and their constant close association, a bond of respect and affection had grown between them. They did not want to break a friendship they had come to enjoy. They were scared because this same friendship meant they had an intimate identification with Jesus. They felt that if the authorities were after Jesus, the disciples’ lives were also in danger. They were scared also because Jesus’ death would mean they would be left alone in an extremely hostile environment. It was to these sad and scared disciples that Jesus reaffirmed the active, powerful presence of God. Undoubtedly, the disciples felt better after Jesus’ words of assurance (16:29, 30).

At-A-Glance

1. The Counselor as Teacher (John 14:15–20)
2. The Counselor as Prosecutor (vv. 21–24)
3. The Counselor as Gift (vv. 25–29)

In Depth

1. The Counselor as Teacher (John 14:15–20) Jesus tells His disciples that the Counselor would reveal the truth about Jesus. Jesus was painfully aware that most of His contemporaries did not know who He truly was. Despite Peter’s confession, not even His disciples really knew Him (John 14:7–12, 20). One denied Him. Another betrayed Him, and all the others ran and hid when He needed them most. But Jesus told them that after a while, they would know Him because the Counselor would throw the spotlight on Him and reveal to them who He really was.

They would know the deep beauty of His words and deeds and begin to understand the universal significance of His life and teachings. They would know Him because God, the Holy Spirit, would make the real Jesus stand out in their experiences (John 14:20; 16:14, 15).

How can we let the Holy Spirit guide us?

2. The Counselor as Prosecutor (vv. 21–24)

Another of the Counselor's ministries was to convince people that Jesus was right and they were wrong. The Holy Spirit convinces unbelievers that: (1) Jesus was right about His Messianic claims, (2) they had been wrong in rejecting Him, and (3) if, like Satan, they deliberately chose to continue doing wrong in spite of their knowledge of right, then they would share Satan's fate (John 16:8-11).

God has been pictured as having two arms— one of love and the other of justice. Those who refuse the forgiveness and security of His arm of love are doomed to feel the crush of His arm of justice. The Counselor has both positive and negative ministries. For the believer, He is an Advocate; for those who refuse to believe, He is a Prosecutor.

What rewards have you experienced from keeping God's commandments?

3. The Counselor as Gift (vv. 25–29)

Jesus assures His disciples that the Holy Spirit will work as an Advocate for them, by teaching them and reminding them of Jesus' teaching. Not only will the Holy Spirit help the disciples remember all that happened in Jesus' ministry over the past three years, but the Spirit will also teach so that the disciples can more fully understand what they have seen.

This understanding grants them peace. This is a peace from God, and so it will always be available. Peace from the world comes and goes, but since God has sent the Holy Spirit to be with His followers all the time, they may have a peace that lasts.

How can we enjoy the Holy Spirit as our constant companion?

Search the Scriptures

1. What kind of warning did Jesus give His disciples before He left them (John 14:18–20)?
2. What else did Jesus promise His disciples before He left them (v. 27)?

Discuss the Meaning

1. Is the Holy Spirit's work confined only to the Church and the lives of believers, or is the Holy Spirit at work in the general society? How can we tell where the Holy Spirit is at work in the world?
2. The tearing down of the Berlin Wall, the collapse of Soviet Communism, and the ending of the "cold war"—were these events the work of the Holy Spirit in the world, or did these events result from the "strength of democracy," the military might of the United States, and/or an unusual stream of good luck?

Liberating Lesson

Many today will insist that we can never know certain things, especially events from long ago history. They say the Bible cannot be trusted to be an accurate account of Jesus' ministry.

As we learned in this week's lesson, however, Christians do not rely solely on the abilities of flawed humans to retain knowledge of God's Incarnation. Jesus assures the disciples that the Holy Spirit will help them remember all that happened. So when the disciples recorded Jesus' message, even though it was decades later, we can trust they did so with faithfulness according to the Spirit's guidance.

Believers firmly trust the vital teachings of the church were kept unchanged throughout history because of the work of the Spirit.

Application for Activation

Look around this week in your community and find out where the Holy Spirit is at work empowering people to do the work of Jesus (See Luke 4:18; Matthew 25:34–40). Ask the Lord for a way you can give your support to this group either by giving time, money, or other tangible resources (not just prayer). Share your experience in class next week.

Follow the Spirit

What God wants me to do:

Remember Your Thoughts

Special insights I have learned:

More Light on the Text

John 14:15–29

This section is a continuation of the discourse at the Passover table after the washing of the disciples' feet (chapter 13) and before their departure to the garden (14:31). In this chapter, Jesus gives them words of comfort and of hope for the future. He reveals to them God's plan for them after He is gone to the Father. These revelations include: the plan of eternal life (vv. 1–7), the true revelation of God (vv. 8–11), the unlimited power for the disciples (vv. 12–14), and revelation and promise of the coming of another Comforter, the Holy Spirit, who will remain with them forever. The following verses under discussion constitute an important and fundamental doctrine in the Christian Church—the gift, purpose, and work of the Holy Spirit.

15 If ye love me, keep my commandments.

Jesus begins this segment of the discourse with a condition using the word "if " and ends with a command "keep my commandments." By using the word "if," does Jesus doubt their love for Him and, therefore, demand that they prove it by keeping His commandment? On the other hand, does He equate their love for Him with their keeping His commandment?

If the former is right, then the statement can be restated thus: "If you really [or, say you] love me then you [should] keep my commandments." If the latter is a better rendering, then it can be reworded thus, "Since you love [or because you love me], keep my commandments" (cf. Luke 11:13). Whichever is the case, Jesus is saying that the proof of their love for Him is the keeping of His commandment. He would repeat this in various ways both in this chapter (vv. 21, 23) and in several other passages (e.g.

15:10). John reiterates this also in his first epistle (1 John 5:3). It is a simple encapsulation of the Gospel. All that Jesus has been teaching them is summed up in this one commandment of love.

16 And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever;

The promise that follows seems to be directly linked with the preceding verse and the theme of loving obedience. It seems that His praying to the Father and the sending of the Comforter are conditional upon the apostles' relationship with Him, evidenced by keeping His commandment. This relationship would motivate him to pray to the Father on their behalf, and "he shall give you another Comforter."

The subject of the prayer is no doubt clear. That is, the sending of another Comforter. The Greek word translated "Comforter" (Gk. *parakletos*) has the idea of one called alongside to help. It has the idea of one who stands by another and exhorts or encourages. It is also translated "Advocate" (NLT) meaning one called by someone, particularly in a law court to plead one's case (1 John 2:1), not as a professional pleader but as a friend.

Here is the first of five times the function and activities of the Holy Spirit are mentioned in the discourse (also in 14:25–26; 15:26–27; 16:5–11; 16:12–15). The idea here is that since Jesus is about to leave them, He is going to plead or intercede on their behalf to the Father to send another Helper or Comforter who will "abide with [them] for ever." The duration of the presence of the Comforter on earth with the disciples and believers is not temporary as in Jesus' case, but permanent—forever.

We see here a picture of a discouraged group of people who are about to lose their Master through death, and their Master (Jesus) comes to encourage them. They are not going to be alone, He encourages them. He assures them that it is to their advantage that He depart so that the Holy Spirit would come and be with them permanently (16:7).

17 Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.

This Paraclete is called "the Spirit of truth." This defines one of the functions of the Holy Spirit. The word "Spirit" used here translates the Greek *pneuma* (*puh-NEW-mah*), which means literally wind, the same word Jesus used to describe to Nicodemus the function of the Spirit in conversion (John 3:8).

Truth is one of the characteristics of the Holy Spirit. Truth is a recurrent theme in the Gospel of John (1:17). Jesus says earlier in this chapter that He is "the way, the truth, and the life" (14:6; cf. 8:32–36). From these and other passages, we learn that Christ is the embodiment of truth. Here the Spirit shares the same nature with Christ, and He communicates truth (15:26; 16:13), testifying about Christ.

Three times Jesus referred to the Holy Spirit as the Spirit of Truth (14:17; 15:26; 16:13). Perhaps this can be thought of as the Counselor's educative function. Jesus told His disciples many things that they did not understand. One of the Spirit's tasks was to bring these things back to their remembrance and help them understand their meaning (John 14:26; 16:4).

Jesus says the world (Gk. *kosmos*, *koss- MOSS*) cannot receive this Spirit. Although this word can refer to the entire universe, or to all the inhabitants of earth, here, context implies Jesus means the unsaved. He gives two reasons they cannot receive Him. Firstly, they do not see Him because they

are spiritually blind (cf. 2 Corinthians 4:4). Secondly, they do not know Him because they refuse to believe or understand Him (cf. 1 Corinthians 2:14).

Talking about the sinful nature of the world, Christ says they prefer darkness rather than light (John 3:19), and calls them children of the devil who is a liar, for they desire to do their father's will (John 8:44). Only those who believe in the Gospel of Christ are able to receive and know the Spirit of truth (1 John 4:6). Peter says it is the work of faith (1 Peter 1:8; cf. John 20:29). In contrast to the world, the disciples know the Spirit or have experienced Him because He dwells in them, Jesus says. They have this privilege of knowing Him because of their belief and relationship with Christ.

The next point of interest in this verse is the use of the present and the future tenses, "for he lives with you and will be in you." Some interpret this as a continuation of the presence or indwelling of the Holy Spirit in the believer. This agrees with the previous verse: "that He may abide with you for ever." Another interpretation is that while the Spirit dwells with them in a measure now, they would receive the Spirit in greater measure when He comes into their lives in His fullness at the baptism of the Holy Spirit (John 3:34; cf. John 1:31–33). It is believed that this was fulfilled on the day of Pentecost in Acts.

18 I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you.

19 Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me: because I live, ye shall live also.

Jesus then assures His disciples of His continued presence. The word translated here "comfortless" is the Greek orphanos (or-FON-ocē) from which we derive its English equivalent, orphan. Other renderings of this word include desolate or helpless. The next use of the word is found in James 1:27, where it is rendered fatherless.

It is common in African tradition, for example, to refer to an apprentice as the child of his master. The apprentice usually lives with the master's family and is generally regarded as part of the family. On many occasions, the apprentice shares in the inheritance of his master if his master dies while he is serving him. It is also believed that such happened in the Jewish tradition of Jesus' time. The disciples of a particular teacher were called his children, and if he died, they were considered orphans. Jesus has called His disciples children (John 13:33), and here He promises them that He will not leave them as orphans.

Jesus promises them further saying, "I will come to you." He could be referring to His immediate appearance after His resurrection, which happens approximately three days after this speech (John 20; Acts 1:3) On the other hand, it is also possible that He is talking about His coming in the person of the Holy Spirit, therefore carrying forward the same train of thought of verses 16 and 17. Or, again, He might be talking about His Second Coming, a thought which He started with in this chapter (vv. 1–3). All three are possible and all three might be inclusive in His thought.

20 At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you.

21 He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.

Jesus explains how after He appears to the disciples again—whether after the Resurrection, in the Person of the Holy Spirit, or at the Second Coming—the disciples will enjoy unity with Christ, and therefore unity with the Father. They will all share in the love and the presence of the Lord. To join in

this great communion among the Persons of the Trinity, one need only keep Jesus' commandments (cf. v. 15). Again keeping the commandments is the sign and assurance that the disciples truly love Jesus. Since those commands from Jesus are ultimately from the Father, obeying them shows love for the Father too. Jesus also reciprocates the love shown Him by loving His disciples, and whomever He loves, the Father also loves.

22 Judas saith unto him, not Iscariot, Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world?

23 Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.

John never gives a complete list of Jesus' disciples. These lists are instead in Matthew, Mark, and Luke. While Matthew and Mark list a disciple named Thaddaeus (Matthew 10:3; Mark 3:18), Luke's list replaces Thaddeus with "Judas" who is related to James (Luke 6:16; Acts 1:13). We do not know if that is James the son of Zebedee, or James the son of Alpheus, or another James altogether. We also do not know precisely how Judas and James are related. The Greek is unclear and could mean Judas is James' son or his brother. Other translations write Judas' name as Jude so as to avoid confusion with Judas Iscariot (as John himself does in this verse). The name is based on the Hebrew name Judah, but since Greek does not have an "h" letter as Hebrew does, most Hebrew names ending in "h" are transliterated into Greek with an "s" at the end instead. This is the only action specifically ascribed to this Judas in John or Luke, and neither Matthew nor Mark mention Thaddaeus aside from their disciple lists.

He asks why Jesus only shows Himself as Messiah to His disciples but not just to everyone. God truly wishes that all would come to salvation, so Judas asks why He does not make it easier for everyone. Jesus' answer is not a direct explanation to Judas' query, but answers the question turned on its head. Instead of saying why some do not truly see and understand Jesus, He explains why some do see and understand Him. The reason is their love and obedience to Christ. Those who do this gain the presence of Christ and the Father.

The implication is that those who do not see Jesus' manifestation are those who do not follow Him or love Him anyway. It is all bundled up in a cycle. There are those who love God, who obey Him, and commune with Him; and there are those who do not love God, do not obey His commands, and do not enjoy His presence. There are only these camps and nothing in between or partially given.

24 He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings: and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me.

25 These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you.

Jesus goes back to the love motif again. Stating it negatively (cf. v. 15), Jesus reinforces the truth about loving Him and keeping His sayings (Gk. logos) or teaching. He says anyone who does not love Him cannot keep His teaching. This is akin to verse 17, where we learned that the world cannot receive the Holy Spirit because they do not know Him.

Jesus seems to be talking about rejection. In essence, he who rejects Christ will not even listen to His teachings, and in effect also rejects His Father since His teachings are the Father's (Luke 10:16; John 3:36; 13:20). Jesus refuses to take glory to Himself and says, "for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you" (John 15:15). The rejection of Christ and His teachings is, therefore, tantamount to rejection of God Himself.

“These things... spoken” include all Jesus’ teachings. It is not limited to His immediate sayings, but to all His teachings from the beginning of His ministry. This verse serves as a transition to the next, which deals more with the Holy Spirit and His work. It goes with the tone with which He started the discourse, and that is comforting and encouraging in view of His imminent departure from them.

26 But the comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.

The conjunction “but” at the beginning of this verse clarifies the point of the previous verse. There Jesus seems to say, “Although I have been teaching you in person and will soon be leaving you, you are not losing anything, since you are about to receive the Comforter (Gk. *parakletos*), the Holy Spirit, whose work includes bringing to your remembrance all my teachings.” Here Christ mentions both the office and name of the Holy Spirit, both of which we have come across in the earlier verses of the chapter (vv. 16–18).

In verse 17, Jesus refers to Him as the Spirit of truth, but here He calls Him the Holy Spirit, intentionally distinguishing Him from any other spirit. As we have already noted in verse 16, the Holy Spirit is from the Father. The new thing here is that Jesus is the medium through (“in my name”) whom the Holy Spirit will be sent.

The function of the Holy Spirit is to comfort, encourage, or communicate the truth. He also teaches. He will both teach and remind them of the teachings of Jesus. The work of the Holy Spirit is referred to here again in order to give the disciples confidence and encouragement to face Jesus’ imminent departure. The Holy Spirit would have a dual function. He would both aid the disciples by recalling all that Jesus has taught them, and teach them Himself – which would include future events (cf. 16:13).

27 Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.

28 Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away, and come again unto you. If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father: for my Father is greater than I.

29 And now I have told you before it come to pass, that, when it is come to pass, ye might believe.

Lastly, Jesus promises the disciples peace, His own peace, which will calm their hearts and fears. This peace is given differently than the world gives, that is, it is given completely, freely, and irrevocably. God’s peace never ends, because Jesus’ peace relies on the completed facts of Jesus’ saving sacrifice and life-giving resurrection.

Jesus assures the disciples that even though they are sad there is reason for them to be happy. Jesus is going to the Father, who is full of glory even greater than Jesus’. Later Paul would similarly long for heaven, since it is “far better” (Philippians 1:23). This knowledge gives us hope, just as Jesus’ departure gives us peace. Knowing that those who die in the Lord go to be with the Father, we do not have to mourn “as others which have no hope” (1 Thessalonians 4:13).

As we close this lesson (though Jesus’ lesson to His disciples continues), Jesus explains that this promise of His return and the Spirit’s coming was given so they will be even more sure of Jesus’ identity when the Spirit does come. They knew that the test of a prophet was if his predictions always came true. Those who speak with the power of our omnipotent God will never prophesy incorrectly. The more Jesus told His disciples about the future, and the more they looked for the fulfillment of

those words, the more sure they would become that Jesus is who He always claimed to be: the Son of God who comes to save the world.

Daily Bible Readings

MONDAY

Seek Peace and Pursue It
(Psalm 34:4-14)

TUESDAY

Rest for the Weary
(Matthew 11:25-30)

WEDNESDAY

Jesus Has Conquered the World
(John 16:23-27, 32-33)

THURSDAY

Peace for the Upright
(Psalm 119:161-176)

FRIDAY

God's Unmoveable Covenant of Peace
(Isaiah 54:6-10)

SATURDAY

Don't Let Your Hearts Be Troubled
(John 14:1-4)

SUNDAY

Peace to the Disciples
(John 14:15-29)