

LIFE IN HIS NAME
HELP FOR THE HELPERS: PART 2
John 14:15-31

Let's pray. Father, we come to this moment to open the scripture and we ask for the help of your Holy Spirit. As we look at the scripture that teaches us about the Holy Spirit, we pray for the ministry of the Spirit in our lives this morning, in Jesus' name. Amen.

John Chapter 14, verses 15 through 31. This is part 2 of a message that we began last week. I'd like to begin by reading verses 15 through 18. Jesus is speaking:

If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, 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. I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.

Today is a special day. In fact, I got up this morning and said, "It's Mothers' Day -- I'm going to put on a suit." This is one of my favorite holidays. God has blessed me with remarkable women in my life. My mother was a godly, amazing woman, two phenomenal grandmothers, my own wife, the mother of our children – just amazing. And it is a joy today for us to honor moms. This is a very appropriate message, and I have entitled this specific part of a two-part message: "Help for the Helpers."

I am calling attention to the fact that moms – you are helpers. You give your life to help your children. In fact, you spend your entire life helping them to be ready for life and to be successful in life. You deny yourself and sacrifice yourself to give to them. And one of the very cruel parts of your job description is that they grow up, and if you're successful they leave you. If you're not successful they don't leave you. But either way, it's cruel.

That child, who becomes an emerging adult, going off to work, or to get married, or to go to school, or whatever is next – the reality (Mom, I think you probably have figured this out) is they have no idea just how much you have done and sacrificed for them. I'm not saying they're completely unaware and they're not grateful, but many times we don't fully appreciate our moms until we grow up and have children. Then the light comes on, right?

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God really calls all of us as Christians to live our lives that way. Moms, you are an amazing example of what a Christian is. That's the reality. Now, your calling is distinct. It's unique. You have God-given anointing, power, responsibility, authority from the Lord. Your position is unique, but what you do is so Christian.

We are called to serve. We are called to give our lives to bless other people, and we have the Holy Spirit to help us do that. In fact, moms, how do you fulfill the call of God on your life, and how do you deal with the ups and downs, the emotional disappointments, the concern, the fear? How do you deal with giving your life to someone who may not fully understand how much you love them and care for them and the sacrifice you've made for them?

In some cases, the return never fully comes to you in this life. How do you deal with those ups and downs and the difficulties and the challenges and the fact that this is not just a job for you. Your heart goes out with these kids. I have such good news for you: The Holy Spirit is in you to help you in every situation – to give you wisdom, to give you peace, to give you joy, to give you strength – to help you fulfill the calling of God on your life to be a mom.

In this passage Jesus is about to go to the cross, just a few hours away. This is his last conversation, the last moment of teaching with his apostles, and he is telling them: "I'm going to give you another Helper. I'm going to give you one like me, but this Helper will not just be with you, he will be in you, and the Holy Spirit is going to help you forever."

We looked at the first two points of this last week.

- I. The Holy Spirit helps us to receive indwelling truth.
- II. The Holy Spirit helps us to experience belonging.

Today we continue that outline and add a third. But before I give you this third, let me just say this as a very, I think, helpful, important point. You know, there are a lot of people, even a lot of people in various churches all over the place who don't really know God. Going to church alone will not bring you into a relationship with God.

In the verses that we began with this morning, Jesus tells us that the Holy Spirit comes into us, and that he is the Spirit of truth, and he brings us into relationship with the Father. For various reasons, many times people are afraid of the Holy Spirit, or they don't understand the importance of the

work of the Holy Spirit, or they've had bad teaching or bad experiences, and they don't really know God in the way that God wants us to know him.

Jesus tells us something kind of difficult to hear, maybe. He says the world doesn't know him, but he will be with you and in you, leading you into truth, leading you into a relationship with the Father, leading you into a sense of belonging as a child of God.

So we come to our third point today.

III. The Holy Spirit helps us overflow with God's love.

Let's jump in and look at verses 19-24. Verse 19: "Yet a little while and the world will see me no more, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live. In that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you." Can you imagine being one of the apostles? Jesus is talking about dying. He's talking about raising. And then he tells you: "Okay, don't worry. Because I live, you'll live. In a little while the world won't see me, but you'll see me. I'm in the Father. The Father is in me. I'm in you." I think the apostles are standing there: "What in the world is he talking about?"

He is describing the impact of the cross and the empty tomb, and then the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit, all before it happens. In fact, he tells them: "I'm telling you this before it happens so that when it happens you'll say, 'Ah! That's what Jesus was talking about, and this is the plan of God!'" Jesus is trying to explain something important about the very nature of God. Let's read on. As we read, it will become clearer. Verse 21: "Whoever has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me. And he who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and manifest myself to him."

We are just moving through the passage. Let me explain really quickly. We talked about how obedience works in the Christian life last week. If you missed that message, I encourage you to go back and listen to it, because it's important. But let me just say this to help us: God loves us first. That's taught clearly in 1 John 4. God's love initiates. We respond, loving God back, and one of the main ways that we express that is through obedience. God loves us. We love him back. And then God gives us this opportunity, this gift of grace. We need to express our love to God in terms of obedience.

Don't get caught into thinking that all the commands are just troublesome and bad. Just because we can't be saved by them doesn't mean they're not a gift of God's grace. You cannot be brought

into relationship with God by keeping the commandments, because you will not be able to keep them perfectly. Jesus offers himself as a sacrifice. The Father gives the Son to pay for our sin. We are brought into relationship. It's all God's love. It's all a gift. We belong. We are a part of the family of God. We want to love him back and we express that in obedience.

So, remember this: Don't try to reverse that order. Don't try to say, "Okay, if I obey, then I'll be expressing love to God, then he'll love me," because it won't work. You won't be able to keep God's commands without the forgiveness that comes in Jesus and the help of the Helper.

Let's continue in verse 22:

Judas (not Iscariot) said to him, "Lord, how is it that you will manifest yourself to us, and not to the world?" Jesus answered him, "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. Whoever does not love me does not keep my words. And the word that you hear is not mine but the Father's who sent me.

These are some deep waters theologically. We are taught in this whole section of scripture about the Trinity: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. God is one, in three persons. Each person is fully God. We don't say, "Well, the Son is a third of God and the Holy Spirit is a third of God." No, each is fully God. God is one, in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. There is a perfect unity in the Godhead -- a oneness, and Trinitarian.

Why is this important? Because the temptation is to read this and say, "Oh, I don't know that I really get this. This is just deep doctrine." It's very, very important for you to understand, for me to understand, because what is being established here is not just the nature of God, but that God is love. You see, if God is eternal... You are saying, "Oh, the waters are getting deeper!" No, no. Stay with me. This is very helpful. God is love, and if God is eternal, and he's just one, not triune, then he has no one to love. But the perfect love of the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit is experienced in eternity past. So because God is triune, we can say that God in his nature is love. When he creates us, he does not create us because he's lonely or in need. He creates us out of his love and the outpouring of his infinite love.

C. S. Lewis calls this the dance of God. The Son revolves around the Father, obeying the Father, doing the will of the Father. The Spirit revolves around the Son and the Father, making them known. The Father delights in making the Son known. Instead of the self-orientation that we usually know

in terms of our own understanding of how relationships work – “I’d like you to dance around me” – we see the dance of God in the love of God manifested in the Trinity. You got that?

Now, here’s what’s amazing in this passage. The Holy Spirit will live in you and bring you into that dance, to experience that love. This is amazing, isn’t it?! Jesus is saying, “Listen, I know you’re broken up! You’re full of fear. You are in turmoil. It’s okay. I’m going to the Father and I’m going to give you the Spirit and you’re going to be brought into our oneness, into our love, so that you will overflow with the love of God.” Yeah, that’s worth giving God praise for and clapping.

The word “love” appears eight times here in these verses. Just a couple of supporting references: 1 John 4:8-10, just so you get this order right, in that it’s God’s love first.

Anyone who does not love does not know God, because (here is this definition) God is love. In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation (to be the sacrifice – judgment-satisfying sacrifice) for our sins.

1 John 4:19: “We love because God first loved us.” God gives the Son. We are forgiven. It’s all God’s grace. We respond in faith. Now, the promise is that we will experience the manifestation of God in us by the Spirit. That’s pretty spectacular, isn’t it? That’s a magnificent experience.

One more verse – Romans 5:5. This really summarizes what we are trying to get in this particular point. “...hope does not put us to shame,” Paul writes, “because God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.” The Holy Spirit is given to us and the love of God is poured out in our hearts. We experience the love of the Father. So, #3 is “We experience God’s love.” Let’s go to point #4:

IV. The Holy Spirit helps us to remember, learn about, and follow Jesus.

Verses 25 and 26: “These things I have spoken to you while I am still with you. 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.” Jesus is saying to the apostles: “Here is the first and most obvious application. I’m going to go and you’re going to write half of the New Testament. You’re going to write most of the New Testament. And it’s okay because I’m going to give you the Spirit and he’s going to help you remember all that’s happened. He’s going to help you order it

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correctly in your life. He's going to help you and inspire you so that the New Testament will be written.

That means, for us, that we rely heavily upon the scriptures for our understanding of Jesus and who he is, and he shows us the Father. But the good news for you and me is that when we open the scriptures, we have the Holy Spirit living within us to help us! I don't know about you, but I need help remembering. I need help getting it all in the right order. I need help following Jesus.

This is an indication of something that's going to become clearer as we move through these chapters. God calls us to be a part of the family, to say, "You are a son. You are a daughter. You belong. I love you. Now, I've got work for you to do. Follow me and learn about me and grow in me so that you'll be a part of the dance. You'll learn that dance, where you're not asking everyone to revolve around you, but you are delighting in who God is and in his love and you are living in his sufficiency."

Moms, I want to encourage you today that when you experience the indwelling of the Spirit of God, there really is an outpouring of God's love into your heart. Think about this. We have recorded twice in scripture the Father speaking to the Son. We are told that Jesus would spend all night in prayer. He would go away and just stay up all night and pray. No doubt, there were some amazing, wonderful things said in those times of prayer. But only twice are we told that the Father spoke out loud to the Son, and about the Son. He said basically the same thing twice, once at his baptism and once at his ascension. These three things: "I love you. You are my son, you belong. And I'm pleased with you."

When the Holy Spirit fills your life, when the Spirit of truth comes in and says, "Hey, you've got a relational problem with God -- you've sinned, but here's the free gift of salvation -- Jesus has paid for your sin," and you open up your heart and say "Yes! I agree; I believe that," you experience the cleansing, the removal of guilt and shame of anything you've done, and you are brought into that sense of belonging. And the Holy Spirit begins to just flood your heart with this truth: I love you. Mom, this is God's word to you: I love you. You are mine. I am pleased with you. Over and over, God speaks that reality.

So parents, let's learn from God as we parent our children. Your children need to hear these three things from you: "I love you. You belong. And I am pleased with you." Now, this is a challenge for us, parents, because we are not always pleased. The danger is, I'll say, "I love you. You're my son.

You're my daughter. You'll always be my son or daughter." But if I communicate displeasure so loud, so long, I begin to unravel #1 and #2. So then no matter how much I say, "I love you," no matter how much I say, "You belong and you will always belong," there is a temptation for them to say: "I'm not really loved. You don't really like who I am."

So we have a challenge, parents, of having imperfect children, and we are imperfect. Here is what helps us: We learn to see our children in God, in Christ. So we will sometimes say, "I'm not happy with this behavior, but I see God in you and I see what God wants to do in you. And you are going to hear that verbally and feel that physically in my embrace, enough to know that I'm full of faith for who you are and who you are going to become." What helps us to do that, moms, is the security that is found when we really understand: "I belong and I'm loved by the Father." If we don't have that clearly in our hearts, fear will get the best of us with our children. Are you with me? Let's go to point 5 and we'll see it demonstrated.

V. The Holy Spirit helps us receive fear-destroying peace.

Verse 27: "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid." Do you realize that Jesus is saying to them right before he goes to the cross, right before they get chased all over Jerusalem, right before Peter denies Jesus three times, right before Judas shows up and kisses him and betrays him: "It's okay! Don't be afraid! I'm giving you peace and wholeness, so powerful it just destroys fear."

So parents, when I understand my belonging, my security is in God, I am then free to love my children in an extraordinary way. It really changes the dynamic of that relationship. And God wants his Holy Spirit to be in me, helping me to follow, helping me to live this courageous life of living for other people, so that I give him everything.

You know, I've found in life that there are three areas that I have to continually give over to God. Do you know what they are? Money, time, and children -- and children cost a lot of money and time, so they all go together. God says, "Brian, I've saved you. I've forgiven you. You belong. You're my son. I'm pleased with you. And I've got a journey for you. Everything you have belongs to me. Your money is not your money. Your money is my money. Trust me with my money." Hmmm. Right?

God says, "Listen, I want you to live an extravagant, generous life." "Oh yes, Lord, I know, but I've got a lot of responsibilities. I'm going to run out!" God says, "I don't run out." Let me speak to the

Christian for a moment. Everything that God gives us that we take and say, “God, I’m giving it back to you,” he just blesses.

It’s hard to do that with money. It’s also hard to do that with time, isn’t it? “Oh, but I won’t get to do this and this and this.” God says, “Just trust me. Trust me. Lay it down.” Well, it’s really tough to do with children, isn’t it? Yeah, that’s maybe the hardest test for us. But God comes to you and says, “You know what? Those children can’t be God in your life. Trust me. I’ll do more with your children than you can do with your children. Give them to me.”

Just recently I had an experience where one of my sons needed something. It was beyond my control. It had to do with money and other things that were beyond my control. I was thinking, “Lord, if I just had more -- more this and more that -- and I could do something.” Here was the concern I had. I had this fear that this son was going to be disappointed and hurt, and you just don’t want to see your kids go through that. How will they respond? Will they be tempted? Will they be discouraged? Will they get upset at God?

You know, there was this moment of surrender where you have to say, “Okay, God, he belongs to you. You are God, and if this is what you order for his life, I’ve got to help him accept that. I’ve got to help him get faith around it.”

Dads, moms, it’s hard to say no to our kids and it’s difficult not to rescue our kids when God says no. But we want God to be God in their lives, and what frees us to do that is when the Spirit of God fills us, and we are going to him and he just says, “No, follow me.” Pray, ask, believe, do what you can, but you know when you are knocking down a door that God has shut, leave it shut, because you won’t like what’s on the other side of that door.

Guys, look at #6 because I need to lift your spirits a little bit before we close this message.

VI. The Holy Spirit helps us to live in joy.

In verses 28-31 this is what he says: “You heard me say to you, ‘I am going away, and I will come to you.’ If you loved me, you would have rejoiced, because I am going to the Father...” We now see this on the other end. We see the success of the cross. Sin is conquered. Death is conquered. Jesus is raised from the dead. Fifty days later he gives the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is poured out – marvelous fulfillment. Now the Helper lives within us and we are brought into a place of joy. But don’t forget this moment. This is right before everything seems to fall apart. Jesus is saying to you:

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“Trust in me, and I will give you the Spirit, and you will live a life of joy, even when you have tremendous difficulty, tremendous trial.”

Ladies, the book we are giving you is a wonderful explanation of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit. It's very practical and very inspirational, with a lot of application. I thought, “Boy, this would be a great gift to encourage moms.” It was an expensive book and I actually contacted the publisher and said, “We want to give this away.” And David C. Cook Publishing was so generous in helping us get these at an affordable rate to make it possible. It was extraordinary generosity on their part, so much so that I'm probably not even supposed to tell you that, because it might get them in trouble. So, listen, moms, when you go to the photo booth today, maybe a group of you can get together and hold the book. We'll send it to the publisher and say thank you.

In the book, Francis Chan tells about Dave Phillips, who the Holy Spirit fills. He just begins to sense, “You know what? I've got to follow Jesus. I've got to give my life.” So God puts it on his heart and his wife's heart to start a relief agency. They have no idea what they're doing. They quit everything. They take this huge risk and set up a little office in their garage in the early 1990's. Six weeks into it, he gets a call from a cancer center in South America. On the other end, the director of the center tells him, “Listen, you don't know me, but we have seven children here who need a specific drug, and if they don't get it, they're all going to die.”

Dave Phillips didn't know anything about the drug. He didn't realize at the time that only two manufacturers in the entire world create this drug. He didn't know where to get it, didn't know how much it cost. He just said, “Okay. I'm going to try to help you.” And as he puts his finger down to hang up the phone, before he can put the receiver down, the phone rings. He answers the phone, and it's one of the two pharmaceutical companies that produce the drug. They tell him: “We have 48,000 vials of this drug. Do you need it? We'll deliver it anywhere in the world that you want it.” Don't you love it when God just shows you that he's God? So, all seven children get the drug, plus 20 other locations in the world. That relief agency is now celebrated every year as one of the most effective agencies.

My encouragement to you is: God has an extraordinary life for you to know him and to make a difference in your world. He has an opportunity for you to foster, adopt, help, minister, encourage. Every time you share Jesus with another person, you are changing that life. If that seems difficult or

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overwhelming, it's okay. It's okay because you have a Helper, and that Helper is God, in the third person of the Trinity.

I want to ask our worship team to come up here and help us get ready to close out this service and I want to just encourage you to respond. Some of you are here today and God wants you to know this message. He wants you to know Jesus Christ. God wants you to know him, and he has sent his Son to pay the penalty of your sin, no matter what you've done.

You know, Stephen was a young man, full of the Holy Spirit, and he preached a powerful message. But his message was not received. In fact, Acts Chapter 7 tells us he was the first Christian martyr. He was put to death that day for the message of good news that he proclaimed. But he said this to those who were listening to him preach. He said, "You are resisting the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is coming to give you life. The Holy Spirit is coming to help you. The third person of the Trinity" (of course, he didn't use that language) "the Spirit of God is here and you are resisting him." I want to encourage you today: Don't resist the Holy Spirit. God comes to give you the gift of eternal life. God comes today to help you, to forgive you, to cleanse you, to live within you. Say yes in faith to Jesus Christ. I want to ask you to bow your head, if you would.