

[IN GOD'S IMAGE 52 – THE ADVOCATE]

I want you to cast your minds back to your early courting days.

- ◆ That time when you couldn't wait to spend time with that significant other.
- ◆ You would think of him during the day, call him on the phone at night or even write letters across the ocean.
- ◆ But nothing could compensate for their physical "presence" when you could look dreamingly into their eyes and whisper sweet nothings in their ear.
- ◆ Adam and Eve before the fall were in a unique position in that they could enjoy the presence of their Creator on a daily basis.
- ◆ It must have been a wonderful experience for both parties as they sat and chatted in the beautiful surroundings of the Garden of Eden.
- ◆ But as we know, sin came along and shattered that special relationship.
- ◆ ***Genesis 3:8 (NKJV) And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden.***
- ◆ This was to be their last personal contact with their Creator as they were driven not only from the garden but also more importantly from the presence of God.

Last time we looked at Jesus' ascension to the Father after His resurrection where He assumed the threefold office of prophet, priest and king.

- ◆ But Jesus had made an extraordinary promise to His disciples before He left them.
- ◆ The disciples like Adam and Eve had the delightful experience of enjoying the presence of God, in Jesus, on a daily basis.
- ◆ But this privilege came to an abrupt end when Jesus disappeared into the clouds as He ascended back to the Father.
- ◆ Anticipating the reaction of the disciples as they were about to be abandoned, Jesus reassured them with the following promise
- ◆ ***John 14:16-21 "And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever—¹⁷ the Spirit of truth.***
- ◆ This word, advocate, is best understood to mean, "one who gives support."
- ◆ The type of support given by this Advocate is qualified by the word, "another."
- ◆ "Another" points back to the same type of support that Jesus gave His disciples while He was physically present with them.
- ◆ Although He was going away, this replacement, this "***Spirit of Truth***", will carry on the ministry begun by Jesus.

Now comes a remarkable statement.

- ◆ ***V.17 ... 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.***
- ◆ This "***Spirit of Truth***", another like Jesus, yet invisible, is not only going to walk beside them as Jesus did, but will come and live "in" them.
- ◆ Up to this point, God had dwelt personally with Israel in the corporate sense through the tabernacle and later the temple.
- ◆ But now the promise of God's presence is expanded to include individuals.

Then comes another remarkable statement.

- ◆ ***V.18 I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.***
- ◆ Jesus repeats His promise not to leave them abandoned, but then in a very Trinitarian statement, says that, He will also be with them through the Spirit.
- ◆ ***V.19 Before long, the world will not see me anymore, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live.***
- ◆ This is a reference to the miraculous transformation that occurs to those who welcome Christ into their lives.
- ◆ The Spirit as we shall see, opens up a whole new dimension not available to those in the world.
- ◆ It is the spiritual insight and awareness brought about by the same Spirit who indwelt Jesus while He walked this earth.
- ◆ It also makes us aware of a presence (there's that word again) that we are connected in an intimate way with the God of the cosmos.

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- ◆ When the temple veil was torn apart it not only gave us access to God's presence once again, but restored God's access to us.
- ◆ We will talk more about "faith" later. But this sense of presence, only available to believers, gives us that wonderful sense of "assurance" our faith is not in vain.
- ◆ But not only does this sense of presence strengthen our faith, but it is also our "assurance" that we are "loved."
- ◆ **V.20 On that day you will realize that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you.** ²¹ **Whoever has my commands and keeps them is the one who loves me. The one who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love them and show myself to them."**
- ◆ This speaks of a much more intimate relationship with God than either Adam or Eve had with God or the disciples had with Jesus.
- ◆ **V.23 Jesus replied, "Anyone who loves me will obey my teaching. My Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them.**
- ◆ Here is the ultimate promise of "presence," God - Father, Son and Holy Spirit living with us and in us.
God had interacted with humanity in the past as we have seen, Adam and Eve, the children of Israel, and Jesus with the disciples.
- ◆ But Jesus' promise here to His disciples' raises the relationship with mankind to a whole new level. In fact it heralds a whole new beginning to the relationship between God and humanity.
- ◆ This dramatic change is brought about through the third person of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit.
- ◆ This short passage in John 14 gives us a rare insight into the relationship that is the Trinity.
- ◆ We have introduced the Greek word *perichoresis* to describe the relationship that exists in the Trinity earlier that is usually translated as "mutual indwelling."
- ◆ It is the term used to highlight the dynamic, spiritual and intensely personal relationships within the Godhead itself.
- ◆ *Perichoresis* refers to that eternal love between the Father (lover) and the Son (beloved) and the Holy Spirit (Spirit of love that binds both the lover and the beloved).
- ◆ But what we see here now in v.20 is this dynamic, spiritual and intensely personal relationship which was in the past limited to the Godhead, is now extended to include the disciples of Jesus. **"...that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you."**
- ◆ The promise Jesus is making to His disciples is that through the Spirit they would be gathered up, embraced and included in the life and love of the Godhead.
- ◆ In other words, they would be included in this circle of "mutual indwelling."
- Earlier we used the title "Advocate" to describe the Holy Spirit.**
- ◆ But this term for me is a little too technical in describing the role and work of the Holy Spirit.
- ◆ It conjures up cold legalistic images such as courtrooms and attorneys.
- ◆ Other warmer titles have been used such as Counselor, Helper, and Comforter.
- ◆ And each of these has its place, but in light of what we have just seen I would like to add an additional term that for me sums up the work of the Holy Spirit and that is "Embracer."
- ◆ "Embracer" – The One who is sent by the Father and the Son to embrace humanity with the love of God.
- ◆ This whole movement of embracing humanity begins with the coming of Jesus and it is in Him that we see the intimate connection between the Holy Spirit and the incarnate Jesus.
- ◆ First of all Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit. At His baptism, the Spirit of God descended on Him like a dove. It was the power of the Holy Spirit that allowed Jesus to defeat the devil and perform His miraculous ministry (Acts 10:38).
- ◆ Every aspect of Jesus' life was inspired and empowered by the Holy Spirit.
- ◆ So the best way to know what the Spirit is like is to look at the inspired life of Jesus.
- ◆ With this in mind, look how Jesus describes the role assigned to Him by the Holy Spirit.
- ◆ **Luke 4:18-19 "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me, to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free,**
¹⁹**to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."**

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- ◆ In other words, Jesus through the power of the Spirit is instructed to go out and embrace the poor, the blind, and the downtrodden, with the love of God.
- ◆ And this is precisely what Jesus did. He went looking for the lost sheep, the prodigals, and the sinners that He was accused of spending too much time with (Luke 15).
- ◆ And now that He is about to leave for heaven, what does He instruct His disciples to do? Go forth in the power of the Spirit and embrace more disciples with the love of God (Matthew 28:19-20).
- ◆ The Father's mission does not change whether it is through Jesus, the Holy Spirit or His disciples. It's to go forth and embrace humanity with the love of God.

But this whole process is ramped up with the coming of the Holy Spirit for two important reasons.

- ◆ First, it is not only Jesus who is filled with the Holy Spirit, but mere men, His disciples. With more involved, the impact obviously will be greater.
- ◆ ***John 14:12 Very truly I tell you, whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father.***
- ◆ Second, because Jesus will be working hand in hand with the Spirit.
- ◆ ***John 14:18 I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.***
- ◆ The Word and the Spirit combine with the disciples to embrace humanity with the love of God.
- ◆ Jesus foretold His part in this process of embracing humanity before His death.
- ◆ ***John 12:32 And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself.***
- ◆ So the stage is set for the "gathering in" or harvest of the "first fruits."