

## Bible Study Guide: Week of 5-17-2021

1. Read through the passage below
2. Read my notes and commentary
3. Read the questions at the end and ponder or discuss with others

Pastor Andrew

### John 15:26-27; 16:4b-15

[Jesus said,] <sup>26</sup>“When the Advocate comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who comes from the Father, he will testify on my behalf. <sup>27</sup>You also are to testify because you have been with me from the beginning.

<sup>16:4b</sup>“I did not say these things to you from the beginning, because I was with you. <sup>5</sup>But now I am going to him who sent me; yet none of you asks me, ‘Where are you going?’ <sup>6</sup>But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your hearts. <sup>7</sup>Nevertheless I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Advocate will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. <sup>8</sup>And when he comes, he will prove the world wrong about sin and righteousness and judgment: <sup>9</sup>about sin, because they do not believe in me; <sup>10</sup>about righteousness, because I am going to the Father and you will see me no longer; <sup>11</sup>about judgment, because the ruler of this world has been condemned.

<sup>12</sup>“I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. <sup>13</sup>When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth; for he will not speak on his own, but will speak whatever he hears, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. <sup>14</sup>He will glorify me, because he will take what is mine and declare it to you. <sup>15</sup>All that the Father has is mine. For this reason I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you.”

**[Jesus said,] <sup>26</sup>“When the Advocate comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who comes from the Father, he will testify on my behalf. <sup>27</sup>You also are to testify because you have been with me from the beginning.**

The term translated “Advocate” here is the Greek word *paracletos*, which was often used to speak about a legal intercessor or advocate. The term can mean advocate, intercessor, helper, comforter, or consoler. The one whom Jesus is describing here (this “Spirit of truth who comes from the Father”) is one who is called on to render aid to those whom Jesus is leaving in the world. Throughout the Gospel Jesus has been testifying to God’s truth. Likewise other characters (such as John the Baptist, the woman at the well, the man born blind, and others) have been testifying to the truth of Jesus. Now, Jesus says, after he goes away, the Spirit of truth will testify on his behalf. The disciples also will bear witness to Jesus’ truth as well. In this way, they are invited to share in the life and ministry that Jesus has come to bring.

**<sup>16:4b</sup>“I did not say these things to you from the beginning, because I was with you. <sup>5</sup>But now I am going to him who sent me; yet none of you asks me, ‘Where are you going?’ <sup>6</sup>But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your hearts. <sup>7</sup>Nevertheless I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Advocate will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you.**

Jesus explains to the disciples that this seemingly new teaching was not necessary to give them sooner since he was already with them. As Jesus said in John 14:9, “anyone who has seen me has seen the Father.” Therefore, the sending of the Spirit was not needed while Jesus was with the disciples. Now that he is about to go away, he promises to send the Spirit to guide them and teach them. Jesus also acknowledges the sorrow the disciples feel at knowing Jesus is going away, yet he promises them that this sorrow will be insignificant compared to the advantage of having the Spirit come into their midst.

**<sup>8</sup>And when he comes, he will prove the world wrong about sin and righteousness and judgment: <sup>9</sup>about sin, because they do not believe in me; <sup>10</sup>about righteousness, because I am going to the Father and you will see me no longer; <sup>11</sup>about judgment, because the ruler of this world has been condemned.**

These lines are among the most mysterious in the gospel. What, we may wonder, does it mean to “prove the world wrong about sin and righteousness and judgment”? For some clues it is helpful to look back earlier in the gospel, especially at John 3. There, Jesus speaks with Nicodemus about God’s sending the Son into the world. The world in John 3 is described as loving sin. People loved

darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil. Likewise, Jesus claimed in John 3 that he came not to condemn the world, but rather to save it. Nevertheless, many in the world already stand condemned because they did not believe in Jesus. So for a world that seems hell-bent on going its own way and against God's ways, being proved wrong about these things seems to indicate a time of reckoning or confrontation in which the world will know the truth Jesus came to bring in some sense. Jesus says that he must go away and the Advocate must come in order for this to happen.

**<sup>12</sup>“I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. <sup>13</sup>When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth; for he will not speak on his own, but will speak whatever he hears, and he will declare to you the things that are to come.**

Jesus acknowledges that his words are heavy for the disciples to bear in this section. We can perhaps imagine how bewildering all of this must have seemed to them. Yet Jesus can go away and trust that the Spirit will complete the work that he began. Jesus emphasizes that the Spirit is not a new entity, but rather is one with the Father and Son, speaking with the same voice and authority as Jesus and the Father.

**<sup>14</sup>He will glorify me, because he will take what is mine and declare it to you. <sup>15</sup>All that the Father has is mine. For this reason I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you.”**

Glorification in John's gospel is all about the revelation of God's will and truth. Jesus speaks of his crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension as his hour of glorification. In the same way, he claims that the Spirit will glorify him—that is, the Spirit will further reveal God's will and truth just as Jesus did. Even though Jesus knows he is about to die and rise again, he trusts that his word will not cease and his followers will continue to hear and follow his word. The sharing described here between the Father, Son and Spirit is one of the most clear places in scripture from which we derive our doctrine of the Holy Trinity.

**Discussion/Reflection Questions:**

- 1. What do you think it means for Jesus' disciples to testify to the truth?**
- 2. How does it change how you think about this passage to translate the word *paracletos* as “Comforter” vs. “Advocate”?**
- 3. What do you think it means for the Spirit to prove the world wrong about sin, righteousness, and judgment?**