

“Need Some Help?”—John 15:26-27

The text for this sermon, the theme of which is, “Need Some Help?”, is John 15:26-27. These are the words of Jesus: *When the Helper comes, Whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, Who proceeds from the Father, He will bear witness about Me. And you also will bear witness, because you have been with Me from the beginning.* This is the text.

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ Jesus:

Are you the type of person who easily asks for help when you need it? This can be a difficult task for many people. Call it independence, being German (or whatever other nationality comes to your mind at the moment) or just plain stubborn, asking someone else for help or advice is difficult. Why? Could it be that asking for help would require one to be humble enough to admit that he cannot function on his own? Even if you are a person who recognizes you need help you may wait until someone sees your need and says, “Need some help?” Only then will you accept it. If someone doesn’t offer to help you, especially if he can see you are struggling, do you find yourself getting angry with him? Some people simply believe others should be able to read their minds and provide help at the appropriate times, unbeknownst to them when

the appropriate times occur.

There is only One Who is omniscient—Who can read your mind and know when you need help. In fact, He even knows what help you need **better than you do!** Even more amazing is that He is helping you, carrying you through life, providing for you even in spite of your sinful stubbornness! That's because His help flows from His love and grace for you! It is not based upon your behavior but rather God's character! As Jesus said: *He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.* (cf. Matthew 4:45) God—Father, Son and Holy Spirit—desires to help you in every area of your life, both physically and spiritually!

The majority of people with whom I've come into contact believe that Jesus exists to help people in the world. It was no different for His disciples. In fact, they viewed Him as the Deliverer promised in the Old Testament Scriptures! As with so many others, Jesus' disciples needed help in their understanding of His help for all mankind! His disciples needed a *Helper* to guide them through a world where most people do not see a need for Jesus except to help them by delivering them from uncomfortable circumstances in life! This needed *Helper* is the Holy Spirit!

On the night before Jesus died on the cross He taught His disciples about the work of the Holy Spirit in a effort to encourage and comfort them. Jesus

recognized that telling them He was going to *suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised* (cf. Matthew 16:21), along with leaving them by ascending into heaven, was disturbing to them. In John 16:6 He said to them: *Because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your heart.* In the midst of such grief over the thought of the loss of His physical presence among them, which could have easily been accompanied by fear, anxiety and apprehension, not only does Jesus reassure them of help but He gives them *the Helper* Who will do it for them! The promise and reassurance given to His twelve apostles is given to you as well:

- In John 14:17 Jesus says: *You know . . . the Spirit of truth . . . for He dwells with you and will be in you.* What a comfort it is to know that you are not left to yourself to figure out how to believe, how to serve Christ, how to do good works and how to do it properly. The Holy Spirit lives in you to produce that which is pleasing to God!
- Jesus says in John 14:25 → *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.* What a comfort it is to know that you are not solely responsible for remembering Christ's teaching. The Holy Spirit will bring back to your remembrance when needed the teaching of

God's Word. What a comfort it is to know that when you read the Bible you don't have to understand everything in it. You simply *let the word of Christ dwell in you richly* and let the Holy Spirit take care of the rest! (cf. Colossians 3:16)

- In John 16:8-11 Jesus says: The Spirit *will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment: concerning sin, because they do not believe in Me; concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father, and you will see Me no longer; concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged.* What a comfort it is to know that you are not responsible for bringing about conviction of sin in the hearts of others so they see their need for the righteous work of Jesus as He defeated the power of the devil **for them!** The Holy Spirit will bring about the conviction of unbelief and conviction of the need for the righteous life and death of Jesus for them as He opens your mouth to simply share the deliverance from the power of sin and the devil by Jesus! We don't have to strive in vain to make a change in people's hearts. We can't do such a thing anyway. Rather, we faithfully speak to others about sin and God's grace and forgiveness in Christ and trust the Holy Spirit to move in their hearts to produce faith in Christ!

Such reassurance is so necessary in your life because the devil uses the sinful, defeatist influences of the world around you to sabotage this working

of the Holy Spirit in and through you. As *the father of lies* (cf. John 8:44) he strives to fill you with fears which disable your speaking to others of their sin and how Jesus suffered the punishment for their sin so they could be forgiven.

As *the father of lies* the devil strives to keep you in a whirlwind of analysis of the spiritual climate of the day and how it is affecting our congregational worship and programs in an effort to focus our attention on something other than the Law and the Gospel to motivate people into obedience to Jesus. The Holy Spirit moves you out of being stuck in analysis to proclaim Christ according Jesus' words in our text: *He will bear witness about Me. And you also will bear witness.*

As *the father of lies* the devil strives to make you believe that Christ's Church on earth is dying because more and more people seem to be disenfranchising themselves from the Christian congregation, even denying their baptisms, thus denying the One Who bought them with His blood! In the midst of your heart which grieves over their spiritual well-being it is so easy to lose heart, especially in the face of rejection or persecution! You need *the Helper* to move you out of such despair over a world lost in sin! It is significant that Jesus refers to Him in our text as *the Spirit of truth, Who proceeds from the Father* because **only He can guide you into all truth** (cf. John 16:13) **and squelch all these lies of satan!** Does the Church truly believe satan is a

defeated enemy or does the Church act like it is defeated?

During His resurrection appearances Jesus gave His disciples the Holy Spirit with the authority to forgive sins on His behalf when people repent or to withhold forgiveness if they refuse to repent. (cf. John 20:21-23) On the Day of Pentecost they experienced the Holy Spirit working as He opened their mouths to *bear witness about* Jesus, and that in languages which were unfamiliar to them but familiar to those who heard *them telling in their own tongues the mighty works of God* in Christ Jesus! (cf. Acts 2:11) They experienced the Holy Spirit producing His miraculous results as He worked through their proclamation of the Law and Gospel to convict their hearer's hearts of sin and bring them to repentance and faith in Jesus as three thousand were baptized that day!!

You see, we don't just need some help—**we need the Helper, the Holy Spirit!** He is always at work as His people share the Gospel! No, the fears still do not dissipate. No, the devil still does not leave you alone with his lies. No, the persecution will not go away. Yes, you will continue to struggle with uncomfortable circumstances in life. Yes, the Holy Spirit will protect you and keep you faithful to the Lord Jesus Christ in trouble and persecution until He brings you safely through it all! Yes, the Holy Spirit will bring forth the fruits of faith through His means of grace—the Gospel of forgiveness in Christ alone,

Baptism, the Lord's Supper and Confession/Absolution—distributed and shared by the Church in a sinful world!! Amen.

In the midst of times when we're being attacked by the devil and the sinful world, the burdens can be so immense that we are at a loss for words even in our prayer life. Again, the promise of God's Word and the Spirit's help shines through from Romans 8:26 →

Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness.

For we do not know what to pray for as we ought,

but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words.