



Looking Inwards (15 mins) *Caring For Each Other*

Reflecting on your life at the moment, is there anything you would like to share with other members of your home group which you feel is appropriate (this is an opportunity to share, not something you have to do, however, 'It's the sharing that enables the caring!') for:

- Thanksgiving?
- Prayer?
- Encouragement?
- Support in any way?



Looking Outwards (15 mins) *Concern For Others*

Is there anything concerning someone in your: family; circle of friends; neighbours or church, which you would like to share (please be sure not pass on anything that is confidential or which you think the person concerned would not wish to be shared) for:

- Thanksgiving?
- Prayer?
- Encouragement?
- Support in any way?

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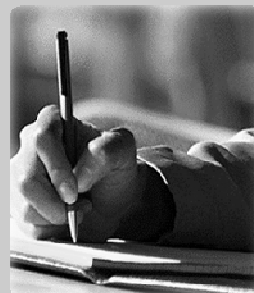


The Last Words Of Jesus HG123: **Another Counsellor**

John 14:15-31

Home Group Study Notes

22 May 2016 - Pauline Woolnough



**PLEASE COMPLETE AS MUCH AS YOU CAN
ON THIS WORKSHEET IN PREPARATION
BEFORE THE MEETING!**

Don't forget to take your Bible to Home Group with you, along with any previous notes and other resources which might be helpful.



Welcome (10 mins) *Ice Breaker*

Can you think of a promise, perhaps that was made to you as a child that was kept or not kept? How did that make you feel?



Looking Upwards (10 mins) *Worship*

In your time of worship, you may want to sing Songs of Praise; listen to a Worship CD, as well as using Meditations; Bible Readings; Prayers ...



The Last Words Of Jesus
HG123: **Another Counsellor**

John 14:15-31

Home Group Sermon Notes

22 May 2016 - Pauline Woolnough

Promises, Promises!

This is a passage full of promises that Jesus made to his disciples and to us -

- v 16 - he promises - to send us a Helper or another Counsellor*
- v 16 - he promises - to send the Spirit of Truth*
- v 18 -he promises - life with Himself as he will not leave us like orphans*
- v 21 - he promises - union with the Father who will love us*
- v 26 -he promises - that the Spirit will teach us all things*
- v 27 -he promises - us peace*

Jesus makes these promises but for John writing this Gospel love is always on his mind. God's love for the Son, the Son's love for us as he died on the cross, and God's love for humanity in sending his Son and for John there is only one test of love, and that is obedience. It is through obedience that we prove our love for Christ. He says in v 15, "If you love me, keep my commandments." We all know how easy it is to say you love someone but in the same breath get irritated by them. How often do we fail to show kindness and patience to those we say we love? Words are not enough, we are to be obedient to God's commands. Jesus proved his love by his obedience to the Father and by dying for us.

That doesn't mean that we have to be perfect and that there is no room for failure because if that's the case none of us will secure the promise of the Holy Spirit? If we look at the example of Peter in Jn 21:15 when Jesus asked him for the 3rd time if Peter loved him and he said "*you know I do,*" although Peter said he loved Jesus he knew fine well that his actions had contradicted the love and desire that he had in his heart. Peter failed and we do too but Jesus can see into our heart, which at times may not always sound like a good thing when we know that he sees all the stuff that goes on in there, but thankfully he can also see that we do want to obey, its just that at times we find it hard to do so.

Paul also found it hard as in Romans 7:15-20 he said, "*I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do, I do not do, but what I hate, I do. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. For I do not do the good I want to do, but the evil I do not want to do—this I keep on doing.*" Satan is the ultimate accuser, he comes alongside us and tells us how we have failed and at every opportunity tells us that we are worthless. His greatest lie is to tell us that God will stop loving us when we make mistakes, he wants to discourage us and alienate us from God. The Spirit comes to our defence and encourages us to hold on to the Word of God and not to listen to the lies of Satan reminding us that we are loved so much that God was willing to die for us, so how on earth can we be worthless?

4: Is the Holy Spirit an acknowledged and active member in your Home group?

5: With what is going on in your life, how can the Holy Spirit help you this week?

6: The Holy Spirit's work is in decline in the West. What can and should we be doing to help Him?



Is there anything you most want to put into practice as a result of this study?



Looking Upwards (40 mins) Bible Study

Read the text for this study, and any references given, then answer the following questions. You may find it helpful to listen to the sermon and/or read through the sermon notes as you do so. Discuss some, or all, your answers with your Home Group and, remember, these questions are only a guide to start your discussions.

1: Why is it important that we understand that the Holy Spirit is God?

2: If someone was to look at your life, would they conclude that you love Jesus by the way you keep his commandments?

3: From the time you first became a Christian, in what ways has Holy Spirit changed your life?

The Parakletos

Most of us will have been let down by people over the years and you can't always rely on someone to keep their promises, but you can always trust Jesus to keep his. He made these promises the night before he was arrested. Some versions say that he will send another Helper, some say a Comforter but Counsellor is a more accurate translation of the original Greek word, *parakletos*, which really means someone who is "called in." A parakletos may be called in to give witness in a court of law, or called in to plead the cause of someone under a serious charge, or raise spirits of the depressed or discouraged. Essentially he is always someone called in to help in times of need or trouble. The title Comforter does not fully do him justice because he does much more than that, he helps us to cope and he helps us to be brave and live victoriously rather in a defeated manner. Often we Christians get excited about what the Holy Spirit can do for us and through us, we pray for an outpouring of his power and to receive his gifts but what we really need to get excited about is the Person Himself, the 3rd Person of the Trinity, and have a right understanding of who he is and what he does.

The Spirit of Truth

The first thing to get right is that the Holy Spirit is a Person in his own right, he is not a creation of God. V 26 says it is the Holy Spirit himself who will "*teach you all things*" and in 15.26 "*the Spirit of Truth who goes out from the Father will testify about me*" He is a witness in his own right. The Spirit is referred to as the Spirit of God, - in Genesis 1, the Holy Spirit is God. 1 Corinthians 2:10-12 says "*The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God. For who knows a person's thoughts except their own spirit within them? In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. What we have received is not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may understand what God has freely given us.*" It will transform our lives when we understand and believe that we are being inhabited and led not by some impersonal force from a distant God, but by a person who is God Himself and whose very essence is the love of God.

Jesus told the disciples about the Holy Spirit on the Thursday night of Passion Week, the following day he knew he was going to die. Up to this point he had hinted that he was not going to be around much longer and that he was going to return to the Father but often it was in a way that they either did not understand or chose not to. Now as he predicted his betrayal and death they couldn't take it in, they were fearful at the idea of being without him. They had followed Jesus around for three years, he had been everything to them, where he led, they had followed and now He was leaving. We can imagine the thoughts that raced through their heads, "*What is going on? Wasn't he the messiah after all, wasn't he going to bring in God's Kingdom, and change the world?*" None of that had happened and now he was leaving!

The ever present Counsellor

The thought of life without Jesus was so overwhelming that they were distraught. In fact in chapter 14:1, Jesus had to tell them, "*Stop letting your heart be troubled.*" In other words, "*stop worrying.*" They had been through a lot over the past three years but nothing like this, all their dreams were crumbling in front of them and panic set in because Jesus was leaving. Jesus knew and understood how they felt and the challenges ahead of them, so he was telling them here that he would send them someone who would guide and help them do what they had to do, but of course when someone is so important to you, you don't want someone else you want the person themselves to stay, but if we look again at what Jesus says in v 16 he says, "*I will ask the Father and he will give you another Counsellor to be with you forever.*" Another Counsellor indicates that he will be just like Jesus. God the Father had sent Jesus to save us and reconcile us to himself, Jesus' work was almost done, the following day he would utter the immortal words, "*It is finished*" and he would return to the Father.

God was now going to send someone else just like Jesus, someone that he had sent at certain times and on certain missions in order to fulfil His purposes but now this same Person, the Holy Spirit, would come and he would remain with those who loved the Lord Jesus, forever. Jesus comforted them with promise, after promise, after promise but the main promise comes right in v 16, that another Counsellor, just like Jesus will be sent to be with them forever.

Even as Jesus was speaking these words men were plotting to kill him, they would not accept him as the Messiah and did not want him or anything to do with him, and he told the disciples that the same thing would happen to the One he would send. He said that the world “*cannot receive him*” and by that he means those in the world who live as if there is no God. If someone has refused outright to even consider the existence of God then it is impossible for them to receive the Holy Spirit, we have to have minds open to the possibility of there being more than what we see in front of our eyes and want to embark on a search for the truth. The Holy Spirit is no gate crusher, he looks for even the smallest opening in someone’s heart but he will never force his way into our lives, that is not his way. He meets the same opposition, apathy and unbelief that Jesus did and so people do not see him, and therefore cannot receive him. Things haven’t changed from when Jesus sat overlooking the city of Jerusalem and wept when he said in Luke 13:34-35 “*Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were not willing.*” Jesus and the Father love the world and everyone in it but the Holy Spirit will not manifest himself to anybody who does not want them and all the promises and blessings that belong to those who love Jesus do not belong to the world that rejects him.

He is Holy

It is through the Spirit of Truth that we will learn and understand about all things that are of any real importance, things about the Father, about how we can be saved and have eternal life, he will also give us some home truths about ourselves, things that we may not always want to hear but that he wants to change in us. He is the *Holy* Spirit and therefore is concerned with holiness, not a word we use much and if we are honest not something we aspire to. If someone calls you holy you feel that they are making fun of you and making you out some kind of pious goody two shoes, but in the biblical term holiness means being set apart, belonging to the Lord and serving Him and worshipping him out of a thankful heart for what he has done. We are to be distinct in the world by how we live without being some kind of weird spoil sport. The Holy Spirit’s concern is in producing holiness in us and encouraging our service to be real, relevant and effective and He is not content with having access to some areas of our lives, he wants access to it all. He teaches us that it is only through Jesus that we can know the truth about life, our humanity, our needs, and how we can come into relationship with the Father, because it is always all about Jesus, the Holy Spirit never takes the limelight he always points to Jesus because Jesus is “*the way the truth and the life*” and it is the Holy Spirit who reveals him to us. The Spirit of Truth is given to us to lead us to the One who *is* the Truth.

Union with the Father

If the promise of another counsellor was still not sufficient to calm the disciples fears Jesus promised even more because he goes on to say in v18 that “*I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. Before long the world will not see me any more but you will see me . Because I live you will also live. On that day you will realise that I am in the Father, and you are in me and I am in you.*” He is telling us that Jesus Himself is in the Father, the Father is in Jesus, we are in Jesus and Jesus is in us. Galatians 2:20 says it this way. “*I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ– lives in me.*” When we love Jesus the Holy Spirit reveals the truth to us that on receiving Jesus as Lord we are grafted into the Trinitarian relationship between Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Being a Christian is about more than just believing in a certain set of facts, going to

church and being in a home group, it is about living in union with the trinity, 3 Persons in one and it is the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Truth who reveals this to us.

The Teacher

The Holy Spirit wants to help us to mature and grow in our understanding and our faith, it will take us a lifetime but he has a reminding ministry and we can see from this how the disciples and New Testament authors were able to record their experiences and the words of Jesus, it was because the Holy Spirit was reminding them for our benefit what Jesus had said and done so that we might learn. We can trust the words and the witness of the writers because it was the Holy Spirit prompting and refining memories. It is this reminding ministry that grounds us and prevents us from always looking for the new word because it is his aim to remind us of the word that Jesus spoke and what he did and in doing so magnify Christ, he wants always to draw us back to what Jesus said and did rather than what some preacher or leader says today, it is what Jesus did and what Jesus said that is significant for us today

The Promise of Peace

Finally the Holy Spirit is the bringer of peace. Jesus won us peace with God through his death on the cross, his death atoned for our sins and reconciled us to the Father, the peace that existed between himself and God is now available to us, Jesus was totally secure in the knowledge that he was loved by his Father and we can also be secure in the knowledge that the Father loves us, we are God’s children, adopted into his family by the blood of Christ, we belong to Him now and forever and nothing can break the bond between the Father and ourselves. It is the Holy Spirit’s purpose and joy to keep us on track with that knowledge and for us to experience peace and security because of it. We are forever looking for the Spirit of God to display his power and to perform extravagantly but his real ministry to us is about bringing the presence of Jesus to us .

Marked URGENT

Our most urgent need and prayer has to be that we don’t just learn about the Holy Spirit, but that we come to know him, love him and enjoy him and also be woken up by him. We need to be empowered by him in order to attack and push back the forces of Satan and rescue the millions from his captivity because the world that we live in is in danger. The world that we live in, and most of the western world in fact is the world that has rejected Jesus. Sadly that is our home, its where we live. Spiritual complacency rules where most Christians are often more concerned with planning their next holiday than a move of God. Churches in Europe are empty yet in the Philip-pines there are mega churches with congregations with members numbering in the 000s. Go to places in rural China, India, Brazil, Nigeria, Cuba and you will find people hungry for the Good News of Jesus Christ. Even and in spite of great difficulty and turmoil, Christianity is expanding throughout Islamic world. God is up to something. The Holy Spirit goes where he is wanted, he will not hang around where people do not want him and in prosperous countries like ours where we have other things to occupy our time least of all satellite TV with endless sport and hundreds of channels, God gets pushed into the background. The only answer to ISIS and other such terror groups, to the migration problem, to poverty and all the other horrors that are going on in the world is the Gospel of Jesus Christ, there is absolutely no other solution.

We seek to enjoy intimacy with God but also need to remember that he wants us to extend that invitation of relationship with him to his world. His Holy Spirit wants to lead us in heartfelt worship of God the Father and Christ the Son and then get out and be a Church in mission. If we look around we will see that God is powerfully at work in the world today through the presence of the risen Christ and by the power of the Holy Spirit and where he is welcomed and sought his Church is contagious, ablaze, unpredictable and powerful. If, as we often say and sing, we want to know and experience more of God and his Son, it is the Holy Spirit, and only the Holy Spirit who will reveal them to us.