

Things of the Spirit - Comfort

When was the last time you set out on some kind of journey and found out that you were not properly prepared?

I'm really kind of an organized person where I like everything to be listed and checked before I head out. But what happens to me is I often get out on the journey and realize I forgot something....it never crossed my mind, it wasn't on my list.

Here's what I've figured out.....I tend to rely on my knowledge of the situation. I often fail to look at the weather reports, or consider some kind of factors that are likely to change throughout the journey.

A couple weeks ago I went to a ballgame with Pastor Dan, the weather had been in the 50s around here and that day it was a high of 70 at the stadium. I wore a jacket but had to take it off because I got hot and ended up getting a pretty bad sunburn on both arms! Now I brought the jacket because I didn't know where the seats were, or what it would actually be like in the stadium, but I never considered sunscreen! I was not properly prepared.

I've gone to other April games where I went in a light jacket and really needed a heavy coat, scarf, sock hat, blanket, insulated boots and gloves....

It's not always about weather, but I'm sure you can think of a time that you were not near as prepared as you should be. Something is missing.

Do you know that if you are a Christ follower, you are on a journey? Do you know that it's a difficult journey?

Jesus never promised it would be easy. In fact, I think He made it abundantly clear that it would be a challenging journey. That we would have difficulties, and possibly at times find ourselves not as prepared as we should be.....

Matthew 10:16-20 (NKJV)

"Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves. Therefore be wise as serpents and harmless as doves. 17 But beware of men, for they will deliver you up to councils and scourge you in their synagogues. 18 You will be brought before governors and kings for My sake, as a testimony to them and to the Gentiles. 19 But when they deliver you up, do not worry about how or what you should speak. For it will be given to you in that hour what you should speak; 20 for it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father who speaks in you.

You will be sheep in the midst of wolves....
You must be wise...on your guard....
You will get accused and beaten....
You will get arrested!

When Jesus sent us out, He didn't send us to a ballgame but to an ultimate fighting match....only we aren't called to be spectators!

Why do Christians believe that Christianity is safe and comfortable? Why do we think it's supposed to be easy. Jesus said you will SUFFER for His name. He says you will be HATED by everyone because of Him!

As Jesus was about ascend to heaven, He sent us out.....out to the world....to make disciples. The most important journey you will ever be on!

I'm all for families taking vacations and doing fun things that will be memorable for the rest of your lives. Many people spend lots of money to make these experiences happen and end up on some really amazing journeys.

But do you know that even the memory of these things are temporary. I'm not saying you won't remember anything about this life in heaven....but something tells me that in the presence of Jesus you won't be thinking about Daytona beach 2009.....

There is no journey you will ever go on that is more important than this one to make disciples.....
- How's that going? Any memories to share with Abraham, Moses, Peter, or Paul one day in heaven?

And the thing is many of us head out on that journey only to find ourselves ill equipped. But look at what Jesus said...

In John 14 He says that He is going away to prepare a place for His people and will come again for us so that we can be with Him. Then Jesus says:

John 14:16 (NKJV)

And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another **Helper**, that He may abide with you forever—

Church we have a Helper.....He is the Holy Spirit! The KJV says He will give you another Comforter.

I don't know about you but for me it is great comfort to know when I have help....to know that I'm not on my own! The Holy Spirit is Helper and Comforter!

The Greek word for Helper/Comforter here is parakletos (parrrr-rock-lay-taas) - this means "called to one's side, especially called to one's aid".

See THAT is the comfort....that the Holy Spirit is not just present....He's present to HELP YOU!

Sometimes it's good to do something with someone even if you don't need their help. But then how great is it when you DO need their help and they are already there!

- How many times in your life have you heard "hey, I'm glad you are here....I could use a hand"

You know at the beginning of John 14, Jesus said "Don't let your heart be troubled, trust God, trust Me"

Lots of Christians are walking around out there with troubled hearts. Many of them have gone through some things that are hard, even seeming impossible.

My heart has been troubled, your heart has been troubled....and maybe it is right now....if not it will be sometime in the future.

The world says drown out the noise, drown out the pain. Drugs, alcohol, sex outside of marriage, self harm, self pity.....these things lead to feelings of defeat, hate, anger, hopelessness, bitterness.... These are the tools of satan....and he is a liar and a thief!

Jesus says "trust in Me". Jesus is the hope for every situation that troubles your heart. Remember He said He would send **another** Helper?

1 John 2:1 (NKJV)

My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an **Advocate** with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.

That word "Advocate" is the same Greek word as Helper/Comforter parakletos (parrrr-rock-lay-taas) - "called to one's side, especially called to one's aid"

See Jesus when He ascended to heaven, did not abandon His church. He didn't bail out on us...

John 14:18 (NKJV)

I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you.

See He didn't abandon us.....He sent **another** Helper....One that would be the continuance of the ministry that Jesus began as the One called to your side to help you!

The Holy Spirit is your help.....going through rough times? He's here! Things are going great.....He's here!

He is called to your side....specifically for the purpose of aiding YOU!

If things aren't getting better....it doesn't mean He's not with you.

If things are too hard, maybe you aren't letting Him help.

If you can't do it, maybe you are right....let the Holy Spirit give you a hand!

We like to do things ourselves until we get to the point where we want to throw our hands up and either give up and "die" or say God it's Yours. Then we expect the Holy Spirit to do ALL the work.

The Holy Spirit is not your slave or servant.....He's your HELPER!

Ever been asked to help someone with something and it turns out you are doing all the work?

The Holy Spirit is your Helper.....that means YOU have to DO something.....otherwise He's the worker not the helper!

We need His help not only to make disciples but to even live a godly life to begin with!

John 14:26 (NKJV)

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 things that I said to you.

Do you know why we don't know all things....(spiritually)? The Helper is here to teach us all things. But there are too many days that we cut class! Not only that but we spend too much time going to other classes!

There's a saying - "Pick the people who pick the right paths, and you will end up in the right place." I like that saying, I think it is often true...

We are regular attenders at the school of complaining, the school of worrying, the school of selfishness.

Either by the things we watch and read or by the people we hang out with.

In 1 Corinthians, Paul said "Bad company corrupts good character."

Hang around with people who cuss and profanity rubs off. Work with people who cut corners and put forth little effort and laziness rubs off. Anger rubs off. Cynicism rubs off. Lots of things you don't want...rub off.

But you know the opposite is true as well? Hang around with people who are kind and kindness rubs off. Wisdom rubs off. Courage rubs off. Joy rubs off. Encouragement rubs off.

Jesus walked with the disciples for over 3 years, and a lot of great things rubbed off.....and when He was about to leave He said "Help is on the way"

John 16:7 (NKJV)

Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the **Helper** will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you.

The more time we spend in the Spirit, listening to the Holy Spirit, letting Him teach us, seeing Him work in us, through us, around us.....the more that stuff "rubs off" and becomes who we are.

This life is hard.....and it may only get harder the more wicked and evil our society gets.....but the Helper is HERE!

This Helper is here to help YOU! He's here to speak truth when you are believing the lies

John 15:26 (NKJV)

"But when the **Helper** comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify of Me.

This is where He is not only Helper but Comforter.....He speaks truth to you in all situations....

"I am with you to the end of the age"

"You will have tribulation.....I have overcome the world"

"He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds"

"If you are tired, He will give you rest"

"God comforts the downcast"

The Holy Spirit is Comforter because He testifies of Jesus. He reminds us of Who Jesus is and what He has done, and the promises He has made.....

He is with us and it will be OK!

"When life caves in, you do not need reasons – you need comfort. You do not need some answers – you need someone. And Jesus does not come to us with an explanation – He comes to us with His presence." ~ Unknown

The Holy Spirit is the presence of Christ living within His people.

This body might be deteriorating, and it might have a heart that's troubled, it might feel like a prison sometimes.....but when Christ enter it with His presence it becomes a temple.

Church....we are missing the comfort of the Spirit....and it's a hindrance to our lives and to the growth of the Kingdom....

Acts 9:31 (NKJV)

Then the churches throughout all Judea, Galilee, and Samaria had peace and were edified. And walking in the fear of the Lord and in the **comfort** of the Holy Spirit, they were multiplied.

This was after Paul's conversion, they were at peace and edified because a man who once was hunting Christians was now on their side!

But the second component was that they walked in (continued in daily) the fear of the Lord (awe, honor, respect) AND in the comfort of the Holy Spirit (knowing He's with them, helping them) and the result was multiplication of the Kingdom.....

ILLUSTRATION

- A grandpa walks into the family room to find his grandson in a playpen crying
- As the child stood there, red faced, in a tear soaked shirt and diaper, he looks up, sees his grandpa and reaches out his little hands saying, "Out Papa, out!"
- How could Papa resist, as he walks over to take the child out of his captivity and distress, the child's mother walks in the room "No, he's being punished, leave him right there dad!"
- What was Papa to do? He couldn't stand staying in the room while his grandson suffered but he couldn't just walk away and turn his back on him either....
- LOVE FOUND A WAY
- Since Papa couldn't take the child out of the playpen, he climbed in. The child may have still been in captivity but he was no longer alone....he had a comforter, someone by his side.....and found comfort even in his captivity!

This is kind of like what the Holy Spirit does, whatever mess you are in, He gets in with you, brings you comfort, helps you through it. He's by your side.....

The Holy Spirit is the presence of Jesus who tells us, even in the darkness of grief "I'm here...I'll never leave...look toward heaven." He's climbed in this little prison of a body to do just that.

You see comfort is not only extended to God's child...it is extended through God's child to a fallen, troubled, broken, hurting world.