

Series: Communion With The Triune God #1614

Title: 2 Corinthians 13.14; John 14, 15, 16
The Holy Spirit

Thank you for joining me today from wherever you are and by however you listen as we meet together coast-to-coast here in the United States and all the way around the world. We continue now in our reflections on enjoying communion with the Triune God. Last time we spoke of the Second Person of the Trinity: God's Son, Jesus Christ and we said He is our *grace*. God the Father is our love and God the Son is our grace. All morning I have been humming the beautiful hymn by the title *Grace Greater Than Our Sin*. Do you know it? I am certain you can sing it better than I can, and here are the words:

1 Marvelous grace of our loving Lord,
Grace that exceeds our sin and our guilt!
Yonder on Calvary's mount out-poured—
There where the blood of the Lamb was spilt.

Grace, grace, God's grace,
Grace that will pardon and cleanse within;
Grace, grace, God's grace,
Grace that is greater than all our sin!

2 Sin and despair, like the sea-waves cold,
Threaten the soul with infinite loss;
Grace that is greater— yes, grace untold—
Points to the Refuge, the mighty Cross.

3 Marvelous, infinite, matchless grace,
Freely bestowed on all who believe!
All who are longing to see His face,
Will you this moment His grace receive?

Grace, grace, God's grace,
Grace that will pardon and cleanse within;
Grace, grace, God's grace,
Grace that is greater than all our sin!

We thank Jesus for His grace, the marvelous grace of our loving Lord in our lives. And I pray that if you have yet to invest your faith in Christ, that you will do so today, so that you too can experience God's grace. I will be happy to talk with you more about this if you would like. My email is mark@godisministry.org, that's m-a-r-k@godisministry.o-r-g. Or you can reach me by regular mail: God Is, PO Box 802, Winchester Massachusetts 01890. Write to me today. Do not delay. Let's communicate around the Person of Jesus Christ. Let's talk about His grace, His unmerited favor for us sinners. I look forward to hearing from you and these addresses will soon be repeated, so stay tuned!

God is One. He is One God in Three Persons. God is God. Jesus Christ is God. And the Holy Spirit is God. And we come now to this Third Person of the Trinity: the Holy Spirit. And when we say "Third," we do not mean third as if these are named in order of importance or authority. It is *not* that God the Son has a little less importance or authority than God the Father and God the Holy Spirit has still a little less importance or authority than God the Son. No. These Three Persons are equal in importance and authority because they are the Three-In-One. There is only One God. And when God expresses Himself as Father and as Son and as Spirit it is always the One God who expresses Himself as such. While the very limited human mind finds this perplexing, this is nevertheless the truth about who God is.

And you will remember that we are following the teaching of John Owen in this series, as he encourages us in how to pray, from his writing in *Communion with God*. He points us to this verse in 2 Corinthians chapter 13. It is verse 14, which reads, "**The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all. Amen.**" The word fellowship here could also be translated communion ("the communion of the Holy Spirit") and Owen draws upon this. We will get some

of what he has to say, but I want to begin in the Gospel of John so that we can first trace what Jesus says about the Spirit. If you have your Bible handy, turn with me to the Gospel of John and hold your place at chapter 14. (John 14.) As you find it I will quote Owen. He says, "The foundation of all our communion with the Holy Ghost [consists] in His mission, or sending to be our comforter, by Jesus Christ (*Communion with God*, 2:222)."

He takes this from his reading of the Gospels. That is, that Jesus Christ (our grace) sent the Holy Spirit (our comfort). And this we learn in John chapters 14, 15, and 16. As you may well know, in John chapters 13-17 Jesus has withdrawn from the crowds and is found in intimate fellowship with His disciples. He moves from public ministry to private ministry. He moves from inviting people to be His followers from among the crowds to now speaking directly to those whom He had chosen to follow Him. And the Lord speaks to them on the night of His betrayal and arrest, leading directly to the crucifixion. The cross is a day away, but first we listen in on Christ's words of farewell to these men. In these five chapters we have massive teaching that is rich in theology and penetratingly practical. I read through it again this weekend and (as always) was left astounded by all Christ says (and does) here.

And in John chapter 14, as the Lord comforts these disciples, twelve men who now sense, they begin to grasp the reality of what is coming. Their Teacher, their Master, and their Lord is no longer going to be with them in-person. He is leaving them. And He is taking leave by death. Imagine the horror they felt. And so they required compassionate comfort. And that is exactly what they get. Amidst this Jesus gives them a monumental promise. I am reading now at John 14, verse 16, "**I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever; ¹⁷ that is the Spirit of truth...**" Mark that. John 14, verse 16. Mark that because I will come back to it in a minute.

First, come over just a few pages in your Bible to John chapter 16 and verse 7. Jesus continues to speak to the disciples and He says to them (John 16, verse 7), "**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 go, I will send Him to you.**" So now we have heard from Jesus Christ, who is our grace, we have heard from Him about the Holy Spirit who is our Comforter or Helper. John 14, verse 16 and repeated in John 16, verse 7. And one more. For this we drop back into chapter 15. This is Jesus speaking to the disciples in John 15, verse 26. Listen for the mention of the promised Holy Spirit. "**When the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, that is the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify about Me...**" (John 15.26.)

I am not going to go word by word through these verses, because of time limitations. What I want to highlight is that Jesus promises the Spirit, and He says the Holy Spirit is our Helper or our Comforter. The Greek word is *Paracletos* and the meaning is Helper or Comforter or Advocate or Intercessor, really all of the above. The *Paracletos* is the Holy Spirit, and He is One who comes alongside us to help us and to comfort us. He will do that for these first disciples and He will do that for all Christ's disciples for all time.

In John 14 Jesus says He will ask the Father and the Father will answer Jesus by giving us the Holy Spirit. This speaks to the Triune nature of God – Jesus praying to the Father and the Father answering His prayer by giving the gift of the Third Person of the Trinity, the Spirit. And in John 14.16 Jesus says, "He will give you another Helper..." I do want to spend a moment with the word "another" here. This word is fascinating! This word means another of the exact, same kind. So the disciples are going to receive someone of the exact, same kind as Jesus. One commentator puts it this way, "The Greek word specifically means another of the same kind, that is, someone like Jesus Himself who will take His place and do His work. The Spirit of Christ is the Third Person of the Trinity, having the same essence of deity as Jesus and as perfectly one with Him as He is with the Father (*MacArthur Study Bible*, 1580)." Close quote.

So, Jesus is soon leaving these disciples. He senses their sorrow and He addresses it by saying that they should have peace and they should be comforted by this. Jesus is going to go to prayer and ask God the Father to give them the Helper/the Comforter. And when He comes He comes from God and this Spirit is of the exact same essence as Jesus so the disciples are not losing out on the presence of the Christ. That's why the Lord says this in John 16.7, "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 go, I will send Him to you." From the perspective of Christ, it's to their advantage that Jesus goes away so that they can then receive the Holy Spirit. What an awesome, timely, and necessary promise this is!

We are laying the foundation, biblically, for how the Holy Spirit is our comfort. And we'll have more about the Spirit next time as, together, we continue to discover how to have communion with the Triune God.

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