

Sunday January 28th sermon: "Jesus Promised His People the Spirit of Life -- The God of All Comforts (Pt 42)"

Preached at the Lord's Table at Grace Bible Church in Greenwood, MS,
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Matthew 3:5-12; John 7:37-39

Everyone longs for a comforter in times of trouble. Not just words, but someone to come along beside us, and help carry the load with us, or at least to understand and sympathize with our trouble.

In order for Jesus to comfort us by saving us, it was necessary that Christ have no man to comfort Him!

Christ suffered God's rebuke, and God's strokes against Jesus. It was the reproach of our sins that fell on Jesus. It pleased God to crush Him there at Calvary, and to make His soul an offering for our sin.

There was no man anywhere to comfort Him, because nobody understood the travail of Christ's soul that day. No man could come along side Jesus, to help bear His heavy load. God's Lamb could not be helped or upheld or assisted by any man, as He was made a sacrifice for us.

Having suffered Himself without a man to comfort Him, Our Lord Jesus is bound and determined that we should never be without a comforter!

Jesus called the Holy Ghost our Comforter, Whom the Father would send in Christ's name after He rose from the grave and ascended to Heaven.

John the Baptist foretold that Christ would baptize His people with that very Spirit of God that descended upon Him at His baptism.

Jesus promised us that the Holy Ghost within us would help us to reply to our persecutors, and that indeed, it would be the Spirit speaking through and for us, to defend the honor and right of our Savior.

Jesus also promised that the Holy Ghost would come to all those who believe in Him, and would be as a river of living water, which is life unto His people! This would happen after the ascension of Christ into glory, after His sacrifice and resurrection.

Water is essential for life, and dehydration is often the cause of sickness and even death. It can come upon a person suddenly, and they will turn weak and disoriented and faint.

But Christ's promise of living water had previously been revealed to the woman at the well. She misunderstood Christ's meaning, thinking that she would never have to draw from the well again.

But Christ was speaking of new life in Him, by the Holy Ghost, which is pictured by a boundless supply of living water.

That water is described as living – not a pond, or some body of stale water with scum and algae growing in it!

No, it is LIVING water, fresh flowing water, indicating an abundant and perpetual life provided by the Holy Ghost in believers!

Christ's promise to us is God's Spirit in us, reviving us, regenerating us, making us born again unto spiritual life, as Jesus had described to Nicodemus.

Our new life in Christ is not something we receive, and then uphold by ourselves. Rather, our new life is animated and purified and sustained by the Holy Ghost within us! He dwells in every believer, as Christ promised, and the Apostle John explained to us.

Without that regeneration, without that spiritual life, that living water, men are dead against Christ and His Gospel. Even His miracles cannot convert such dead men, because they have no life in them.

The Lord Jesus reminded His disciples of His promise of the Holy Ghost, that very evening that He rose from the dead.

Jesus appeared to His terrified disciples, who were still broken by His death, and refusing to believe the witnesses that Christ had risen already.

Jesus showed them His wounded hands and side, and then the disciples were glad!

At which point, Christ breathed on them, and commanded that they should receive the Holy Ghost not many days hence.

At Pentecost, the coming of the Holy Ghost was accompanied by a display of power and signs and wonders.

But Christ's promise is sure to all those who trust in Him, and that Spirit comes like the wind – not at our command, and unseen by us, and according to the Spirit's design, and not our own.

None of us can command our own regeneration and faith! None of us can command the regeneration of our lost loved ones.

But His coming is mysterious and inexorable, and according to God's choice and purpose and will, not under the control of mortal men.

When the Holy Ghost comes to us, He receives us, gives us new life in Christ, and grants us the faith to believe the Gospel.

Without the coming of the Holy Ghost as our Comforter, we should be bereft and lost and hopeless.

But those who love Jesus, and delight in His Table, and lay hold of His sacrifice as their only hope, can only do these things by the presence and power of the Holy Ghost within us!