



Sermon, Sunday May 26, 2024

“It is for your good that I am going away”

SCRIPTURE: John 16:1-15 ¹“I have said these things to you to keep you from falling away. ²They will put you out of the synagogues. Indeed, an hour is coming when those who kill you will think that by doing so they are offering worship to God. ³And they will do this because they have not known the Father or me. ⁴But I have said these things to you so that when their hour comes you may remember that I told you about them. “I did not say these things to you from the beginning, because I was with you. ⁵But now I am going to him who sent me, yet none of you asks me, ‘Where are you going?’ ⁶But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your hearts. ⁷Nevertheless, I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Advocate will not come to you, but if I go, I will send him to you. ⁸And when he comes, he will prove the world wrong about sin and righteousness and judgment: ⁹about sin, because they do not believe in me; ¹⁰about righteousness, because I am going to the Father, and you will see me no longer; ¹¹about judgment, because the ruler of this world has been condemned. ¹²“I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. ¹³When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own but will speak whatever he hears, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. ¹⁴He will glorify me because he will take what is mine and declare it to you. ¹⁵All that the Father has is mine. For this reason I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you.

Introduction: The Spirit of truth

Today is the first Sunday after Pentecost. At the time of Jesus, the Jews did not use their native language, Hebrew, but Aramaic. However, the New Testament was not written in Aramaic, but in Koine Greek (the standard Greek language used under the Roman Empire), which was used by the public.

The word **‘the Advocate’** appears in verse 7 of today’s text. This is a translation of the Greek word Parakletos (παράκλητος). The Greek word Parakletos (παράκλητος) is translated into English as ‘Counselor, Helper, Intercessor, Advocate’. Additionally, the concept of the word parakletos (παράκλητος) also includes the role of a lawyer assisting a defendant in a trial. However, in today’s text, why did the Lord speak to the disciples about ‘Paráklētos (παράκλητος)’?

Today’s Gospel of John 16:7 says: **‘Nevertheless I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Advocate will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you.’**

To understand this verse, you must know its background. The background comes from Chapter 13 of the Gospel of John. Chapter 13 where it talks about Jesus washing the feet of his disciples during dinner with them before his death on the cross. Jesus said that one of his disciples would betray him, and he also said that Peter would deny Him. From then on, everything happens just as Jesus said. Additionally, the Bible clearly describes the ragtag group of disciples after Jesus’ death on the cross.

In fact, it is a miracle that Christianity took a firm place in history after the death of Jesus. For some reason, many people at that time could not accept the crucified man as the Son of God and Christ. Additionally, Jews did not like the gathering of Christians, a new religion. Furthermore, in the 60s AD, the representative leaders of the church: James, Jesus’ younger brother, Peter, Jesus’ greatest disciple, and Paul, who established the doctrinal system of the Christian faith, were all dead. Furthermore, after 70s AD when Jerusalem fell to Rome, Christians



began to be expelled from Jewish synagogues. Also, under these circumstances, the persecution of Christians in the Roman Empire became more severe.

Despite these difficult circumstances, the second coming of Jesus that Christians in the early church had been waiting for did not occur. From our commonsense perspective, the Christian community should have collapsed in this situation, but instead it became stronger.

Christians in the early church were not ashamed of Jesus being crucified. Also, they didn't hide from the world because they were afraid. They revealed their faith to the world as it is. Where did they get the strength to overcome the difficult situation they were facing?

The reason the early Christians were able to overcome trials was because of Parakletos. From chapters 14 to 16 of the Gospel of John, parakletos appears three times. John 14:26 says: **“But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said to you.”** In this passage, Parakletos (παράκλητος) is the spirit who teaches the disciples. Also, John 15:26 says: **“When the Advocate comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who comes from the Father, he will testify on my behalf.”** In this passage Parakletos (παράκλητος) is described as the Holy Spirit of Truth. In other words, this means that the fact that Jesus is the truth is revealed by Parakletos (παράκλητος). Lastly, in chapter 16 of today's text, Parakletos (παράκλητος) is described as the spirit who will replace Jesus Christ. In other words, it means that the internal basis for maintaining the disciples' faith in a world where Jesus does not exist is Parakletos (παράκλητος).

Body: Three roles of Parakletos (παράκλητος)

In today's text, verse 8 and below, the three roles of Parakletos are mentioned. Those three things define how early Christianity would relate to the world. If we understand these three perspectives, we will know the essence of the Christian faith and the power for life that comes from it.

The first is sin. Verse 9 of the text says this: **“About sin, because they do not believe in me.”** In this passage, how does it sound to you that not believing in Jesus is a sin? Perhaps, those who do not believe in the Lord will find it difficult to agree with these biblical claims. In this verse, not believing in Jesus is a sin, means that the world denied Jesus, who poured his life into the fact that the kingdom of God has come near.

In other words, the reason many people denied Jesus was because they were not interested in God's rule of the world. We must realize that the Jews at the time of Jesus were so caught up in legalism that they overlooked what God truly wanted. In other words, many Jews at the time of Jesus were not interested in God's original word and were only focused on religious rituals and achievements. This is an act that destroys the fundamental spirit of the law through the law.

Let's take an easy example to understand this. In Jewish law, the command to keep the Sabbath is a command given in the sense that even the resilient and poor must rest one day a week. However, Jewish leaders were not interested in creating a world where everyone lived well and were only interested in whether people kept the Sabbath regulations or not.

Likewise, denying and distorting the kingdom of God proclaimed by Jesus is a sin that destroys life. The spirit that makes us realize this fact is Parakletos (παράκλητος).

The second is righteousness. Verse 10 of the text says: **“About righteousness, because I am going to the Father and you will see me no longer.”** Sometimes when we see a wonderful person with mature character, we say, ‘That person is a just person.’ The Roman people at the time of Jesus also considered justice to be a very important value. So, even while fighting large and small wars along the Mediterranean coast, they claimed that they were achieving justice. But, what on earth is justice and what is injustice? Are we capable of making clear judgments about this?



Also, what exactly is the righteousness that verse 10 refers to? The righteousness (dikaiosúnē; δικαιοσύνη) refers to the resurrection of Jesus. We can see this in the sentence **‘I am going to the Father.’** The meaning of these words is that ‘reaching the ultimate life’ is justice.

We generally think that justice is punishing evil people and rewarding good people according to the standards we have created (the standards of the world).

However, the disciples who experienced Jesus’ resurrection came to know and realize the path to **‘ultimate life.’** So they no longer fear what the world calls **‘rewards and punishments.’** The Parakletos (παράκλητος) makes us realize that reaching the ultimate life is justice.

Third is judgment. Verse 11 of the text says: **“And in regard to judgment, because the prince of this world now stands condemned.”** In fact, if people at the time had heard that the prince of the world was judged because of Jesus Christ, they would not have agreed. At that time, there were only a few people who believed in Jesus, who was crucified, as our savior, Christ, and the Son of God. So what does it mean that **‘the prince of this world now stands condemned’?** It means that the empty reality of the power and authority of the prince of this world who was at the peak of his supreme power was revealed through Jesus.

The world we live in is dominated by materialistic capitalism. Money has become an idol, and many people live by clinging to that idol. People live their lives chasing the idols of money, fame, and power, but these things not only cannot satisfy the thirsty soul of humans, but also make them thirstier. The fact that Jesus revealed the true nature of this world is what it means to say that ‘the prince of this world now stands condemned.’

In fact, it is not easy to live without worrying about money. But some Christians find peace in breaking free from these worries and realizing that their daily bread is enough to ensure a happy life. This is the experience of Parakletos (παράκλητος) that today's Gospel of John talks about.

However, there is an important fact that we should not miss here. The point is that the experience of parakletos is not given to us automatically. The experience of parakletos is given to us through Jesus Christ. Today's text verses 13-14 say; ‘When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth; for he will not speak on his own, but will speak whatever he hears, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. He will glorify me because he will take what is mine and declare it to you.’ We can only experience the Holy Spirit when we get close to Jesus Christ.

Conclusion: Christians are people who have received the first fruits of the Holy Spirit.

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ! Now let’s summarize today’s message. The reason the church has observed Pentecost for the past 2,000 years is because the church is a creation of the Holy Spirit and a community of the Holy Spirit. In Romans 8:22-27, Paul said that Christians are ‘those who have received the first fruits of the Holy Spirit.’ Even saved Christians will be sick, lonely, old, and die while living in this world. Paul says that the Holy Spirit helps us in our weaknesses. This promise of the Bible is a word of comfort in our weary lives.

As mentioned in today's text, this is connected to the words that Parakletos comforts, enlightens, and gives strength to disciples and Christians who were in a crisis of faith.

Lastly, I will conclude the sermon by reading **Romans 8:26-27. “In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express. And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God's will.”** I hope these words will be of great comfort to all of us who are spending the season of Pentecost. **Amen!**

