

"Promised Help: The Holy Spirit"



John 14:15-26

"If you love me, you will keep my commandments. ¹⁶ And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper,^a to be with you forever, ¹⁷ even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be^b in you.

¹⁸ "I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. ¹⁹ Yet a little while and the world will see me no more, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live. ²⁰ In that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you. ²¹ Whoever has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me. And he who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and manifest myself to him." ²² Judas (not Iscariot) said to him, "Lord, how is it that you will manifest yourself to us, and not to the world?" ²³ Jesus answered him, "If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. ²⁴ Whoever does not love me does not keep my words. And the word that you hear is not mine but the Father's who sent me.

²⁵ "These things I have spoken to you while I am still with you. ²⁶ 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 that I have said to you.

::Transcription::

Pastor Thom Rittichier:

Hey, welcome to the last day of January. I think that there's a lot of folks that are kind of glad for that. Also, a little snow has interrupted our regular plan. So we are not at the school. As a matter of fact, I am sitting in my dining room. And this behind me is not a halo. I know some of you were thinking that, however, I have not applied for the canonization and the getting of a halo. Matter of fact, the Bible lets us know that when we trust Jesus Christ, we become saints, saints of God through the work of Christ. Well, this morning is a little bit different since Dr. Stewart is in his study, and he'll be talking to us in a little bit, and I am in my dining room. And we are trying some different components and some new technology applications this morning. These have been

worked through, but you know how that goes even when electronic things are worked through. So if you run into a bit of a snag, let us know, send us a note. We are on YouTube this morning, we are on Facebook and The Heartland Bible Chapel website. So according to Proverbs 16:16-19, one of the seven things that are abhorrent to God is the sowing of discord among brother. So we are going to go opposite of that this morning, we are going to be using this accord to sow unity among brothers. Dr. Stewart will be addressing that in a moment, because he's going to take to one of the Over The Top Promises of God delivered by Jesus to us. This is particularly designed to bring unity among brotheren. It's designed to be the help that God has in mind for us. So John 14 is on deck with Dr. Stewart coming up right away. You know, the experience of that, which he's going to be talking about, is a reality for us. This is not a lesson from a book years ago. This is a description of Jesus promise, that is the living reality for us, as believers to keep us connected.

And being connected is one of the fundamental essentials of Heartland Bible Chapel. As a matter of fact, we call it part of the rhythm of the Heartland heartbeat, connecting to God and others. We're going to take a moment to connect this morning to others. Doc is going to be helping us connect to God, but we're going to be talking about connecting to others here. I talked to Justin just last night, and he said that he is probably going to be out shoveling and plowing snow today. He has the opportunity to do that. So I hope that's going well for him. He also reported that Laura is home. This past week there were some things going on with her pregnancy that they wanted to pay attention to, so she's at home. So that is good. And also this past week, three folks from our fellowship took a step in ministry, very encouraging. We had an opportunity to do some training.

Emmaus Bible School provides correspondence materials to the incarcerated and one of the directors in Indiana was training three of our folks to be involved in that. So there's Linda, Doug and myself, Dorothy is going to be coming on board with that soon. So I'd like you to be in prayer for that, it's a good ministry especially during these limited and restricted time. It gives us an opportunity to minister the Word of God directly to some folks who are incarcerated. Doc also may share a note, in a moment, about their older son, who they have an opportunity to have at home again. So I think that will be an important Connect note as well.

We want to open with a word of prayer. And there have been many prayers answered recently. And these have opened up doors of opportunity of ministry, even during these COVID times. Indeed, the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man accomplishes much. And so we're going to take time to do that. If you have some prayer requests, I'd like you to send them to us. You could call or text at this number, we do have a group that is earnestly getting together weekly to seek God in prayer, that phone number is 765-499-8970. It is also posted on our website. So let's pray for a moment, and then turn this over to doc, to connect with God.

Father in heaven, we come to you and we are so grateful that we are in a place that, even during a pandemic, we can get together, even during weather that is disruptive for our regular routine, we can get together. We can sow accord among one another and it's accord that's more than just a choice for unity. It is a work that you accomplish supernaturally. So Father, as we come together today, I pray that you will open our

hearts to have a spirit of wisdom and insight into the Word of God. That you may lead us into your truth, which is a promise that you have made to us. So Father, encouraged doc to be bold in proclaiming what Jesus had to tell us and encourage our hearts to be receptive to join you in what you're doing. In Jesus name. Amen. So I am checking off and doc is coming on.

Dr. Stewart:

Good morning. Beautiful outside, I'm looking outside my window at the snow on the trees and it's really, really pretty. We have a son home with us, another COVID casualty, not really sick, but he needs to isolate. So Nate's with us now for a few days. We're glad to have him.

So today we're going to continue on with the promises of God. I would title this promise, Help of the Holy Spirit, John 14:15-26. Early on, as a new Christian, I was given a book about five missionaries that went to a tribe deep in the Amazon jungle to share Christ with them, Jim Elliot and several other missionaries. This was a biography about his life, and their motivation was to reach people who had never heard the gospel. The tribe was isolated, mainly due to their reputation. You see, people knew them as murderers. They killed outsiders who entered their territory, and they murdered each other frequently. The death rate from spearing among them was 60%. And they had a high infant mortality. They were in danger of dying out completely. These missionaries understood the danger that they could potentially be in, but they were motivated by a stronger force. They were motivated by love, a love for this tribe, to share Christ with them. The men decided that they would carry guns, just in case things went badly. But guns would be used only to scare or intimidate the Indians not to shoot them. They were convinced that they were ready to meet God, but the Huaorani Indians were not. Contact was made and the first gifts were dropped carefully to the Indians. And then contact was made between a couple women and a man who came to be with the missionaries for an entire day. And they felt they had made good progress. But based on a lie, one man said the missionaries were violent, and they were there to hurt them. And so they went back and secretly snuck up on them and spear them to death. Jim Elliott wrote the famous words, "He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose". His life was an illustration of that. Two years later, Elizabeth Elliott, widow of Jim, and Valerie, their two year old daughter along with another lady, went to the Huaorani, at their invitation. Can you imagine taking your toddler daughter to live with the tribe who had killed your husband? What could Elizabeth have been thinking? Some said: Don't go. You're crazy. Think of your daughter. Are you just suicidal? Elizabeth had longed for this opportunity. She had prayed for years for the chance to live among the Huaorani, to learn their language and to translate the New Testament into that language. She loved them, and she asked God over and over to send her. He did. She believed God and He sent her to them. And her going was a simple act of obedience to God. That brings us to our passage in John 14. "If you love me, you will keep my commandments", verse 15. What commandment? Love your enemies. To that end, her heart's desire was to bring them to Jesus. She would place herself and her daughter in God's hands. She would trust I AM. How could she do this? It seems super human. That's because it is. The Spirit of God inhabited her heart. And love was the fruit. She was faithful. But even though she desired to translate the Bible into their language, she

wouldn't be allowed to do that. Another woman, Rachel Saint, the sister of missionary pilot, Nate Saint, who was speared to death with Jim Elliot, would do that. Rachel would live her entire life with the Huaorani. And she and some other linguists translated the New Testament into their language. And most of the tribe came to know Jesus.

Elisabeth Elliot would go on to write a series of books about the events that would captivate Christians and non Christians. Many people, because of these, would bring to have a heart for missions and go to various places around the world.

And that brings us to our passage, John 14:15-26. I want to read that with you. "If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father and He will give you another helper, to be with you forever. He is the spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him, nor knows him. You know him for he dwells with you and will be in you. I will not leave you as orphans, I will come to you. Yet a little while, and the world will see me no more, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live. In that day, you will know that I am in the Father, and you in me and I in you. Whoever has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me. And he who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and manifest myself to him. Judas (not Iscariot) said to him, Lord, how is it that you will manifest yourself to us and not to the world? Jesus answered, If anyone loves me, he will keep my word and my Father will love him and we will come to him and make our home with him. Whoever does not love me, does not keep my words. The word that you hear is not mine but the Father who sent me. These things I have spoken to you while I am still with you. 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 that I've said to you."

Verse 15, "If you love me, you will keep my commandments." God created us and has given us spiritual life. The all wise God has given us His command. It just makes sense that we would obey. The problem is, we like to do it our own way. We don't want to do it God's way, He must make us willing. Ezekiel 36:26-27 tells us that, "And I will give you a new heart, and put a new spirit within you and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and will give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules." Notice he said he will cause you to "walk in my statutes". We need his spirit to make us willing. Jay Adams says "love is structured by Christ's commandment." We don't always like structure, but God has structured it that way. Love is not some amorphous, free flowing thing which oozes around, it has form. That is why love can be commanded. It is not feeling first. It begins by obedient giving of one's self to another. Jesus gave of himself all his days, but especially on his way to the cross. Hebrews 5:8 and 9, tells us "he learned obedience through the things that he suffered." In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cry and tears that makes us think of the garden of Gethsemane when Jesus was sweating great drops of blood as he prayed to his father, to him who is able to save him from death. And he was heard because of his reverence. Although he was a son, he learned obedience through what he suffered. Even though it was painful, he would listen and walk with his father. And that is our great example, as we suffer in various ways. We can endure it on our own, we can get a stiff upper lip, or pull ourselves up by our bootstraps, or we can trust the great I AM, in the middle of our suffering, and walk with Him. It is love to God as we do this.

But we need strength outside of ourselves to do it. And that's where verse 16 comes in. Jesus prays for you. Jesus prays for you. He asks the Father for another helper. You see, Jesus had been a great help and support and comfort to His disciples. Now he asked for another helper, helper of the same kind, just like he is. The Greek word is Allos, which means the same. The backdrop of Jesus words, he is getting ready to leave in a few hours, but this new helper will be with you forever. No matter where you go. No matter how much trouble or danger or loss you suffer, he will be with you. The Greek word for helper is Paraclete, one who comes alongside another, a helper in a time of need. Ironside says Paraclete is the same word as in 1 John 2:1, which means that which speaks as an advocate, a defense attorney. Why would we need an attorney? People don't particularly like attorneys or feel like they need them. But when you're in legal trouble, you would very much love to have an attorney by your side. I have been there and I have appreciated that help. We have a need and Jesus Christ, the righteous, is the one who has given the satisfying payment for our sins, we're justly condemned for our sins. That's our greatest legal trouble. We're condemned. Satan comes and accuses us while Jesus Christ argues our case before God, My blood is shed on the cross to wash that one white. Just as I look at the snow, the pure white snow, we are washed, white and clean by Jesus's blood. We are innocent by the blood. The spirit is our advocate. He can defend us just like Jesus. There is a sweetness and preciousness about the word comforter that appeals to the heart. The Paraclete is the Comforter. Our English word is a compound word: con-to be with or in the company of and fortis-to strengthen, one who strengthens by companionship. That is one of the greatest ministries of the Holy Spirit. The Paraclete who comes to your side to help and he is an advocate, one who helps with your trouble, your legal troubles before God. And the Holy Spirit is all this. He has come from heaven, as promised by our blessed Lord, to assist us in every crisis, and every time of difficulty, that may arise in our Christian lives.

Verse 17, "Even the spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him for he dwells with you and will be in you." The spirit of truth. We live in a world filled with lies and deceptions. And the Spirit of God is consistent with God the Father, "Let God be true, but every man a liar", God the Father is truth, Romans 3:4. With Jesus, who is the way, the truth and the life. He embodies truth. The world cannot receive the Spirit because it neither sees him or knows him. in 1 Corinthians 2:14 we're told the "natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, they're foolishness. He's not able to understand them, because they're spiritually discerned." It's not a question of would they like to know, or are they willing, it's a question of ability. They're "dead in trespasses and sins", Ephesians 2:1. They cannot know, it takes insight and drawing from the Holy Spirit, himself, to bring them. If you don't know Christ, you are totally dependent upon God to receive truth, you must ask him, please open my eyes, open my ears, let me hear. He's led us here today. Listen to what he says about your sins. He commands all men everywhere to repent, to turn to Him, and trust in Jesus who sacrificed himself for your sins.

If you're a believer and you've trusted Jesus, the last part of John 14:17 says, you know there is intimacy and communion, he is with you and will be in you. Notice the future tense. He's not indwelt believers yet in this verse. But after Pentecost, the Spirit was

given. Let's see that just for a moment. Turn to John 20:21-22, Jesus says, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you." That's the great commission. "And then he breathed on them and said to them, receive the Holy Spirit." I believe the spirit delayed here, and nothing happens when Jesus breathed on them. But 40 days later, at Pentecost, we see in Acts 2:1-4, "When the day of Pentecost arrived, they were all together in one place. Suddenly there came from heaven, a sound like a mighty rushing wind." I believe this is Jesus breath, pneuma, spirit, "a breath which comes in power, a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. And divided tongues of fire appear to them arrested on each of them. And they were filled with the Holy Spirit." And these men were changed. There was a supernatural boldness, and the gospel was preached with great power as 3000 in Jerusalem were converted, converted to Christ, that first day, Acts 2:41. In Old Testament times, the spirit was with men but He did not indwell them. MacArthur says this, "The Lord's promise that the Spirit would indwell the disciples in the future does not mean that the Holy Spirit was not present or active with them before Pentecost. No one in any era of redemptive history", that's all the saints of the past through the whole old testament, "could be saved, sanctified, empowered for service and witness, or guided in understanding the scriptures and praying in the will of God apart from the spirit's internal soul work. That he was already present with the disciples, before the cross, is clear from the present tense of the verb translated abides." One author explains the Holy Spirit's ministry prior to the church with these words: "To distinguish it from the intimacy of the new covenant indwelling, perhaps this ministry is best designated abiding." Or in the words of the prophet Haggai, "My spirit is abiding in your midst; do not fear.", Haggai 2:5. So in the Old Testament, the spirit is with them, but not necessarily indwelling. And in the Old Testament, saints could not have enjoyed the benefits of the new covenant before it had been inaugurated. Under the old covenant, the spirit was present with believers in a general sense. But soon, as Christ promised His disciples, the Comforter would in an unprecedented way, personally and permanently, indwell those who believed. There would be unique power in ministry and evangelism. That happened on the day of Pentecost.

John 14:18, Jesus said, "I will not leave you as orphans", fatherless. Ironside said, "When they have been deprived of the protection of the Spirit, they are orphans, exposed to every kind of fraud and injustice, incapable of governing themselves and in short, unable of themselves to do anything. First then, the disciples are reminded of their weaknesses, that, distrusting themselves, they may rely on nothing else than the protection of Christ." So timely in a pandemic. When we have so many things, like social unrest, around us, there is such uncertainty. We are truly desperately dependent on Him. This is a powerful way to describe the disciples feelings, at the time, there was disappointment and disillusionment, a loss after the death of Jesus. And they would feel it, they would feel alone. He had been their friend and their teacher, their encourager. And then the cross, it was all gone. This was coming in just a few hours. He says, Do not fear I am coming back and in three days, he would be back to see them. He would not come back to evangelize or show himself to the lost, those who had rejected him, but to his people, his disciples and others who believed. In 1 Corinthians 15:6-8 says this is after his resurrection, "he appeared to Peter and the 12 and then he appeared to more than 500 brothers at one time, and then he appeared to James and then to all the

apostles. Last He appeared to Paul". He did not show himself to the world, but to believers.

Back in John 14:19, "Soon the world will no longer see me, but you will see me. Since I live, you will live also." Because they witnessed Jesus resurrection, they were given visible proof of their own reality, that one day they would be physically raised up just as Jesus was. In 1 Corinthians 15:20-21, spiritually we are alive from the dead by Jesus death and resurrection for us. We can see God at work in our lives. "Because I live, you will live also" reminds me of a song...because he lives I can face tomorrow, because he lives all fear is gone. Because I know, I know, he holds the future. Life is worth living just because he lives. Verse 20 of John 14 says "In that day", What day? That day of Pentecost when the Spirit comes in to the church. "In that day, the spirit will testify within you that I am in my Father and you are in me and I in you." This is a profound truth, to be in Christ. What does that mean? The New Testament gives many metaphors to explain this great truth and to depict the nature of that union. Jesus is the vine and the believers are the branches, John 15:5. They are the body of which he is the head, 1 Corinthians 12:27 and Ephesians:1:22-23. They are stones in the spiritual house of which he is the cornerstone Ephesians 2:20-22 and 1 Peter 2:4-6. They are the bride and he is the groom, 2 Corinthians 11:2 and Ephesians 5:22-24 and Revelation 19:7. Further expressing that union, the Bible teaches that believers are "in Christ". Romans 8:1, Paul declared, "There is therefore no condemnation for those who are in Christ." 2 Corinthians 5:17, "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature. The old has passed away, behold, all things have become new." He reminded the Colossians of the "riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.", Colossians 1:27. Jesus reassured his worried disciples that death would not end their relationship. Their union with him was indestructible, which is true for all believers. Nothing can separate us from his presence or his love, Romans 8:38-39. This is a tremendous comfort and help when we are going through hard times. Our initial story of a young woman whose husband was killed by the tribe in Ecuador, is hard to imagine, the grief and the loss and the utter darkness of that experience. She describes her thinking just after that, "It was hard to think. I just kept doing the next thing. Obediently walking with Jesus, step by step." That's what we need in whatever hardship or trial or loss, even the loss of a spouse, whatever we're experiencing. Trusting I AM, walking hand in hand through the process with him. That's what we need, to look into his word for encouragement and strength. And when we feel as though we have none, then to simply pray, Help me Lord! Whenever we're overwhelmed.

Verse 21 of John 14, as we obey his commandments, we show love for God. Have we heard this before? Three different times in this passage he's going tie obedience with love, seems to be pretty important. As we do that, we will be loved. God promises to manifest or reveal Himself to us. There is no greater promise in the Bible than this, that we might know God, that we can grow deeper in our relationship with Him, finding him more and more precious to us, as we obey and listen and respond. Ironsides calls this "invaluable treasure". And Gill says, "He favors his people with communion with Him and they see his beauty, his fullness, his grace and righteousness, his power and glory.

Verse 22, Judas response to this. This is not Iscariot, the rebel, this is the other Judas, who is Thaddeus. He asked sensitive question of Jesus, "Lord, how is it that you will manifest yourself to us and not to the world? Jesus, you've told us that you love the world, that you've gone out to the world, preached the gospel to the world. But now you say, you will manifest yourself to us and not to the world. This is complicated by the misunderstanding that they felt Jesus was going to set up an earthly kingdom, which he told them he was not.

Verse 23, "Jesus answers If anyone loves me, he will keep my word and my Father will love him and we will come to him and make our home with him." We have seen the world. The world has no desire for Christ, the world despises his words and wants no part of obeying Him, it is foolishness to them. They will find judgment and condemnation from God for their rejection of him and his God-given authority. That was true of us too, before we knew him. We were enemies of the cross. Jesus had appealed to the whole world, he preached the gospel to all but many rejected, and now their opportunity with him has run out. Not necessarily with the Holy Spirit. The promise to us as we listen and obey, God says in verse 23, "we will come to him and make our home with him." That is not love at a distance but love which comes near to us, to take up residence in us, not a temporary apartment, but a permanent home. He plans on staying for good in our hearts, never to leave us or forsake us. Verse 25, "These things I've spoken to you while I am still with you." Jesus is intentional here. He cares about his disciples. He's preparing them for his death and the spirits entrance.

Jay Adams says about verse 26, "Though Jesus is gone physically, Jesus will make himself apparent or he'll make it real, not in a public or a visible manner, but in the person of the Holy Spirit." The Spirit will come to you and will remain with you so that you will experience the loving guidance "he will provide teaching and reminding you of everything I told you". It was important that these disciples would have divine recollection of his words, because they would write the majority of the New Testament. This is divine inspiration. MacArthur says but Christ's promise, that the Spirit would bring to their remembrance all that he had said to them, was primarily a promise to the apostles of divine inspiration. The Holy Spirit was supernaturally guiding them, granting them an inerrant understanding of Jesus Christ person and teaching. Peter described the process of inspiration in 2 Peter 1:20-21, men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God. All Scripture is inspired by God or God breathed. The Holy Spirit inspired the very words of Scripture, not merely the thoughts of the writers,¹ 1 Corinthians 2:13. The Bible therefore is inerrant and authoritative. And that's the only infallible rule of faith and practice. For the redeemed the Bible is the sword of the Spirit, Ephesians 6:17. Will you leave your offensive weapon, the sword, sitting on the shelf collecting dust while Satan is alive and well and after you? The word is profitable, for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness so that the man of God, or the woman of God may be adequate and equipped for every good work,² 2 Timothy 3:16-17. Armed with the truth, and accompanied by the presence of God, the disciples and their contemporaries would soon be those who turn the world upside down, Acts 17:6. For us, there is a promise here as well. We're not inspired to write the New Testament, but we are taught by the Spirit of God. And for us he does bring truth to our minds, he helps us remember these truths as we go throughout our day, he teaches

us. Harry Ironside says it this way, "The Holy Spirit is now the teacher, for Jesus said, But the Comforter, whom the Father will send in my name. He will teach you all things and bring all things to remembrance, whatever I've said to you." That is his special ministry to the people of God as they go through this scene, it means far more to sit down over the Bible and have the Holy Spirit open up its precious truths. The great ministry of the Holy Spirit is to take the things of Christ and reveal them to us, to open his truth and to make his Holy Word clear and plain and real to our souls. The more we read this word, in dependence on the teaching of the Holy Spirit, the more it will be open to us, and the more precious it will become to us. We should be very, very thankful for this ministry of the Holy Spirit. In Isaiah chapter 29:11 it says that "the sealing or the closing of the word is a punishment threatened to unbelievers". We should be so thankful God gives us His Word and His Spirit to teach us, inspire us and help us understand the Word of God. It's a gift from God. Jesus taught the disciples these things at a very stressful time. MacArthur says this, "But in this moment of distress, just hours before the cross, the situation looked desperately hopeless. Aware of the disciples distress, Jesus pointed them to the ultimate and only source of hope, the Triune God." In the same way that the promise of God's presence heartened them 2000 years ago, it should still bring confidence and courage to believers today, since it provides comfort, both now and forever, Revelation 21:4.

So let's take just a few moments, to consider what the scripture says about the Holy Spirit. First, what do we know of him? He's the third person of the Trinity. And he is a person, he has personal characteristics that we are told about in Scripture, like intellect, "who knows the thoughts of God?", 1 Corinthians 2:11. He has a mind, Romans 8:27. He has emotions, he can be grieved, Ephesians 4:30. He has a will, he distributes gifts to the church according to his will, 1 Corinthians 12:11. He teaches as we've seen in John 14:26 and Luke 12:12. He testifies, John 15:26 and Romans 8:16. He leads and directs, Matthew 4:1. He gives guidance, Mark 13:11 and Acts 15:28. He convicts, John 16:7-8. He speaks, Acts 8:29. He intercedes for us, Romans 8:26. He reveals things to us, Mark 12:36. If he was simply an impersonal force, he cannot be lied to, Acts 5:3. He couldn't be blasphemed, Matthew 12:31 or insulted, Hebrew 10:29. As a member of the Godhead, the Holy Spirit has attributes. He possesses the divine attributes, including eternity, Hebrews 9:14. Omnipotence, He knows everything, 1 Corinthians 2:10-11. He's omnipresent, Psalm 139:7. He's omniscient, Genesis 1:2 and Job 33:4, as he creates the world. Veracity or truthfulness, 1 John 5:6. And he's called the spirit of truth in our passage, John 14:17. He has the power to give life, he's called the spirit of life, Romans 8:2. The Holy Spirit does the work that only God can do, including creating the universe, Genesis 1:2. And inspiring the scriptures, 2 Peter 1:21 and 2 Timothy 3:16. He regenerates lost sinners, John 3:6 and Titus 3:5. He sanctifies us, he makes us look like Jesus, 2 Thessalonians 2:13. Finally, scripture unequivocally states that the Holy Spirit is God. Paul says, "Now the Lord is the spirit unmistakably affirming the deity of the Holy Spirit."

I hope this gives you a greater appreciation for the Holy Spirit, who's been sent to us. I hope you experience His encouragement, his teaching, his comfort, his strength and even his conviction. The key to this, as a believer, is trusting God with your circumstances. Even the difficult circumstances we find ourselves in today. And obeying

Him each step of the way. You will show your love for God, and He promises to reveal Himself to you as you obey Him. Let's take a moment pray.

Father, we're thankful for your grace to us. We know that we're lost sinners, that are completely undone and on our own. And the Holy Spirit comes to us, he draws us to Jesus. And as believers, as we would trust Christ and ask forgiveness of our sins, He indwells us. And he gives us comfort and strength and help. We're so thankful for your grace and mercy that comes through him. We know we're totally dependent on you, even to walk in the Christian life, by his power. Help us to look to you and trust you. We thank you that he speaks of Jesus, in His sacrifice for us. We thank you for him. In Jesus name. Amen.

Pastor Thom Rittichier:

Well, I think that I'm back. This is all being controlled from Bloomington. We appreciate the work that has gone into this by Nathanael, who's functioning out of Bloomington and others, who have worked on coordinating all of these components to make this possible. Hopefully, it's been an improvement. Well, I want to comment a little bit on what doc unfolded to us today. You know, that is so much more than a message, that is so much more than a lesson to be learned and that is the living reality for those who are in Christ. This is what unites us together, that by One spirit we've been born. The apostle Paul says, by one Spirit, we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, we've been all made to drink of one spirit. We have a spirit, a spirit that's in us. It's beyond what our styles and our traditions, and our takes on the events in the world. It's beyond all of that in uniting us. Paul says, keep the unity of the Spirit, in the bond of peace. God's people have been tried along with the world. God's people are seeing this as a preparation for what God is doing down the road as he keeps going on his plan, and bringing his course to completion, that he's made known to us. And as believers, we're unified with God's Spirit, to see that accomplished. So we pray, we labor, we serve, we carry on, as God does his work in the world. And those who yet don't trust Christ are presented opportunities, through the demeanor, the behavior of the believers, as they keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, as they're taught by him, as they carry this on. This is so much more than a lesson. This is the living reality for those who are in Christ, and we know it, don't we, we know it. We know this is not just words on a page. This is where our heart is. Thank God for that. Thank God for doc taking the time to work on that, thank God for putting this together that it can be streamed today. We'll be following up on that. It does tell us that life is about trusting I AM and what provisions we have to do that and what a great course to run to for those who are in Christ.

Well, I'd like to share with you a Connect, as we close up today. The Connect has to do with our efforts right now, to connect with those who are around the world. We have been pursuing this publication that has come out. This comes from opendoorsusa.org. And that publication can be accessed online by you. And right now we are looking at the persecuted countries of the world. We're on number 35, Morocco. Now we're doing this systematically, because all of these 50 countries are places in the world where it is the most difficult to follow Jesus Christ. That is a heritage of those who follow Jesus Christ. All who live godly, in Christ Jesus, will suffer persecution. There will be folks who talk

bad about you. And if those folks happen to get into a position of power, they will use that power. All who live godly, in Christ Jesus, will suffer persecution. There'll be bad mouthing, there'll be actions taken, there'll be loss of income, because you name the name of Jesus Christ and that's going on for brothers who are in the world. Some of them, we will never cross paths with. But we can, through media and technology and by the unity of the Spirit seek God's face concerning them. Morocco is a country that's in the African continent. And these folks have Islamic heritage, Islamic presence. And Christianity is severely persecuted both on a personal level and a state level. We've got brothers, there, sisters there, in Christ, who are experiencing that. And my request is that you get on opendoorsusa.org or you just look up Morocco, and pray about these folks. They are needing to trust the great I AM and what he's taking them through in that corner of the world. It's important during this time, trusting I AM. And also for us too. If you need somebody to talk to, get a hold of me. We have some others who'd be willing to talk with you, as well as myself. I made some efforts to do that this week. And it's been really good to share with some believers. If you're not in touch with believers, you need to be, we need to stay connected.

And hey, let me give you a personal note of something that is a prayer request. This week, I go to the audiologist because some of my family members are saying, "you're not picking up on that". They've been saying it for a while, but I haven't heard it, but not because I didn't hear it. But because I ignore it. This week, you can keep me in prayer. And then maybe I'll be able to hear a little closer. Let me tell you, it is a little frustrating, especially in counseling, when I'm sitting there and I can't pick up on what's being said, I can't sort out the words. And of course they have these masks on now. And you know that doesn't make it go any better and they're taking sounds muffled and I can't get more visual cues to figure out what that particular word was, you have to ask them again and again. So keep me in prayer. That's the short of it. Keep me in prayers, if you would, as I go through this. Let us know what prayer request you have. Because this isn't a one way street. This is a two way street because together in the unity of the Spirit, and the bond of peace. We are supplied to serve the Lord during pandemic times, during a time of unrest, during a time of cold weather, we can do it in Jesus name.

Let's pray, Father in heaven, thank you. Thank you for the abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness in Jesus Christ. Thank you that your son has not left us as orphans. But he's come to us and we know Him, that He dwells with us and He is in us. It is all a downpayment. What we're going to experience, when we see you, face to face, when it's no longer walking by faith, but our faith becomes sight, in Jesus name. Amen.

You know, that kind of reminds me of a song, I'm not going to sing though like doc got to. But it's the song, when our faith becomes sight. That will be the reality. Well I hope to see you, face to face, soon, especially as more of our folks are getting the vaccine, which is a big help. Hope to see you soon because we've got a future and a ministry as people are being able to get back together. Buy for right now, take the precautions. Take care. God bless and see you later. Amen."