

The Promise of the Comforter

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[0 : 00] we're going to worship God beginning singing in Gaelic the words of Psalm 135 at the beginning of this psalm Psalm 135 praise ye the Lord the Lord's name praise his servants praise ye God who stand in God's house in the courts of our God make abode praise ye the Lord for he is good and to him praises sing sing praises to his name because it is a pleasant thing for Jacob to himself the Lord the Jews of his good pleasure and he hath chosen Israel for his peculiar treasure because I know assuredly the Lord is very great and that our Lord above all gods in glory hath his seat mollav shu jiya ardvallav vos jay anam yehovah shen mollav shen todo

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

[3 : 55] Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Oh, my God.

Oh, my God.

[6 : 49] Oh, my God.

Oh, my God.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

[8 : 25] Amen. Amen.

Amen. our knees before the Lord our Maker. And we acknowledge that you are indeed our Maker, that you are Creator. We are your creatures and in you we live, move and have our being. We bless you for every knowledge that we have of you.

Even though your word teaches us that by nature we have this innate understanding that we are creatures bounded to our Creator God.

And yet we have the capacity to suppress that knowledge and deny it and live as if we have no accountability to such a God.

That we have no dependence upon such a God. And that everything is bound up in our own hands. And the reality is far from that. You created us for yourself.

[9 : 50] And we are created in order to glorify you and enjoy you as the divines of old thought. And our limited experience of that enjoyment is down to the fact that we are far distant from you.

We have fallen in sin and we sin daily in thought, word and indeed and we acknowledge that to you. We pray that even as we pray these words that you would guide us in the truth.

For your word is truth. That you would fill our mouth from on high. That your hand would be upon us. And that your spirit would enlighten our mind afresh in the knowledge of Christ.

He is the one to whom we must come and upon whose name we must cling. And as we worship, may your worship be acceptable to you because of that very fact that we come in his name.

Remember all that we join with in worship. We give thanks that we can believe that even at this moment, while we may be in our homes, some of us, and separate from the body of Christ as far as the physical presence of it is concerned, that the spiritual reality is before us always.

[11 : 11] that we are part of that body. And Christ is our head and that each one who has experienced his saving grace, who has experienced the redemptive power of his spirit, bringing us to our knees, pleading for mercy, crying out to the God who is God over all, that you would cleanse from our sin.

Just as another before us did, as he saw Jesus Christ in the way. Jesus, thou son of David, have mercy upon me.

And we give thanks that if that is the knowledge that we have, that it is not a knowledge that we are willing to acknowledge in any way, except it be for thy grace.

Guide us then this evening, so that each one of us may we may plead the merits of another and come clinging to his finished work, that you would receive us to yourself.

Remember each one of us, according to the needs that we have, temporal or spiritual needs, greater or smaller, whatever they may be, you know all things about it.

[12 : 26] There is nothing hidden from the all-seeing eye of the God with whom we have to do. And we acknowledge that, that your spirit is present with us, that you are the searcher of the thoughts and the intents of the heart, that you are the one who is able to enter into the experience of each one of us here, wherever we may be this evening.

We may outwardly conform, but inwardly we may be wayward. We may keep hidden from sight our fallenness and the aftermath of that, so that to all intents and purposes we appear on the straight and narrow, when the reality is that we are far from you.

Have mercy upon each of us, we pray, that we may walk in the path of light and of health. May we embrace Christ as our Saviour and follow in his footsteps, depending upon his mercy, entrusting to his finished work.

We pray that you would bless our homes, our families, loved ones, young and old, great or small amongst us, we pray that you would remember each one. You are able to visit the Bothy, you are able to visit the Palace, you are able to visit kings and queens, and you are able to visit the neighbors of the land, those who are without the substance of this world, except in a very meagre fashion, that you are able to endow us with riches far greater than any the world has to offer us.

Every one of us is the same in that regard. Day will come, that what we came into the world with will be what we leave the world with. There is nothing that we can take with us, save the riches that Christ has endowed us with, if that is true of us.

[14 : 28] So remember your people, the world over, we pray for them, that you would bless them richly, that you would bless them body and soul. You remember us in this time of pandemic, as it goes on, so we hear of prospects that are positive.

At the same time, we hear the same repeated message of those affected and infected by COVID, and suffering goes on.

In our own midst, within these islands, we have avoided much of the griefs and the sorrows that many others have had to endure, but we are no more worthy than they.

And we pray that you would continue to keep us free from the hares that this pandemic has introduced into our experience, almost as something that has come during the night and it has caught us unaware.

So we pray for the nation that we're part of. We pray your blessing upon those who are suffering at the present, remembering those in hospital, any who are unwell at home, any who depend on the care of others.

[15 : 45] We pray for them and ask your blessing to be imparted to them, even by the hand of those whose duty it is to care for them, doctors and nurses and carers of all descriptions, whether it be in institutions or whether it be in the community.

We pray for the nations of the earth, remembering all who govern. May they be wise in the way that they look beyond themselves to God.

And we see so much evidence of carelessness and indifference to the word of the Lord. And yet you are the word made flesh.

You are the God who has made provision for our sin and no greater provision can be found and no lesser will be expected of us at the last.

We pray that you would bless your gospel, bless the word of truth as it goes out from weekday to weekday, from Sabbath day to Sabbath day. Be merciful to us, we pray, remembering all the needs that we bring before you, those hidden, those known.

[16 : 51] We pray for the grieving, we pray for the broken hearted, we pray for those embroiled in all kinds of dispute within the home, within the community, within the nations of the earth.

Cleanse from sin, we pray. Go before us in the Lord. His name we ask it, with forgiveness of sin in him. Amen. Going to hear the word of God as we have it in the gospel of John.

In chapter 14, John's gospel, chapter 14, we can read from verse 15 to the end of the chapter.

If ye love me, keep my commandments, and I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another comforter, that he may abide with you forever.

Even the spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him, but ye know him, for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.

[18 : 00] I will not leave you comfortless, I will come to you. Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more, but ye see me.

Because I live, ye shall live also. At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you. He that hath my commandments, and keepeth him, he it is that loveth me, and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.

Judas saith unto him, not Iscariot, Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world? Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words, and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.

He that loveth me not, keepeth not my sayings, and the word which you hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me. These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you, but the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.

Peace I lay with you, my peace I give unto you, not as the world giveth give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.

[19 : 50] Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away, and come again unto you. If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father, for my Father is greater than I.

And now I have told you, before it come to pass, that when it is come to pass, ye might believe, hereafter I will not talk much with you, for the Prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me.

But that the world may know that I love the Father, and as the Father gave me commandment, even so I do. Arise, let us go hence.

Amen. And may the Lord add his blessing to a reading of his word, and to his name be the praise. I'd like us to turn for a short while to words we have in John chapter 14.

We can read again at verse 25. These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you. But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.

[21 : 16] And so on. But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things.

Who of us can doubt the love that Jesus has for his own in this world. This is seen in so many different ways.

Not just where we would expect to see it or recognise it. We see it, for example, in the most obvious way, in his willingness to die the death of his people on the cross.

We see, however, his patience in the face of his disciples repeated lack of understanding despite his many efforts to teach them.

And here, in this sequence of chapters, we see the depth of concern that he has for these disciples, even though the cross is very much on his mind, and in it his encounter with the righteous judge to whom he must answer for the sins of his people.

[22 : 37] speaking in the words of the passage John 16 verses 8 to 11 B. B. Warfield wrote, What a spectacle we see here, the master girding himself for his last stroke of battle, with the joy of victory in his eyes, while his surrounding friends are with streaming tears anointing him for burial.

He plants his foot firmly upon the steps of his eternal throne, and they smited breasts with the sorrowful cry we had hoped that thou mightest have been he that should have redeemed Israel.

I would like us to consider the words of our text in the light of the great comfort it contains to all believers of all generations.

First of all, I want us to think of the provision that is being made for the people of God upon the departure of the Lord from the world.

There are three parts I think to this that we can just say a word on. The Holy Ghost is going to come and he will come sent by God in the name of Christ and there is a name that he is given that is of the utmost import for the Lord's people.

[24 : 18] Secondly, what will he be doing once he comes? We are told that he will teach all things and that he shall bring all things to remembrance whatever Christ Jesus has said to you.

Regarding the provision made, we are taught plainly that the Holy Spirit is going to come. this is an important truth that the Bible teaches us and it is taught repeatedly and in many ways from the prophecies of the Old Testament to the promises of the Lord Jesus.

He is going to come and be at work in the world in a way that the world had not experienced before. Obviously, that is not to say that the Holy Spirit was not at work in the world before then.

The Bible makes plain that God is Spirit. In the words of the Divines who composed the shorter Catechism, they explore the nature of the Godhead and God and God is infinite, eternal and intangible in His being.

And then they follow that with the teaching that is but one only, the living and through God. And then that there are three persons in the Godhead, Father, Son and Holy Ghost.

[25 : 57] One God, the same in substance, equal in power and glory. On the basis of these words, we can say that God, the Spirit, is one of the Trinity and as part of the Trinity, He does not change.

He does not diminish in power. The persons all possess equally that power and all other attributes of deity are shared by them equally.

So that in the activity of creation, for example, the Trinity is shown to be actively engaged. I don't want to spend too much time on this other than to state that despite this activity that is described as one that will come into the world as described, to function on behalf of Christ at the Father's request.

We need to understand that in His Old Testament appearances, that is, appearances were the appearances of God, the Spirit.

Jesus says, it is expedient for you that I go away. For if I go not away, the Spirit will not come unto you.

[27 : 32] But if I go, I will send Him unto you. Theologian James Buchanan insists we are not to imagine that before then He did not function in the world.

Every believer from the beginning had been enlightened and sanctified and comforted by His spiritual power, but the reference to the departure of Christ being followed by a remarkable manifestation of the Spirit's grace and power.

Two things again I'd like us to note at this point. First of all, not only does the Spirit work in the world before now, but the nature of the new activity is foretold by way of prophecy.

For example, in the book of Acts that describes for us the actual advent of the Holy Spirit, it equates it with the fulfilment of prophecy.

As Peter says, this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel, and it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy.

[28 : 53] The second thing perhaps could be almost passed over in ignorance, without us being aware of it being said.

But Jesus, whose words we have quoted, also says, if I go, I will send him into you. Here in the text we have before us, the Father will send in my name.

Elsewhere, Jesus states concerning the work of the Holy Spirit, behold, I send the promise of my Father on you. And what we are seeing there is the activity of the Spirit is activity in which God the Father and God the Son and God the Spirit have an equal interest.

There is activity attributed to the Spirit, but appointed by God the Father as surely as God the Son, but also with the mind of the Spirit, the heart of the Spirit, the actions of the Spirit coalescing with the Father and the Son.

I don't want to add confusion at this point. The Spirit comes into the world at the behest of the Father and the Son. He is equally willing to come as the one who delights in revealing the Son and ascribing the glory to the Father.

[30 : 39] We notice that he bears the name comforter or as the Greek has it paraclete. Commonly comforter is the translation of the Greek word but also we are told teacher or monitor or advocate and he fills the role entrusted to him at particular times where we see one name perhaps more suitable than the other in that instance.

Here Jesus says the comforter which is the Holy Ghost is clearly describing to us something that the Holy Ghost is going to do.

Scholars suggest that the variety of different words used to interpret the word paraclete is because of the fact that there is no exact equivalent translation.

For example advocate is one that stands beside or alongside in such as we have in a court of law pleading one's cause.

The only real way is to endeavour to understand the consequences of the Holy Spirit's activity in the life of the believer and understand that the triune God means to see this in their lives.

[32 : 07] Jesus is as if saying despite the fact that I am no longer with you in person you will not be alone. You will not miss my presence.

I will not leave you comfortless. I will not leave you without a paraclete. My Father will have me with him where I was before the world was.

But he too wants you to have my continued presence and comfort. So he will be with you to teach you.

But what is he going to teach us? He is going to teach us if the question were asked who wouldn't ask the question if you are told that there is going to be a teacher then the question is what is he going to teach?

What is the Holy Spirit going to teach me? He is going to teach you all about Christ all about the Son of God all about the man Christ Jesus all about the Redeemer all about the judge of the quick and the dead as one has it all they need to know to be men and women of faith and faithfulness in his study of the fruit of the Spirit in Paul's epistle to the Galatians Ciaran Beville writes the Holy Spirit does not coerch believers to behave in a manner that is consistent with their beliefs rather the Holy Spirit comes and teaches us convinces us intellectually and convicts us spiritually so that we desire to cooperate with his divine activity in our lives although we are not compelled or constrained to modify our attitudes or actions the process of maturing that has commenced or to continue as we yield to that divine authority on our lives now that's one way of understanding it the

[34 : 43] Holy Spirit Jesus says is here given to us by himself given to us by the Father to teach us to teach us we all experience or have experienced teachers in the past in many ways we are still being taught by different ways by different teachers maybe some better than others here the teacher has a subject like no other the textbook is the word of God Paul writes all scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching for reproof for correction for training in righteousness so not only do we have the best manual but the instructor wrote the manual what could be plained you would have heard the story of two Christian believers discussing a point of theology one maintained that he had the best view because it was shared by the famous

Bible commentator Matthew Henry the other however refused to yield ground on the basis that he was as he said himself just as related to the Holy Spirit as Matthew Henry Sarah's opinion was concerned I can't say who was right or wrong but I can say that every one of us is equally dependent upon the guidance of the Holy Spirit in order to see Christ better and in order to know more about him as C.H.

Spurgeon puts it there is no doctrine of the Bible which can be safely thoroughly and truly learned except by the agency of the one authoritative teacher I rest not on any man's boasting authority nor will you he says and the Spirit will direct you to the word of life the truth of Christ who is the way the truth and the life he is able to comfort because he knows not only the truth of Christ but also where the truth is going to work the Spirit is a spirit he is spirit and he knows he is able to penetrate into the heart into the depths of our being he knows what our needs are as A.W.

Toser reminds us he will always act like Jesus towards sinners in compassion towards saints in warm affection towards human suffering in tenderest pity and love where Christ is honoured the spirit is sure to feel welcome where Christ is glorified he will move about freely pleased and at home is that not what we need to experience today in this generation of ours we have many gifts we have many privileges we have many things that we take our easing but we need more than anything to see the spirit of God work in our lives you remember what Jesus said that the spirit would do when he comes chapter 16 and verse 13 he says how be it when he the spirit of truth is come he will guide you into all truth for he shall not speak of himself but whatsoever he shall hear that shall he speak and he will show you things to come and he shall glorify me for he shall receive of mine and shall show it unto you we give thanks that the mercy of

God in Christ ensures that his spirit the comforter is still at work in this world may his work be much in evidence in our life as he teaches us and leads us into all truth directing us to the Christ who is our saviour may bless his word to us let us pray oh Lord our God we give thanks for your word we give thanks that we have it in our own tongue that we can turn to it at any time and that at that moment we can we can lift our eyes heavenwards and ask for your help in order to understand it and to apply it meaningfully to our lives help us to wait upon you to that end watch over us now we pray blessing all we leave to your blessing cleansing us from every sin and now may grace mercy and peace from

[39 : 52] God the Father the Son and the Holy Spirit be with you all now and always amen