

John Ch14v15-26 - Enjoying The Gift Forever

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- [0 : 00] So we're going to read from John's Gospel, chapter 14, from verse 15 down to verse 27.
- Just wait for the others to come back there. So let's read John chapter 14, verse 15 to verse 27.
- This is Jesus speaking to his disciples. If you love me, keep my commands. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever, the Spirit of Truth.
- The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you.
- I will not leave you as orphans. I will come to you. Before long, the world will not see me anymore, but you will see me.
- [1 : 32] Because I live, you also will live. On that day, you will realize that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you.
- Whoever has my commands and keeps them is the one who loves me. The one who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love them and show myself to them.
- Then Judas, not Judas Iscariot, said, But Lord, why do you intend to show yourself to us and not to the world? Jesus replied, Anyone who loves me will obey my teaching.
- My Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them. Anyone who does not love me will not obey my teaching.
- These words you hear are not my own. They belong to the Father who sent me. All this I have spoken while still with you.
- [2 : 38] But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things, and will remind you of everything I have said to you.
- Peace I leave with you. My peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives.
- Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not be afraid. Well, let's ask for God's help as we look at this together.
- Let's pray. Father, thank you for John's Gospel. Thank you for this written account of the Lord Jesus Christ, God's wonderful gift to the world.
- And we pray that as we read and look at these words together, that they would become life to us, nourishing us and feeding us, bringing new life and causing us to grow and mature, causing us to become fruitful, causing us to be the kind of people you want us to be.
- [4 : 01] By your Holy Spirit, do an effective work in our lives today, individually and together, so that as we leave this building, we will go and encourage people, a changed people, trusting you, and knowing how awesome and how wonderful you are.
- So would you please do that for us? Would you bless us today? Would you give to us what we need? We ask for your help.

In Jesus' name. Amen. Well, as we've entered into this Christmas season, and as we reflect about the birth of Jesus Christ, I can't help thinking, wouldn't it have been great to have been there?

I mean, yes, we have the written account, we have John's Gospel, which we've just been reading together, but it's really not the same, is it, to be reading what's on a page and seeing the actual Lord Jesus.

I mean, could you imagine, stretch back in your memory, well, not your memory, but in your minds, stretch back and imagine, if you were there with the shepherds when the angel appeared and you went to visit, or that you travelled with the Magi and you brought your gifts to this baby.

[5 : 43] Or maybe you're thinking, I would like to have been Simeon or Anna, waiting all those years for the arrival of God's Messiah and then holding the very Messiah in your arms to meet and see the real Jesus.

Wouldn't that be good? Wouldn't that be better than what we're experiencing now? Or how about being with Jesus as he grew up?

Maybe being his neighbour or maybe a buddy of his at school. Or thinking about Jesus later on in his life as a carpenter, maybe working with him on some construction project.

Or what if Jesus were to just walk in that door right now and move a seat and place it right beside you and you turn and you look and you kind of actually prod and touch and you go, yes, this is a real person.

Could you imagine Jesus being there with you? And then going home with you for lunch and sitting down at the table and eating food with you.

[6 : 59] Yes, physically putting food in his mouth and drinking and laughing and sharing with you. the real physical Jesus at your dining table.

Well, the disciples were some of those who had that real experience of being with Jesus. They had spent time with him. But here we discover something quite extraordinary.

Jesus has something better for the disciples and something better for us. Have a look.

Just jump forward to chapter 16 and verse 7. Chapter 16, verse 7. Jesus is talking about his return to his father.

He had been sent by the father and now he's returning to his father. Chapter 16, verse 7. But very truly I tell you, it is for your good that I am going away.

[8 : 06] Unless I go away, the advocate will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you. Yes, Jesus says, it is better that I must go.

It is better for you that I don't stay with you. It is better that I leave that you don't see me in the flesh anymore.

It is for your good that I am going away and you won't be able to see me. You see, being with the shepherds or with the magi or with Simeon or Anna or even with the disciples, it would have been a great experience hanging out with Jesus, walking, talking.

But the truth is, it is for our good. It is actually for our best that Jesus is not physically present.

Really? Yes, it is. Yes, it is. Christmas is a time of giving and Jesus is giving a gift to us.

[9 : 24] And this gift is better than being with or seeing the actual physical Jesus. Look at our text in chapter 14, verse 16.

Back to chapter 14, verse 16. Jesus says, I will ask the Father and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever.

Who is this advocate that he is speaking about? Well, look at verse 25. All this I have spoken while with you, but the advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name.

The Holy Spirit is a wonderful gift to us, requested by Jesus and given by the Father. He's not someone we can get ourselves or request ourselves.

The Spirit is a generous gift from God to his children, to those who love and trust in the Lord Jesus.

[10 : 39] So who is this gift? What is this gift from Jesus? Who is the Holy Spirit? Well, two things about this gift that we're going to look at together.

First, the gift we can know and then second, the gift we can enjoy. So first, we're going to look at the gift we can know. The gift of the Holy Spirit is not an idea, something in our imaginations.

He is a person who can be known and experienced. Look at verse 16. I will ask the Father and he will give you another advocate.

When Jesus says another advocate, Jesus means another one just like Jesus. Not different, not someone else or something else, but another one just like Jesus.

He is, as we're told in the beginning of verse 17, the Spirit of Truth. Now a spirit isn't visible in a physical sense, so Jesus is not with us physically, but he is present with us spiritually.

[12 : 02] Right now, as we gather, he is here, he is with us. So often we think it would be much better if Jesus were here physically. Well, if he were here physically, he would be sitting with just one person, but he is now present with every person.

The point is, Jesus is here by his Spirit. The only difference is we cannot see him. Close your eyes for a minute.

Go on, just do it. Close your eyes. As you close your eyes, you know there is somebody beside you. You cannot see them, but you know they are there. Well, Jesus is here.

It's just we cannot physically see him. He sends us another, verse 16, advocate. Well, what's an advocate?

Someone who comes alongside you. Kirsty, my wife, is an advocate, not just for me, but for the deafblind.

[13 : 10] She works with people who need someone to come alongside them in a supporting, helping, comforting capacity. It means being able to understand where the person is at and then giving what is required, what they need.

Well, Jesus tells us that the Holy Spirit is our advocate. He comes alongside us. He's one who knows us inside out because he is the one who made us.

more than that, Jesus lived a life on this earth as a fellow human being. He knows what it is to experience weaknesses and fears, loneliness and temptation.

He knew joy and happiness, tears and heartache. He understood when people were sick. He understood what it was to lose loved ones.

And so he comes alongside us now by his Holy Spirit and he gives of himself, look at verse 16, to help, an advocate to help, to equip us and enable us to live life in this broken and disordered world, to comfort us in our sorrows and in our struggles, to encourage us and give to us what we need.

[14 : 46] So he gives us another advocate to help us. Verse 16, who will be with you.

He will be with you. Remember how John's gospel began. Let's remind ourselves of those words again. Let's go to chapter 1 and verse 1.

Follow along with me. Chapter 1 and verse 1. This is how John opens up his account.

In the beginning was the Word. And the Word was with God and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning.

God became one of us. But then, verse 14, the Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. The Word that spoke the universe into existence, the Word that sustains and keeps everything in motion, keeping everything together, the Word became one of us.

[15 : 58] God taking on humanity, God in flesh, becoming one with us. We could say, and we could describe it like this, that God moved in with us.

He took up residence as a person on this earth. Now, as incredible as a fact as that is, the God-man, Jesus Christ, when he was on this earth, was always limited in where he would be and who he was with.

Jesus could only be in one place at one time. Not in multiple places, all over the place with different people all at once. One place, one time.

But now, let's go back to chapter 14, he has given to us the gift of his Holy Spirit, which means he now is with us, all of his people, all of the time, wherever we are.

Verse 18 tells us, he says, I will not leave you as orphans, I will come to you. An orphan is someone without a parent, without the caring, loving protection of a mum or a dad.

[17 : 20] So Jesus says, I will not leave you as orphans. I'm not going to abandon you. You will never be without me. There will never be a time when you can say, I am not there.

Wherever you are, whatever you do, whatever happens in your life, I am present with you as your helper coming alongside as your advocate.

But it gets better than that. Look at verse 23. Jesus replied, anyone who loves me will obey my teaching.

My father will love them and we will come to them and make our home with them. Just focus on that text, verse 23.

All of God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, we will come and make our home with you.

[18 : 31] God literally moves in with us. He takes up residence in our life. We celebrate at Christmas, God dwelling with us, God coming in person.

Well, that is actually true for us. Through this act, God is saying, I want to get close to you. We might think of it this way.

The final act of a Christian marriage is that you would move into the same home as your spouse. It's a sign of commitment, of loyalty, and faithfulness.

You are saying, I love you, I care for you, I'm going to move in with you. But God is saying to us, I am moving into you.

The God of the universe, who made the universe, the universe cannot contain God, God, but yet God comes down and makes his home in us.

[19 : 41] Father, Son, and Holy Spirit dwelling within. What an awesome, amazing truth.

And this act of God, we're told, will be, again, verse 16, another advocate to help you and be with you forever.

Forever. Jesus was born physically into this world. He was with his parents for 33 years.

People knew him physically on earth and then he died and then he returned to his father. But now because Jesus has sent his spirit, there is never going to be a time when he is not with us.

Look at verse 19. Jesus says to the disciples, before long, the world will not see me anymore, but you will see me.

[20 : 47] Jesus knows that his death and his resurrection are coming soon. And when it does happen, when he does die and when he does rise again and returns to the father, he says verse 19, the world will no longer see him.

Now whenever John uses the term world, he's talking about people of the world, people who are separated from God and need rescued.

Like that well-known verse in John 3.16, God so loved the world. It's talking about people who are living in rebellion to God. He loves us and came to do something about it.

Now in verse 19, he says, the world will no longer see him. Those who have rejected Jesus, those who have refused Jesus, will not see him.

But because we have the Spirit, if we're trusting him, we will see him. That's what he's telling us at the end of verse 19, but you will see me, because I am going to die and I'm going to rise again and I'm going to my Father and not even death will be able to break the bond and the unity that you have with me.

[22 : 11] In fact, our very death will mean being in the very presence of Jesus himself for all eternity, forever.

this is the gift of Christmas, the gift of the Holy Spirit requested by Jesus and given by the Father.

The presence of Jesus with us in you, alongside you, helping you, forever. That's the gift we can know.

the second thing we want to see is the gift we can enjoy. The gift we can enjoy. This gift is not just to be known, but to be enjoyed and experienced.

So let me give you two things that we can enjoy this Christmas season and on into the new year. The gift of the Spirit, how we can enjoy his gift.

[23 : 18] Here's the first one. The Spirit reveals Jesus to us. The Spirit living in us will reveal more of Jesus to us.

Because the Spirit's longing and desire is that we would all know Jesus better. Look at verse 17. He is the Spirit of Truth.

What does it mean that he's the Spirit of Truth? Well, look at chapter 15 verse 26. Chapter 15 verse 26. When the Advocate comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of Truth who goes out from the Father, he will testify about me.

That the Spirit will testify or speak the truth about Jesus because he wants us to know Jesus better. And we can only know someone better if they introduce themselves in the first place and continue to reveal and tell us things about themselves.

They must speak to us. So how is the Holy Spirit going to be speaking to you and I so that we can get to know Jesus better?

[24 : 38] well, look down at chapter 16, verse 13. Chapter 16, verse 13. He's speaking to his disciples.

Verse 13. But when he, the Spirit of Truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth. He will not speak on his own. He will speak only what he hears and he will tell you what is yet to come.

He will glorify me because it is from me that he will receive what he will make known to you. A little bit complex but I hope you can follow the sequence here.

There's a pattern, there's a flow of thought. And it's this, Jesus makes known the truth about himself to the Spirit and the Spirit makes known the truth about Jesus to his disciples.

Jesus makes it known to the Spirit and the Spirit makes it known to the disciples. That's what it says in verse 15, chapter 16, verse 15.

[25 : 57] All that belongs to the Father is mine. That is why I said the Spirit will receive from me what he will make known to you.

Jesus to the Spirit, the Spirit to the disciples. You see, the disciples were given the unique privilege and responsibility of receiving truth about Jesus, who he is, what he came to do, what it means to follow him, and they in turn have written it down.

That's what John has done. The author of this gospel has written down the truth about Jesus so that we can know him better.

You see, the Spirit of God takes the Word of God, Scripture itself, and makes it known to us, makes Jesus known to us.

So if we want to know Jesus better, if we are going to enjoy him, over this Christmas season, and on into the year, then we've got to open this book, the Bible.

[27 : 14] And as we open up this book, we will learn more about who Jesus is. Jesus will be revealed to us more and more in a deeper way so that we can experience him in our life.

Want to know him more? Want to know Jesus better? Let the Spirit of God work through the Word of God into your life, and I guarantee you will know him better.

So, the Spirit reveals Jesus to us. The second part of that gift is, how we can enjoy him, is the Spirit deepens Jesus' love for us.

He gives us a greater experience of the love of Jesus. God loves us. He loves me, and he loves you.

And in many ways it's true that we cannot make God love us more. He loves us with a steadfast, loyal, and faithful love, a love that is perfect.

[28 : 30] However, there is a way in which we can experience that love. A love that moves from the intellectual to the experiential, from the mind, deep down into the heart.

Yes, we can know the love of God with our head, yes, we can write an essay about the love of God, but we can know and experience the love of God in our heart.

How? Well, let me show you briefly. Go back to chapter 14, verse 15. Chapter 14, verse 15.

Jesus says, if you love me, keep my commands. It says something similar in verse 21. Whoever has my commands and keeps them is the one who loves me.

The way in which we express our love to Jesus, if you want to say, I love you, Jesus, it's by obeying his commands.

[29 : 44] Love is not love unless it is expressed in action. Now, look what he says when we obey, when we obey his commands.

What does he say? Look at the rest of verse 21. The one who loves me, in other words, the one who obeys my commands, will be loved by my Father, and I too will love them and show myself to them.

As we obey, we experience the love of God deep in our hearts. the love that the Father and the Son enjoy with one another is a love that we get to participate and share in and enjoy as we obey.

Now you're thinking, hang on a minute, Johnny, that all sounds a little bit like this works theology. I obey, God loves me.

I do better at my obedience and God's going to love me more. Is that what it's saying? No, no, God loves us freely.

[31 : 00] He loves us because he loves us. Not because of who we are or what we've done, but the experience of that love comes as we love him in response.

Think of it in this term again as we think of the marriage. Kirsty and I love each other, but unless our love to one another is expressed, love is just not experienced, is it?

As we love one another, as we show love, that love between each other grows and deepens as we serve, as we give ourselves to one another, that love is now realised.

But here's the crucial point. We need help in obeying the commands of the Lord. And that's what the Spirit does.

That's what the Spirit does within us. He empowers us to do what God commands. Remember, it's the very presence of Jesus within us. the Spirit of Truth.

[32 : 10] And He loves the truth. He loves to obey. And so the Spirit within us enables us and empowers us and equips us to obey.

Just as the Father gave commands to His Son because He loved the Son, and just as the Son obeyed the Father because He loved the Father, so we have received His commands and we love in our response and we are invited into that trinity of love, experiencing what the Father and Son enjoy with each other.

So the more we know the love of God, the more we will obey Him and the more we obey Him, the more we will experience His love.

love. You want to know Jesus better? You want to experience His love in your life? Well then, let me just encourage all of us to open up the Word of God, not just on your own, with others, and you will get to know Him better.

But not only that, you will experience His love in a way that you've perhaps never known before. The birth of Jesus is only the beginning of the story.

[33 : 35] There is so much more for us to know and enjoy. The gift of the Spirit, another advocate, a helper with you forever.

Let's pray. Lord Jesus, thank you for the wonderful request that you made to your Father to send another advocate, a helper, the Holy Spirit.

Thank you, Father, for sending your Spirit into our life. Thank you, Jesus.

Thank you, Father. Thank you, Holy Spirit, for making your dwelling in our life. Coming alongside, comforting, strengthening, and helping.

How we long to know you better. How we long to experience your love. And I pray that that may be true for each one of us.

[35 : 01] Help us, we ask. Thank you for the gift of your Holy Spirit to us today and forever. In Jesus' name.

Amen. We're going to sing as we close. Amen. Amen.