

Text: John 14:15-21

Theme: All the Help We Can Get

May 21, 2017

How many of you have heard the statement or used the statement, "I need all the help I can get?" Sometimes, it's factual, but most times, it's a simple response to the other familiar question, "Do you need some help?" Whether we actually need that kind of help or not, our text makes it clear that we need help, that we're desperate for help, so desperate that our Lord promises to send us a Helper who will help us forever. Today, we focus on our need for help and our Helper as we consider our theme: All the Help We Can Get.

I. Our great God has promised to provide all the help we need. A. Yet, sometimes, we fail to realize how much help we need. 1. We fail to realize it because we think we can handle life. How many times did Jesus' disciples think they could handle life on their own? How many of those new believers thought that with Jesus in their back pocket, they could conquer the world? In our foolish moments, we actually think we can handle life on our own. But we're only fooling ourselves. Jesus didn't send a Helper for all those other people. He sent a Helper for you and me because we don't have all the answers, because we need all the help we can get.

2. We fail to realize how much help we need because we view asking for help as a sign of weakness. As those disciples walked with Jesus, were they eager to say, "Hey, Jesus, can You help me. I can't do this alone?" Are we any different today? With all our technology, we think, more than ever, that we have the answer or can find the answer. Therefore, asking for help is only out of desperation, our last move. If we dare to ask for help, we surely don't want anyone else to know because what other people might think too often controls what we do or not do. Jesus offers us the Helper we need as He says, "Ask and it will be given to you."

3. We fail to realize how much help we need because we forget that we were once orphans. How much do you know about orphans? Do their lives resemble your day-to-day life? Do they see a promising future or merely one of survival? Having visited orphanages in Peru, I can tell you with accuracy that life there is merely survival, one step from living in the streets. Once, before most of us remember, we were spiritual orphans. Before the Father invited us into His family, we were in survival mode. We needed help; we knew help was out there somewhere because life was better for others, but we didn't know where to find it or how to get it.

B. Realizing we need all the help we can get, what does the Holy Spirit offer? 1. He offers us the gift of faith. That gift arrives through Baptism as our Epistle says, "Baptism now saves you." Freely, with no strings attached, our Helper says, "I have brought you a gift. Nothing you do will entitle you to this gift. How you act, how you live your life will not enable you to earn this gift. Out of My love for you, I offer you, I place in your heart the gift of faith." For people like us who need all the help we can get, it's the greatest gift we could ever receive. Although we bring nothing to the equation, our Helper, who knows our greatest need, offers us the free gift of faith.

2. He also offers to dwell with us. When family or friends come to visit, are they considered guests or residents in your house? The Holy Spirit always comes to dwell, to move in, to take up residence. You may not need to add a room onto your house, yet He is now a resident. His address is your heart. Like that unlikely

bunch of disciples who needed all the help they could get, we, too, are following in their footsteps because the Holy Spirit knows we need His help, that this world will grind us up and spit us out. Knowing our need, we are eternally grateful that the Holy Spirit has moved in and become a permanent resident in our hearts.

3. The Holy Spirit offers to fill us with knowledge. In our First Reading, Paul says, "I also found an altar with this inscription, 'to an unknown god'." Before the Holy Spirit came to help us, we didn't know God. It's only when the Holy Spirit stepped in that we learned of God and His love for us. Today, we're surrounded by knowledge. Yet the Holy Spirit offers us much more than facts and information gathered from searching the internet. He offers to fill us with faith knowledge, with God-directed knowledge, with knowledge accessible nowhere else. Every ounce of faith knowledge that we possess is because the Holy Spirit chose to help those who needed help.

4. The Holy Spirit also offers us personalized help. Have you ever arrived at worship and left feeling like everything applied to someone else, that the comfort and hope offered was just beyond your reach? In our impersonal world, it's easy to think no one cares. Thankfully, the Holy Spirit always cares and offers you personalized help, help that will work for you, that will give you strength to take the next step, to continue to fight the good fight when you are tired of fighting. He knows what kind of help you need at this moment and at every other moment. Because He dwells in you, He says, "Come to Me and I will help you."

C. Since the Holy Spirit offers us all the help we need, what do we offer Him? 1. We offer Him our worship. Is there anything more appropriate, more reflective of our appreciation? As we gather in worship, we confess that we need help. But rather than make us feel worse, the Spirit lifts our hearts out of the mud as He says, "Go in peace; your sins are forgiven!" That's great news for people who need all the help they can get, such great news that our response becomes one of praise. By making confession and receiving the assurance of forgiveness, the remainder of our worship can be focused on offering our appreciation for all the great things He has done.

2. We offer Him our best ever day. On Monday, Wednesday, Saturday, Sunday. All day every day. Because we possess the abundant life, our Helper is waiting for us to live that abundant life, to step out in faith even though we don't know where the next step will lead, to expect God to step in, to do the miraculous in us and through us. However our day may begin, we offer our best by going, by constantly pressing on. We don't know what God has planned for us today or tomorrow, but God knows. As we allow Him to help us, as we respond by offering our best, we know His response will be, "Well done, good and faith-filled servant. Well done!"

3. It's no secret that we need help. Thankfully, to you and to me, our Helper says every day, "I'm here for you because I already know that you need all the help you can get!" Amen.