

Meet your local “Comforting” Counsellor.

Worship Notes for Sunday 17th May 2020

This week’s material is also available as an automatically playing a YouTube play list:
[Sunday Service 17th May 2020](#) (including the music, prayers, reading and address).

Prelude: [Let our praise be your Welcome - here For You \(Matt Redman\) - YouTube](#)

Call to Worship: Praise our God, all peoples,
let the sound of his praise be heard;
he has preserved our lives
and kept our feet from slipping. (Psalm 66:8-20)

Songs: [Holy, Holy, Holy - sung by Audrey Assad - YouTube](#)
[10,000 Reasons | Virtual Church Choir & band | OneSound & National
Methodist Choir GB with National Methodist Youth Brass Band - YouTube](#)

A Prayer:

Mighty and mysterious God,
Your majesty is beyond our understanding.
You are the creator of all and we praise You;
from the beginning You are the One in whom we find our life
and from whom all life springs.
We praise You that although You and reign in all splendour, holiness and glory,
yet, still, You choose to reach out to us and seek that we should know You.
Thank You that by Your gracious action in Jesus, You reveal Yourself
as The Way, The Truth and The Life, and call us to trust in Him.
We praise You that Jesus showed us the way, taught the truth
and gave His life that we might receive life from Him.
Forgive us when we put our trust in ourselves, go our own way, pick and choose at the truth and
live life as though we were the centre of the universe.
Pour out Your Spirit in our hearts and lives, to guide us on our way,
to reveal the truth that is in Jesus and to bring us new life from You.
This prayer we ask in the name of Jesus and through the working if Your Holy Spirit, Amen.

Hymn: [All My Days \(Beautiful Saviour\) - Stuart Townend - YouTube](#)

Bible Reading: Read John 14:15-31.

Meet your local “Comforting” Counsellor. Based John 14:15-31.

What happened next? It’s one of those questions I find myself asking quite often at the end of films, books, TV and radio programmes... An unresolved story can be intriguing or frustrating - depending on who you are! We’ve been looking at some *what happened next* stories in recent weeks as we’ve explored the incidents after Jesus died and rose the first Easter.

Today, we’re looking at a *what happened next* Bible passage earlier in John’s Gospel. Most of you

will have heard the words at the beginning of John chapter 14 read somewhere - often at funerals, where Jesus's words, "Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me." (v.1) offer comfort and strength to His anxious disciples. Jesus then enigmatically promises He is "going ahead" to prepare for the disciples to join Him and that they, "know the way to the place where I am going." (v.4) When Thomas says, "Lord, we don't know where you are going, so how can we know the way?" (v.5) Jesus replies "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me" (v.6) and "Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; or at least believe on the evidence of the works themselves." (v.11)

If Thomas had asked a key question that unlocked Jesus' declaration and offer, then it was the unspoken question "How, Jesus?" He then answered. First, Jesus says, "If you love me, you will obey my commands" (v.15); scholars disagree about how many commands Jesus us - not to be confused with the Ten Commandments, nor the 613 OT laws, which Jesus stated he came to fulfill rather than overturn (Matthew 5:17). No, I mean how many commands did Jesus give; it's tricky to define them and decide a single answer. I've seen lists containing 31, 38, 50, 64 and even 335!

However, Jesus does help us. When asked which was "The Greatest Commandment?" Jesus replied: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind." This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: "Love your neighbour as yourself." All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.' (Matthew 22:35-40) and earlier on the evening before this part of the conversation, Jesus said, 'A new command I give you: love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.' (John 13:34-35) which he would reiterate in John 15:16. This is the key. that love is shown by obedience to Jesus; all His other teaching flows from this.

But that just feels like a whole new batch of effort! It's a thought the dismayed look in the disciples faces said, "Do you mean we have to do all this without You?" So Jesus makes the promise of another companion; however he uses a word that's tricky to translate as shown by The Amplified Bible, "And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Comforter (Counsellor, Helper, Intercessor, Advocate, Strengthener, and Standby), that He may remain with you forever - the Spirit of truth." (John 14:16)

Ask yourself: in these changed, challenging times in which we live, how are we finding living with he promises of Jesus we've always claimed underpin our faith? Do you need to trust again in Jesus' unique offer - to offer the way to know God, to see in Him the truth about God's character and nature and to receive the life of God, offered up on the cross and offered to you to give you new life to live?

Song: [Holy Spirit, We Welcome You \(With Lyrics\) - Chris Boater - YouTube](#)

The Greeks have a word for Him...

The word Jesus uses definitely causes holy confusion - the word Paraclete from the Greek word *paraklētōs*. It carries all the meanings in the translation above and it's even tricky to pronounce! Near Whitby in North Yorkshire is an Anglican retreat house and St Hilda's Priory at Sneaton Castle. Based there is an order of nuns called "The Order of the Holy Paraclete"; I once heard the prior (Mother Superior, for those raised on *The Sound of Music*) describe how she was introduced at a large conference as leader of the Order of the Holy Parakeet! We're sure Jesus DIDN'T mean He'd send a small parrot!

The word *paraclete* (parakl etoV) can be translated various ways - all confusing!

Comforter - but, He's a not a duvet, nor a parent's hug! This comes from Latin and French words *conforter* or *confortare* "to strengthen". In the Bayeux tapestry there's a panel with the description "Bishop Odo comforts (*confortare*) the troops" and there is the Army Chaplain with a stick poking them to get on! An uncomfortable comforter, then...

Counsellor - we have an idea of what that means, but, He's NOT the non-directive counselling listener that Carl Rogers envisaged in his seminal text book on the subject. This "counsellor" offers counsel - advice and teaching...

Advocate - the formal name for a lawyer who advises a client when they're in court. This helps us understand the pleading and interceding role of God's Holy Spirit.

The word, *paraclete* (parakl etoV) is an unusual one comprised of two others, the *para* - coming - *kello* called - the one called alongside. Another image might help, because the word was occasionally used to describe a **Ship's Pilot** - the local expert called on board to navigate a ship into a harbour.

A *paraclete* - the one coming alongside. Meet your local "Comforting" Counsellor!" Jesus says He's:-

The Advocate of the Truth - "The Spirit of truth" His job is to teach us what Jesus commands. (v.15, 21)

The Counsellor of Good Guidance "If anyone loves me they will obey my teaching" and "we will come and make our home with him" (v.23)

The Discomforting Comforter - who spurs us on as followers of Jesus, reminding us of Jesus' teaching. (v.24)

The Expert Pilot who guides us into the safe path, "He will teach you [the disciples] all things and remind you of everything I said to you" (v.26)

But How?

Trust Jesus - especially if you're feeling fearful, hurt or a failure. He's the expert at overcoming fear, healing hurt and setting aside failure.

If we want to be the people of Jesus and do His will, so, we must seek "Apostolic Counsel" - read the New Testament! If you have Bible notes use them. Remember, "Do not deceive yourselves by just listening to his word; instead, put it into practice. (James 1:22 GNB). The truth is "not just for information, but transformation" - do it

Use Bible Notes that work for you - there's a vast variety is because people are different. If you don't, contact me and we'll get you some, even in the pandemic!

Pray for the Holy Spirit's help:

With the tasks - and the people - you find hard; that He'll work and an though you so you're more like Jesus.

For guidance - that the *Holy Spirit* He'll pilot you in the right paths. Talk with Christian friends
For the Holy Spirit to dwell with and in you and assure you of God's presence each day.

Hymn: [Come down, O Love Divine - Fernando Ortega - YouTube](#)

Prayers of Intercession

In each section, feel free to add your own prayers...

Let's pray

Gracious God,

We bring your world to You, in prayer: In a time when many are fearful, we ask You to help us trust You,

to know that You will bring good things out of this time,
and to seek to know Your presence in our lives and world.

In a time when many are bewildered by the competing claims
of leaders, experts and politicians:

we ask for Your Spirit who is the advocate of the truth,
to show us what is right and wrong, to discern truth from fiction
and to fill us with courage to live by the truth.

In a time when many are confused by the right responses to
competing instructions and claims for the best way for our world to act:

we ask for Your Spirit who is the counsellor of good guidance
to make his home with us on earth and bring wisdom to leaders and citizens alike
that your world may be governed wisely and faithfully, for the good of all.

In a time when many are disturbed by the troubles of the world:

we ask for Your Spirit who is the discomfoting comforter to spurs us and all Your Church on
equipping us to live courageously as followers of Our Lord Jesus Christ,
as witnesses of Your truth, holiness and love.

In a time when many are lost and realising their lives have little direction:

we ask for Your Spirit who is the expert pilot of life and eternity,
to guide us into the sure path, of loving You and obeying Your command
to love one another as You have loved us,
even giving Your life for the life of the world.

And these with all our prayers we offer in the Name above every name, even Jesus Christ our risen
Saviour and Lord, Whom with You and the Holy Spirit, we glorify, now and for ever, Amen.

Pray: The Lord's Prayer in a version with which you are familiar.

Hymn: [Come, set Your rule and reign - Build Your Kingdom here - Rend Collective
Experiment - YouTube](#)

Blessing: [The UK Blessing — Churches sing 'The Blessing' over the UK - YouTube](#)

After service music: [Holy Spirit - Bryan & Katie Torwalt - YouTube](#)

David Miler, May 2020.