**Three Comforts**

John 14

Introduction:

1. In our recent studies in the Gospel of John we have observed that John arranges his material geographically and around the various feasts of the Jews.

 a. He locates John in Bethany, beyond the Jordan (1:28).

 b. He locates Jesus in Cana of Galilee (2:1).

 c. Then moves Him from there to Capernaum (2:12) and then to Jerusalem at the Passover

 of the Jews (2:13).

 d. John’s structure is easy to follow as his account unfolds.

2. We have also noticed that he clearly identifies his purpose in writing in 20:30-31: “Many other signs Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name.” And so we look for signs.

 a. We find seven: turning water to wine, healing of a nobleman’s son, healing of a lame

 man, feeding of 5,000, walking on the water, healing the man born blind, and the raising

 of Lazarus.

 b. All of these signs are testimony by the Father that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.

3. But not everyone believes. Some do. Some are hesitant, fearing to be put out of the synagogue. Others, particularly the chief priests and Pharisees are openly hostile and plan to kill Him.

4. Jesus controls the temperature of the opposition by withdrawing from Jerusalem and then returning.

5. John 13 is a turning point in the account. Jesus has gone up to Jerusalem during the Feast of Passover. He has predicted His death. The disciples are anxious. 13:1 says, “He knew that His hour had come that He would depart out of this world.” His death is now only days away. But there is much to do. He must prepare His disciples for the separation.

 a. He washes their feet symbolizing the cleansing from sin that He will provide for them.

 b. He calls on them to act similarly.

 c. He predicts His betrayal and tells them, “Now is the Son of Man glorified.”

 d. He tells them He is going away and they cannot come, now, but will follow later.

6. John 14 opens with this statement: “Do not let your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father’s house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also.”

7. With this statement Jesus begins a three element message in chapter 14 designed to comfort the disciples. What are the three elements? How would they be a comfort to the disciples and what do they mean to us?

Discussion:

I. The three elements.

 A. The first of the three elements (vs. 1-6): The wedding imagery. I am going away but I

 will return for you.

 B. The second of the three elements (vs. 7-15). I and the Father are One.

 C. The third element (vs. 16-31). The Father and I are sending you another Helper.

II. The wedding imagery: I am going away but I will return for you (1-6).

 A. As we have noted before, this passage does not identify particularly that this is wedding

 imagery.

 1. However, it is apparent that this is the background (cf. Matt. 22:1ff; 25:1ff).

 2. Typical of Jewish wedding tradition the bridegroom and the bride betrothed

 themselves to each other in marriage and then the bridegroom went away to prepare

 a place in His father’s house for His bride. When he returned for her the wedding

 feast celebration occurred.

 3. This imagery is used throughout the text of Scripture (cf. Eph. 5:21ff; Rev. 19:7ff; note

 Isa. 25:6ff).

 4. It is evident how this should have comforted the disciples.

 B. The immediate comfort that this could have provided is marred by their current lack of

 understanding (vs. 5-6). I think later as they understand more clearly their comfort will

 be increased. But it is obvious they have a high level of anxiety in the present

 circumstance revealing the intense need for what Jesus is trying to do.

 C. It also reveals His love for them as He responds to their anxiety (cf. 13:1).

III. His relationship with the Father should provide them comfort (14:7-15).

 A. Jesus clearly associates Himself with the Father.

 1. He does not mean that they are the same person.

 2. Throughout His ministry He has identified the Father as the source and authority of

 Him and His mission.

 3. In other words, He and I are on the same page. We are one in this.

 B. Jesus acts as the Father’s agent.

 1. This is evident in what Jesus says (vs. 10-11).

 2. The works (miracles) bear evidence of this.

 3. The miracles validate the Father’s relationship with the Son. In other words, the

 Father supports the Son as His agent.

 C. There is an appeal here for the disciples to recognize themselves as similar agents of

 the Father and the Son (vs. 12-15). Thus, “If you love Me, you will keep My

 commandments.” Agents of the Father and Son do the will of those they represent.

 D. Note here that our keeping of the commandments stems from our love for Him as

 His representatives (Paul uses the term “ambassadors.” See 2 Cor. 5:20.). Our failure

 in keeping the commandments mars our representation to the world. Our sin gives the

 world the occasion to blaspheme the fair name of Christ.

 E. The close association between the Father and the Son should give us comfort. They

 are for us. And will not desert us or abandon us, even though Jesus goes away. Cf.

 Heb. 13:5—words used by God to Joshua as Moses was about to leave Joshua (cf.

 Deut. 31:6, 8; Josh. 1:5).

IV. The third thing that will comfort the disciples is that the Father and the Son will send the Holy Spirit as a Comforter (16-31).

 A. The word translated here either “Comforter” or “Helper” (NASB) is the Greek

 “paracletos,” which represents one called along side of as an advocate or intercessor.

 Cf. an attorney who comes to your side to represent you.

 B. Jesus said, “I will not leave you as orphans.”

 C. The disciples will abide in His words as a result of the things the Holy Spirit teaches and

 helps them to remember. Jesus in effect says, “Don’t worry. I am going to take care of

 you.”

 D. I am telling you things now before they happen so that when they do happen you may

 believe, i.e., Be assured. I’ve got you.

 E. What a reassurance! What a comfort to them and to me. He reminded them again

 after His resurrection and before He ascended into heaven. “Lo, I am with you always,

 even to the end of the age” (Matt. 28:20).

Conclusion:

1. Three comforts: I will return. The Father and I are together in this mission. We will send the Holy Spirit to be beside you.

2. I rest confident in the promises. Not only these disciples, but we too have comfort that even though Jesus is not with us now. We are looking to His return. We know that His mission is the mission of the Father. And we have the Spirit guiding us in the words of His representatives.

3. Even though things are difficult in the spiritual battle that we are engaged in, nevertheless, we are bold in our confidence in Him.