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Grace Fellowship Church, Port Jervis, New York

August 7, 2016

"I Will Send the Helper"

John 14:17-18

Prayer: *Father, I just again, I thank you for the precious blood that you have given to us through the sacrifice of your Son on the cross. Again, this is the time where we gather to reflect on that and again especially because of that, I pray for the presence of your Holy Spirit. Father, give us the ability as again we look into your word to understand at a greater depth what it is you've given to us in that precious blood. Give us the ability by your Holy Spirit's power to understand your word and to grow in our understanding and appreciation for the gift that your Son is to us. And I pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.*

Well, as you know, this is the first Sunday of the month and this is the one that we remember Jesus and his cross. And that Jesus on the night before he died met with his disciples for the very last time and he celebrated the Passover supper with them for the last time and it's recorded in Matthew 26. It says this: Now as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and after blessing it broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, "Take, eat; this is my body."

And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, saying, "Drink of it, all of you, for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. I tell you I will not drink again of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom." So Jesus took bread and he took wine and he offered them up as symbols of his flesh and his blood and then he asked his disciples to eat the bread and drink the cup in order to symbolically eat his flesh and drink his blood. And then he asked them to repeat this remembrance of his sacrifice on a regular basis, and this is what we call the Lord's table. Now we here at Grace, we do it once a month and we do it by meditating on what the Lord Jesus Christ did for us on the cross, by examining ourselves, asking God's Holy Spirit to bring to our minds those sins that we need to confess and to repent of and by also participating in the elements. John 6:53 says: So Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you."

Now we have been following the 14th -- we've been following actually the life of Christ and we're in the 14th chapter of the gospel of John, and just to kind of bring us back to where we were, Jesus is now only hours from his crucifixion and he's just had a disastrous conversation with his disciples in which they reveal

that after three years of the most intimate contact with him, they still know next to nothing about who he is and what he's there for. After living with Jesus for three years, Philip, his disciple, says in *John 14:8*: "Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us." Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you so long, and you still do not know me, Philip? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father?' Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own authority, but the Father who dwells in me does his works. Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me, or else believe on account of the works themselves."

I pointed out last time it's almost as if Jesus is engaged in a dialogue of the deaf at this point. But that Jesus knows that shortly after he leaves them he's going to be sending them the third person of the trinity, the Holy Spirit whom he refers to as "the Helper." Now we also notice that when the helper comes, all of those things about Jesus that mystified the disciples would begin to slowly but surely get cleared up. In addition to that, they will also sense within them the indwelling Holy Spirit. Jesus tells the disciples that he will give them -- quote -- "the spirit of truth whom the world cannot receive." He puts it this way in *John 14:16*. Jesus says, "And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, the Spirit of

truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you."

This morning I'm going to look at just how that process happens. Jesus says I will send you a comforter who will make what it is the world cannot understand understandable on a gut spiritual level. And you know, folks have tried for years and years to be able to kind of put what the Holy Spirit's presence in them means, to try to put it into words. I've heard people say well, you just know that you know that you know and what they're trying to say is that when the Spirit of God indwells you, you receive three things: First of all you receive a love for Christ that you never had before; you receive a desire to obey him that you never knew before; and thirdly, you receive this -- this ineffable sense of his presence that you know but that you also know you're not going to be able to fully communicate to somebody else. As Jesus said you know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you.

I want to speak about that third part, God's Holy Spirit in us this morning. You know sometimes the teaching part of me wants to over analyze these things and kind of break them down into easily digestible parts, but this is one of those things that just will not yield to that kind of analysis. *Romans 8:16* says: *The Spirit*

himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God.

And so we ask the question, how exactly does that happen? Well, I'm going to illustrate that this morning by telling you three stories and they're stories of how I have personally sensed the Holy Spirit's presence within me and in -- within others. And I remember the first time that I was aware of the Holy Spirit's presence, it happened the day that I got saved in May of 1973. Now the story of that process is a story way too long for this morning, but suffice it to say that God in a very real and very direct way spoke into my life and he spoke that he was God, that he was speaking to me directly that very moment, and that he was claiming me as his own. And I know for a fact that I gave my life to Christ that day. And God says the moment that that happens, his Holy Spirit comes to dwell within you.

I want to illustrate one way of how that happened to me and how I was aware of that. Just to kind of back up, Janice and I were living your typical pagan life-style, pagan experience, we were living in Vermont, we were recently married, married a couple years and I had gotten accepted to a graduate program at San Francisco State, and so we decided to move cross country. And so we drove cross country in an Opal Cadet station wagon that had blown up the previous fall and that I had spent the entire winter rebuilding all the way down to the crankshaft bearings. And me rebuilding an

engine was an experience. So we kind of -- we made it all the way out to Michigan, which was a major accomplishment because I had friends who lived in Michigan who just happened to be Christians. We weren't stopping there because they were Christians. That was the -- in fact the one thing that made us want to not stop there. But it was -- it was a great place to stop and to connect and it was just a good enough distance. Anyway, the day before I met Christ, I was in the upper peninsula of Michigan, I was in Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan underneath this Opal Cadet station wagon working on the exhaust system which was falling apart. If you've ever been under a very old car with a very rusted out exhaust system trying to fix it, you know how frustrating that is. And true confession, I was under there cursing like a sailor. I routinely used the Lord's name in vain, that was not a problem for me at all. And so I'm cursing away that afternoon and then that evening, these folks asked if -- they had a house church there and they asked if we would come to their prayer meeting, and that's the place where I got saved. So I -- that takes way too long to describe. But I want to describe what happened right after, right after we decided to go into town and get a bite to eat. And so we went into town and we were walking into a diner, and as we were walking into this diner, a couple was walking out and they were arguing. And as they were arguing, the person, the guy, used the words "God," "damn," and "Jesus," and "Christ." And you can

imagine he didn't use them in a God glorifying way. And what struck me immediately when I heard those words was how awful they were. It was like a gut punch to me to hear those words spoken that way. And that was absolutely astounding to me because months later I learned that the horror that I had experienced didn't come from me. The horror that I experienced at hearing those words spoken that way came from the Holy Spirit who was now inside me. And it wasn't until months later that I started to understand exactly what this process was. You see, as a brand new believer I had no knowledge, I had no knowledge of the Holy Spirit, I had no idea what that was all about. I had no idea that he would take up residence within me. Like I said, it took me months to discover what God said in *Romans 8:16* where he said: *The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God.* And that evening in that diner, the Holy Spirit bore witness with my spirit what God thinks of using his name in vain. And think about it, I said that very afternoon I was doing that exact thing repeatedly. And now almost in an instant I saw it for what it was. Like I said, it was months later that I discovered this verse that explained what had taken place. This is *Ephesians 1:13*, it says: *In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.*

Well, for 43 years now, the Holy Spirit has lived within me, he's been consoling me, convicting me, and empowering me just as he did the disciples some 2,000 years ago. And Jesus explained to his disciples, he said to them, when I leave I'm going to send you a helper and then he gave them specific instructions as to what this helper was going to do, and this is in *John 16*. He says:

"Nevertheless, I tell you the truth: It is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you. And when he comes, he will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment: Concerning sin, because they do not believe in me; concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father, and you will see me no longer; concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged." Now you have to understand what Jesus is saying in context here. You have to realize that Jesus understands that he is mere hours away from being arrested and crucified. And so he's explaining to the disciples what the Holy Spirit is going to do in the next few hours as well as in the rest of their lives. And there's three things that Jesus names and they all have to do with the events that are about to take place. He starts off by saying the Holy Spirit will expose wicked men who refuse to believe in him. He says the Holy Spirit will convict the world, in verse 9, concerning sin because they do not believe in me. See, Jesus knows that these men are going to attempt to establish him as

unrighteous by virtue of the disgrace of the death that he's going to die. I mean he knew he was going to the Father but his executioners are insisting all the while that he's a fraud and that he's headed to the death of the cursed that he richly deserves. I mean we know this is the case because Luke describes how the unbelievers responded at the cross. This is *Luke 23*, and it says: *And the people stood by, watching, but the rulers scoffed at him, saying, "He saved others; let him save himself, if he is the Christ of God, his chosen one!" The soldiers also mocked him, coming up and offering him sour wine and saying, "If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself!"* See, they didn't believe in Jesus and they thought they were sending him anywhere but to the Father. And that's why Jesus says in verse 10, the Holy Spirit's going to convict the world in verse 10 *"concerning righteousness because I go to the Father, and you will see me no longer."* See, Jesus knew in the immediate future the world would have succeeded in painting him as unrighteous and wicked and worthy of crucifixion. But he also was telling them that my helper, the Holy Spirit's going to make this all right. See, the wicked in their unbelief thought they were sending Jesus to hell when in fact he knew he would go from the cross to the grave to the Father. And Jesus knows that the cross will once and for all remove Satan's power from us. And so Jesus says the Holy Spirit will convict the world in verse 11: *"concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged."*

So Jesus again, he's telling the disciples that this cross which is about to take place is going to be Satan's undoing.

Now if you were one of the disciples and you just happened to be there at the foot of the cross and you saw the broken, shattered body of Jesus hanging dead on that cross, well you'd have every right to think that this is the absolute ultimate disaster. I mean the one who claimed to be the son of God, the one who was ultimate righteousness is now dead and he's died the death of a common criminal. I mean little would you know that you were a witness to the greatest victory the world has ever seen. Jesus has ultimately defeated the ruler of this world. But see, the disciples, they could only see the little picture of what was directly in front of them. And God saw and we see through scripture what the big picture was all about. *Colossians 2:13* says: *And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross. He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him.*

So what we really see here is Jesus is preparing his disciples for this great/awful event and he's doing it by telling them that the

Holy Spirit is going to convict the world of three things: Number one, of the sin of unbelief; number two, of the sin of declaring the Righteous One as unrighteous; and number three, of the sin of Satan in thinking that he was going to ultimately defeat Christ. And so I want to look for a minute at this first point that Jesus made, the fact that Jesus said that the Holy Spirit would convict the world of the only sin that God says is unforgivable, and that's refusing to believe in God's only Son. That's refusing to believe that he alone is capable of paying the debt of our sin. Now that's the sin that Janice and I were guilty of as pagans. It's called blasphemy of the Holy Spirit, and this is what Jesus says about it in *Matthew 12*. He says: *"Therefore I tell you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven people, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven. And whoever speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come."* Now more than a few people have wondered if Jesus meant that if you ever speak blasphemously about the Holy Spirit you are now unforgiven and unforgivable. That's not what Jesus was saying. See he told his disciples that the Holy Spirit's task was to convict people of sin, and the number one sin he spoke of was a refusal to believe. It was a refusal to believe Jesus' offer of forgiveness. In verse 8, he says: *"And when he comes, he will convict the world concerning sin righteousness and judgment:*

concerning sin, because they do not believe in me." See, to refuse this offer is to blaspheme the Holy Spirit and Jesus says that's an unforgivable sin. But understand what he's meaning here. It's unforgivable on our end, not on his end. You see, every time I refused the Holy Spirit's entreaties, every time I refused to accept what the Holy Spirit is trying to say, every time I do that, I'm speaking out against him. And as long as I continue in my unbelief, my sin will never be forgiven because as long as I still refuse to believe, I will never seek his forgiveness. I mean what makes this an unforgivable sin is not the one-time sin of blasphemy but a pattern of unbelief that refuses the Holy Spirit continually. Again, verse 9: *"Concerning sin, because they do not believe in me."* And so if you refuse to believe, you are refusing God's offer of forgiveness, and as long as you refuse to believe Jesus died for your sins, you will remain unforgiven.

Now folks might say well, why is it that God would reject folks for not believing in him if they can't believe in him in the first place, because after all it says in *2 Corinthians 4: The god of this world has blinded the minds of unbelievers to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.* But understand what God is saying here. What God is saying is that the natural default setting of the human heart is unbelief. That's how we're constituted now. *Ephesians 2:3* says:

*We all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. What God is saying is we don't believe in Christ because we are by nature children of wrath like the rest of mankind and what then flows effortlessly from this unbelief is this gut level subconscious hatred for God. You have to understand this from God's standpoint. I mean God entered into the very same existence as us and he entered into it flawlessly, doing nothing but good. And what did we do? Well, we stripped him, we beat him, we mocked him, we flogged him, and then we crucified him. When Pontius Pilate declared that he was innocent of the blood of this man Jesus, the crowd cried out in *Matthew 27: "His blood be on us and on our children!"* We are those children and his blood is on us. I mean I think God has every right to reject a people whose very nature it is to thoroughly reject the truth of who he was and to respond with his -- to his love with pure unwarranted hatred. Listen to how Jesus himself describes this in *John 15:24*. He says: "*If I had not done among them the works that no one else did, they would not be guilty of sin, but now they have seen and hated both me and my Father. But the word that is written in their law must be fulfilled: 'They hated me without a cause.'*" And Jesus further acknowledges that by saying to his disciples in *John 15:18*: "*If the world hates you, know that had has hated me before it hated you.*"*

As the elders begin distributing the bread, I'd just like us to take a moment to consider the privilege that we have. Consider the privilege that you have that God himself lives inside of you. God says we are temples of the Holy Spirit; that means his Holy Spirit has come to dwell in us. And understand that privilege when the vast majority of those surrounding us are so mired in unbelief that has them on an unconscious level hating and fearing the very God that gave them life. If we could only begin to realize the privilege that we have been given of opened eyes and opened ears, if we could only understand that this is a privilege the vast majority of the world will never see. Jesus says there is a super highway heading down to hell and a very crooked, narrow path leading to heaven. Consider the privilege that you have been given to be put on that narrow path. Consider the privilege you have of the Holy Spirit himself living within you.

Consider also this warning that God gives as communion is being passed out. This is *1 Corinthians 11*, it says: *But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. For this reason many are weak and sick among you, and many sleep. For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened by the Lord, that we may not be*

condemned with the world. You know, I say this every time, I say how serious the business of communion is and that to enter into it in an unworthy manner as to literally court disaster. God has killed people for doing this. So if you're not absolutely confident that you are a child of the King or if you first need to be reconciled to your brother and sister before you bring the sacrifice of your life to the altar, then just pass the elements on. I often say no one's going to look at you and think you're strange, they may in fact think you're wise. But also on the other hand, you can make the mistake of thinking that you have to be perfect, that you have to be spotless or else you're unworthy to receive communion and that, too, is a mistake as well because being a child of the King doesn't mean that -- that you don't sin, and it doesn't mean that you never fail, that you never fall. What it does mean is that you recognize that salvation is a gift given by God. It's a gift given that no one is ever capable of earning. And I repeat these words of Dane Ortlund each month because they're so appropriate. He says: "In the kingdom of God the one thing that qualifies you is knowing you don't qualify, and the one thing that disqualifies you is thinking that you do." And you know it also means that when we do fail, we are aware of the fact that we've sinned. Why? It's what I'm talking about this morning, because inside you is God's Holy Spirit and he's inside you convicting you of sin, and so we grieve as children who know that

we have a Father who longs to forgive us and longs to cleanse us who says in *1 John 1:9*: *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.* So being a child of the King doesn't mean that you are without sin. It means that when we do sin, we understand something, we understand that we have an advocate with the Father, someone who speaks on our behalf. *1 John 2:1* says: *My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have an advocate with the Father -- Jesus Christ, the Righteous One.* And as I've said many times, because we have Jesus's righteousness and not our own, we are now free to eat from this table. So if you love the Lord, don't deny yourself the privilege that Jesus purchased for you. You know, he lived the life we were supposed to live and then he died the death we all deserved to die just so that we could be made worthy of heaven. So consider what it is that we've been given, consider the privilege that we've been given. The Lord Jesus Christ for the glory of the Father came down to rescue us at the cost of his own blood. In addition to ransoming and rescuing us, he's given us a helper, the very person who is a person of the Holy Trinity, the Holy Spirit. Just consider the privilege of God's Holy Spirit living within you.

1 Corinthians 11:23-24 says: For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was

betrayed took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, "This is my body which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me." So take, and eat.

You know, the term Holy Spirit in Greek is "parakletos." You probably heard the term "paraclete," it means "one who comes alongside." And Donald Grey Barnhouse gave a great explanation of how he saw the role of the Holy Spirit by describing one day when he was observing in Rockefeller Center the skating rink. He said there are some wealthy people who skate around that rink who are able to hire skaters, and the skaters go about two or three paces behind them keeping their eyes steadily on their students, those who they've instructed, and they're just skating along with them but if they happen to notice them beginning to stumble or starting to fall or slip, they immediately zoom up beside them, grab their arm, steady them, get them squared away and then back away again just so that they have this steadying effect that keeps them from stumbling. The Holy Spirit comes alongside us in the very same way to keep us from stumbling. You see, Jesus knew that the disciples were about to stumble in a very major way. And it's stunning to think that Jesus, who was only hours away from his own execution, who's about to enter into this outer darkness where he would be completely rejected by earth and by heaven, he's facing that, and he's thinking not of himself, he's thinking only of his disciples.

And this is what he says in *John 14:25*, he says: *"These things I have spoken to you while I am still with you. But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you. Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid."*

Well, my first story of how God brings us his Holy Spirit was of my gut reaction to what it was like to hear God's name being used as a dishrag. It was the beginning of a life long relationship with the Holy Spirit who literally has skated along beside me for years and years, and he swoops in, and he rights me when I find myself losing my balance, and often times he does this through the word of God. I cannot emphasize how incredibly important it is to be reading your bibles because it's the primary way that God communicates to us. I mean, you may come across scriptures as you're reading that you just can't relate to, that you just don't know why they're there, they may not connect with you as you're reading them but every single time you take in scripture, it's like basically you are downloading files into your spiritual hard drive. You know, they begin to get stored in your spirit, even more so when you memorize scripture. And it is this spiritual data that God brings to mind, that the Holy Spirit brings to mind to encourage us when

we stumble. And that's why Jesus said: *"He will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you."*

Let me tell you how this works. Again, as the elders begin distributing the cup, let me tell you my second story. This is about an incident that took place in my daughter Lydia's life. Now my daughter Lydia and her husband Sam, they've been living in Jacksonville, Florida, and they -- she gave me permission to speak to you about this. She struggles mightily with anxiety and with depression; she has done so for years. And it had been a particularly difficult year for them in Jacksonville. Actually they moved there because Sam was assigned to teach in an inner city school in Jacksonville by Teach for America, which is an organization that takes college graduates in different fields and trains them to teach by just throwing them into the deep end of the pool. And anyway, they've since moved back to Colorado with their baby whom they've named Jackson, as they put it, because he was conceived in Jacksonville, born in Jacksonville, and that God did a mighty work in their lives in Jacksonville. And one of those works took place on a Sunday morning and it took place at the church that they went to. It had been a particularly rough week for Lydia and she said she was struggling greatly. She said she was having a tough time connecting. And she was in the service and then they started to sing a song, the lyrics were: "I am no longer a slave

to fear; I am a child of God." She said those were incredibly encouraging words to her, and as soon as she heard them, she felt the enemy telling her that this song is not so special to her at all. The enemy said sure, you're a child of God but so is everybody, and the hundreds of people in this building, they're children of God as well. In fact, the enemy suggested that millions of people all over the world were children of God. And Lydia said that Satan was saying to her that you may be feeling God's presence but you're nothing special to God. Lydia told herself at that point that Jesus had a name in heaven, her name, that was written in it, and she said that because she had previously read that in scripture; she had downloaded those files. They were already there in her hard drive. Let me tell you what these files consist of. This is *Revelation 2:17*, it says: *To the one who conquers I will give some of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, with a new name written on the stone that no one knows except the one who receives it. Isaiah 49:15* says: *Can a woman forget her nursing child, that she should have no compassion on the son of her womb? Even these may forget, yet I will not forget you. Behold, I have engraved you on the palms of my hands.* These were in her heart and this is what she was saying to herself but nonetheless, she felt the enemy come rushing in saying, "You are nothing to God, you are a nobody. I mean, how dare you think you amount to anything before God?" She said she

was having this running dialogue with the enemy. And so the church ended the worship service and they decided to have a time of prayer. And of course Lydia's right there in the middle of this battle, and she said as she was standing there, she saw a woman about ten pews away turn around, make eye contact with her, and just make a beeline to her. The woman was a complete stranger to Lydia, but she approached her and said, "Can I say something to you?" And I want to quote Lydia exactly here because, among other things, she said this -- quote -- "She said God knew -- God knew how he made me and he did not make a mistake and that he made me exactly how he wanted me to be." Excuse me. You know, for somebody who's struggling with depression, this is the Comforter. This is somebody skating up alongside you, this is somebody grabbing your arm. Lydia went on to say, "God was speaking to my anxiety and depression and me feeling frustrated. I've struggled with this since I was a little girl and always felt I was broken." Well, after speaking to Lydia, the woman spoke to Sam, her husband. He said that he wants you to know that he hears your prayers at night. But there's no way she could have known that many, many nights Lydia's anxiety had kept them up and they had spent many, many hours in the night just praying that it would go away. See, God's Holy Spirit was using this dear woman to speak directly into Sam and Lydia's life exactly what God had promised to the disciples. When he said this in *John 14*: "*But the helper, the*

Holy Spirit whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I've said to you. Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid."

As you take the cup, I want you to remember the times that God has spoken to you. I'm so glad, I called Lydia up because I knew about this story and we had spoken about it before, and I said, "Is it okay if I speak about this?" And she said, "Yeah, I know all the details 'cause I wrote it in my journal." It's incredibly important that you do these kind of things when God touches you very specifically. You need to remember the times that God has spoken to you through prayers, he's spoken to you through the scriptures, he's spoken to you through people, and if this has been your experience -- if it's not been your experience, you need to ask yourself do I spend enough time in prayer, do I spend enough time reading and memorizing scripture, do I spend enough time even conversing and fellowshiping with my brothers and sisters? Or maybe you even need to ask a more important question and that is am I a child of God? Ask yourself those questions for a moment.

1 Corinthians, the 11th chapter says: *In the same manner He also took the cup after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in*

my blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me." Take, and drink.

This our heads, heart and feet part, this is where we look for some practical application of what it means to remember the Lord, and this is my third story. This story has to do with actually Janice and her family. Janice has a very intimidating family. She had six siblings. And I remember the very first time I drove up to her house to meet all of her brothers and sisters. I mean, I met Janice at Villanova, and Villanova's famous now, because after all they won the NCAA basketball tournament. But as I drove up the driveway to her house -- and of course I didn't know any of these people, you know, people put the decals of their schools on the back of their car, and so I pulled up the driveway behind the station wagon and it says "Harvard, Yale, Dartmouth, University of Pennsylvania, Tufts," and at the very bottom "Villanova," you know, so I'm sitting there going this is going to be interesting. I've been with them for 45 years. And so I know the family, and I've gotten pretty comfortable with them, but I also wanted to tell you about Janice's cousin Bob. Bob also was ivy league educated, he was a lawyer, he was the fellow who was living in San Francisco when we moved out to San Francisco. He was the person who lived -- the apartment that he lived in we were going to take over. He was heading back to Connecticut to set up his law practice. He had

been living in San Francisco for quite a while and decided to move back east. We had just arrived and so we were able to connect with him because he said, "You can have my apartment when I leave." He was leaving in the fall. We got there in the spring, so we had a sublet for the summer. So we found a sublet -- and I should back up a little bit in that when we met Bob in San Francisco for him to take us around, I had been a believer for about what, three or four weeks. I was brand new believer and Bob was the first person I ever shared the gospel with and I just -- I backed up the dump truck and I just hit it on "unload," and that's -- he was the very first person that I ever shared the gospel with. And so we got our sublet, and I was anxious to kind of reconnect with him and I remember calling him up and said, "Look, we'd love to have you over for dinner. We appreciate everything you've been doing," I said, "would next Saturday work?" And he said, "No, that wouldn't work for me." I said, "How about Sunday?" He said, "No, that wouldn't work for me." I said, "What day's good for you?" And he said, "Actually no day is no good for me. I'm just not interested." Click. Well, you can imagine my very first sharing of the gospel was as cosmic a dud as you're ever going to find, and my reaction to that of course was, you know, the heck with him, you know, that guy's gone. Forget that guy. There's not a chance that this guy would ever be anything in the kingdom. And so I just kind of wrote him off. And fast forward, oh, about 15 years, we moved -- we've

already moved back east. I'm back east, I get a phone call from one Bob Farrell. What the heck, why does he want to talk to me? Pick up the phone. He just wants to tell me that he is gloriously saved, Jesus Christ is his Lord and Savior. I mean you could have knocked me over with a feather. But what one thing I learned from that is that never, never doubt God's timing, never, never doubt God's power, never, never doubt God's ability to do what he's going to do when he's going to do it.

And so over the last, oh, 20 or so years, I've had the privilege of connecting with Bob. And you know, we always go up to Canada -- the families do -- and he's in one of the other families and so sometimes we see him, sometimes we don't. We saw him about five or six years ago. They had just come back from a mission trip to China and he and his wife have just lived their life, he has a law practice, she had a gift shop, just living their lives for the glory of God. And it's always a joy and pleasure to connect with them. And so I -- this summer we were there and I got to connect with him again. I haven't seen him for a number of years. And so I'm down at the dock and he comes down to the dock, and I just noticed that his gate was a lot more hesitant, he looked a lot weaker and he kind of fell into his chair rather than just getting into his chair. But he had a great big smile on his face. And so we were just sitting out on the dock and we were talking and he was

just sharing how wonderful God has been and what a joy it was to have this -- this relationship with Christ. And in the course of the conversation twice he teared up and I teared up and I just thought here's these two old guys getting verklempt on the dock, you know, and it just was an amazing thought. And then I have to back up, because I had to back up and say, point out, Bob, Bob is an ivy league educated lawyer, okay. At the time that I was speaking to him -- of course he didn't get into that at all -- his past history, the past three years was he had had knee trouble, so he had knee replacement surgery that didn't work and he wound up having to have both of his knees replaced at the same time. You know, any of you that have gone through that, you know what that's like. That was followed by a severe bout of pneumonia, which was followed by a severe bout of Legionnaires' disease, which was followed by a stroke, which made him have to give up his law practice, which was followed by his wife's gift shop going bankrupt, which was followed by her developing Trigeminal neuralgia which is an incredibly painful situation. They call it suicide disease because people have pain they just can't get rid of, which was followed by them losing their house. Now, I just need to put all of this into context because Bob is sharing with me, he's weeping with joy over how good God has been. And so he was telling, I said, "what are you doing now?" He said he managed to pick up a job driving cars for a used car dealer. So the car

dealer will have him drive a car to Newburgh or drive a car to Albany from Connecticut, and he says, "Which is great, I can pop a sermon in and just sit there and just bask listening to the word of God." And I'm sitting there trying to put all of these things together, your life, disaster; your joy is ever present, it's just bubbling out of him. And I thought of this verse that we were looking at this morning. It says this: Jesus says: *"Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid."* You know what Bob said over and over again, he said, "Jesus is more than enough." This is a guy, like I said, this guy went from here to here, no biggie, it was no biggie because he had Jesus Christ.

So I just want us to stop for a moment and I just want to pray and I just want us to think about the precious gift of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit can make life work for you whether you're at the top or at the bottom. You know, Paul said that he has learned whether or not he's at the top or the bottom, he can still praise God. Bob Farrell is a living example of how that works. And so I just want to spend a couple of moments this morning just thanking God for his Holy Spirit.

Father, I just, I thank you for the gift that you've given us of

the Helper. I thank you for the gift you've given us of the Comforter. And Father, I want to pray that your Holy Spirit would fall anew on this congregation. Lord, you are the one who empowers us, you are the one who comforts us, you are the one who brings to our remembrance those things that you have spoken to us and you speak to us in your word. Lord, you give us the ability to do anything. There's nothing we can't do without the power of your Holy Spirit's backing. And so I pray you would give us the grace, the strength, the peace, and the power of your Spirit and that we would not only have it ourselves but that we would communicate it to others, knowing and realizing just as I did when Bob told me 15 years or right at the very beginning "I don't want your gospel" and yet 15 years later that gospel connected. Lord, give us the ability to understand your power, your grace, your input in our life and I pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.