Come in Third: The Advocate

John 14:15-31

OPEN

How have you experienced God (and his presence) when you have faced significant grief, trial, or challenge in life?

DISCUSS

Read John 14:15-31

- In John's Gospel, he uses the word *parakletos* in Jesus' teaching on the Holy Spirit. This word can mean: advocate, comforter, or helper. How are these words similar or different?
- How has God comforted you in past experiences of life?
- Describe God's comfort in these verses: John 11:25-26, 16:33; Deut 31:8; Isa 66:13.
- How would you respond to a friend if they asked you, "Is there anything I can do to have my life more fully filled by the comfort and counsel of the Holy Spirit?"
    - Consider what is shared in your group and come to a consensus in a good response to this question. (Consider Luke 11:11 and Rev 3:20)
- Describe some key elements of building a lasting relationship with someone.
    - How do these apply to your relationship with God?
    - What elements do you feel (personally) you need to put into practice more intentionally to nurture this relationship?

LISTENING TO GOD:

- Read John 14:26. Does this verse mean God will teach us everything we want to know? Explain.
- Do you believe God will give you everything you NEED to know to fulfill His purposes in and through you?
- Remember, it is good to test what we think we hear the Spirit telling us through the authority of Scripture which will always be aligned. In other words, reading your Bible and listening to the Spirit go hand and hand.

- Read John 14:21.
    - Does this verse challenge you?
    - Do you think we have diminished obedience in our American Christianity? Why or why not?

Note: We have been trained to think very individualistically when it comes to Scripture, sermons, and their application. We say, "What is this saying to ME?" How often do we think or ask, "What is this saying to us? What does this teaching look like when lived in community with one another?"

Jesus is saying to his followers (and now church) that the Spirit in YOU—and YOU is a collective YOU as much (maybe more) as it is an individual YOU. As WE continue in our study, keep this communal focus in mind as it will open US up to the mission and reality of what it means to be the church (and who YOU are in relation to whole body of Christ).

YOUR NEXT STEP…

- Pay attention to the Holy Spirit's leading in your thoughts, attitudes, and actions. Report back to the group how you experienced (or heard) the Spirit in your week.
- This week, give yourself 15 minutes of uninterrupted quiet (whether the first part of your day or pausing in the midst of your day) to do the following:
    - Pray to God asking what it is you need to hear, know, or do.
    - Then sit quietly, listening for impulses, thoughts, or suggestions that come from the Spirit.
    - Close your time with thanksgiving and commit yourself to the Spirit's leading in what you heard.