

“I’ve lost both my boys.” The father who spoke those words just lost two sons to a tornado this past week. These words tear at your heart strings. The shock and pain probably still hasn’t worn off for many families with victims in Tuesday’s tornadoes. It’s painful to watch someone else’s pain over the loss of loved ones they couldn’t protect. It’s painful to watch all the victims cope with the loss of property they couldn’t stop the tornado from destroying. These people had no idea what was going to happen to them and now they have no idea the help they’ll need going forward.

Jesus is just days from suffering and dying. We’ve gone back to the time before the crucifixion in order to look carefully at how Jesus acts in these moments. He knows what’s about to happen to him and he knows it will be shocking to his disciples; just as shocking as losing a loved one in a tornado. He also knows the help they’ll need.

But unlike the people this week who didn’t have time to prepare, Jesus does have the time to get his disciples ready. So he’s preparing them. In the gospel Jesus speaks to them that know him best and lets them know they’ll be cared for when he’s gone. Gone isn’t a concept they want to think about, but they must. Jesus alerts them they’ll be in good hands because...

**Jesus lives to promise the Holy Spirit**  
**Helps us fellowship with Jesus**  
**Helps us obey Jesus out of love**

Students across the country have mostly left college campuses for the summer. If anyone made friends with someone from far away they know they won’t see each other for a while. Communication technology helps some. Yet the fact remains as each goes their separate ways they won’t be in close proximity to each other. Those who may have been inseparable now will be separated. This can be a sad occasion and depending on the level of friendship may be cause for a few tears. Jesus was leaving not just for the summer but for a long time. He was going someplace the disciples couldn’t visit or communicate with him face to face. The close personal ties of three years were being broken. Jesus looked to soften the blow. **“I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever.”** Jesus promised them the Holy Spirit.

Here on earth we’ve existed as a human race for almost 2,000 years after Jesus ascended and have never seen him. This would indicate for some people that having a relationship with him is impossible. It’s like trying to have a long-distance relationship. All the talking on the phone, video chatting, and texting is fine. But you don’t get quality face time, that ability to hold and hug, and to look deeply into each other’s eyes. Because we don’t have that with Jesus we might feel like we’re missing something.

The Holy Spirit has a unique relationship with Jesus. Jesus has a unique relationship with the Father. It’s all a unique relationship in the Godhead, among the persons of the Trinity. Jesus and the Father fellowship together in perfect harmony. Jesus can send the Holy Spirit. Thus Jesus’ promise is that, **“Before long, the world will not see me anymore, but you will see me. On that day you will realize that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you.”** Some will see Jesus and others won’t. That doesn’t sound clear. No one sees Jesus physically. But believers have a unique relationship with Jesus. He promises believers will be in him and he in them. Believers still fellowship with Jesus by the work of the helper Jesus sends, the Holy Spirit. This work is faith.

So it turns out Jesus doesn’t leave believers alone. He promises he’s coming back to dwell in them. That’s a closer relationship than we could ever hope to have with Jesus face to face. The Holy Spirit is now our close personal friend, a trusted advisor, sent to our side by God to reveal God and lead us to God. The Holy Spirit dwells in believers, making his home in us so that Jesus makes his home in us. His personal presence dwells in us, his energy surges through us, and he comforts, guides, and instructs us. We have this relationship, this fellowship with Jesus by grace.

Some women expect that after three years if the man they’re dating hasn’t proposed he never will. There’s an expectation after a certain amount of time that they should act a certain way. The disciples had followed Jesus for three years. Jesus had shown he cared for them, loved them, and would do extraordinary things for them. Now the time was coming for them to show what they thought of him. Some of you have had a relationship with Jesus for a long time. You came to faith early in life and have remained close ever since. What do you think of him? How does that show in your life? Jesus says that the Holy Spirit will help you to obey out of love.

“If you cared about me you wouldn’t say hurtful things to me. If you supported this cause you would give a bigger donation. If you liked the movie you would say something about it.” We know the “if” means the other person isn’t doing or thinking or saying what we think they should. **“If you love me, you will obey what I command.”** Does Jesus mean that the disciples didn’t love him because they were still sinning and disobeying commands like the 10 Commandments? Does Jesus mean to point the finger at us the same way?

Notice Jesus asks the question and then goes right into promises. Their action won’t be based on their love alone. Immediately Jesus tells them what he’ll do for them. He loved them before they ever had a chance to show it back. In mere hours he would show them the full extent of his love. Hanging from a cross paying for sin he would demonstrate the lengths his love would go to. This was love like the disciples would never be able to show. They would need to focus their hearts on the cross if they hoped to show any kind of love or obedience. Their love would be based on his love for them.

There's no doubt that we're loved by Jesus. We hear week after week just how much he loves us. So the real question then is how are we doing in our response to that love, how well are we doing in obeying? We get it mixed up thinking our obedience earns us God's love. We get it mixed up if we think that our level of obedience is going to match God's response of love. If I hold back he'll hold back. That's not focusing on Jesus' love for us. It's focusing on our love for him.

Jesus doesn't leave you wondering if you'll have to go it alone in obeying him. **"I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you."** Rejoice in the fact that Jesus isn't apart from us even right now. He's here. Part of that is his promise to send his Holy Spirit to help us obey him in love. Love can't be separated from obedience anymore than faith can. They naturally go together. So when Jesus promised to send the Holy Spirit it was a loaded promise, loaded with the gospel power that was needed to make it happen. The very thing Jesus promised is the very thing the Holy Spirit helps them do.

Our response to God's love for us in Christ and the Holy Spirit is a life lived as God intended. It's as natural as breath means life and fire means heat. Where you have love for Jesus, you have obedience to his commands. This is where the help of the Holy Spirit is essential. For us to live a life that treasures the Lord, his Word, and seeks to obey both always depends on the life of Christ.

**"Because I live, you also will live."** With Jesus living it's impossible for us to be fearful of death. It's impossible for us to feel like we've been left alone. It's impossible to not obey his commands. Jesus living makes it all possible.

Maybe you didn't suffer loss in this latest round of storms and bad weather. Maybe you never will. But tragedy is always around the corner. Death is as close as our next breath. But we have a living Savior. And because he lives we too shall live. He lives today to promise us the Holy Spirit. This helper is right there to help us have fellowship and an ongoing relationship with Jesus. He's right there to help us live a life of obedience to the commands of Christ. We live in the promise of the Holy Spirit but that doesn't mean we live without Jesus. Our living Savior is here too. He dwells in us, with us, and through us now and always.