

There are times in our lives when we need counselors. High school kids who have no clue how to choose a career might go to see a guidance counselor. Couples who realize that they aren't experts at making marriage work will see a marriage counselor. People planning to retire who don't know the first thing about investing see a financial counselor. Whatever the case, when we realize that there's some area in our lives where we aren't able to give ourselves the help we need – we need a counselor. We need the expert who can give us the help we can't give ourselves.

The disciples were in desperate need of a Counselor. You see, Jesus had charged them with the task of teaching the world about him. One big problem with that: Did you ever notice in the gospels how often the disciples *themselves* were confused about Jesus? How they misread his actions...or misunderstood his mission...or forgot something he told them? They needed help – and up until now, Jesus had given it. He taught, explained, reminded...but when Jesus returned to the Father, and they were left to teach the world about him, then who would give them this help they could not give themselves?

The Counselor would. Jesus wasn't going to leave them alone. The night before he died, he assured his disciples he'd send them the Holy Spirit, the expert help, just the Counselor they needed. And just the Counselor you need. You see, Jesus' promise here isn't just for his 1st century disciples – it's for you and me. In desperate need of help we cannot give ourselves – when it comes to spiritual things, that's all of us. And that's the help this Counselor keeps on giving through the Word. Jesus gives us just the Counselor we need... 1. He teaches our hearts to trust, and 2. He gives us Jesus' peace.

²⁵ “All this I have spoken while still with you. ²⁶ But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you. ²⁷ Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.

1. He teaches our hearts to trust

The night before he died, Jesus explained what Pentecost would mean for the disciples. So much greater than the sound of wind, flames of fire, the speaking foreign languages, was what the Spirit was doing in their hearts. **The Counselor will teach you all things.** The disciples often misunderstood things about Jesus. Even right before his ascension, they didn't fully grasp his mission. “Are you gonna restore Israel to its former glory now?” they asked him. But on the Day of Pentecost, the Counselor came and **taught them all things.** Cleared up any confusion, removed any misunderstanding, so they fully grasped all Jesus had done and would do.

Not only that – he **reminded** them of **everything Jesus said.** Just think about that miracle. By midweek, we struggle to remember what Sunday's sermon was about. That's fifteen minutes of teaching. These disciples had *three years* of Jesus' teaching they needed to

remember accurately. Impossible...until the Counselor came. In a moment, he gave them accurate memory of all Jesus had said.

So, good for them, right? No, good for us! Do you realize your very salvation depended on Pentecost happening? Think about it: It's the only reason the saving truths about Jesus are in bibles today. The Spirit **taught** and **reminded** them...but he did it for you. So that they could write those facts down, without any mistakes. So that you can hear them and know them today.

But we needed more than just facts about Jesus in our heads. We needed trust in Jesus in our hearts to be saved. And that's something we're helpless to produce on our own! We're born spiritually dead, blind, enemies of God. On our own, we could hear message about Jesus a million times, and a million times we'd reject it.

So thank God, Jesus' promise here goes beyond Pentecost. The Father is still sending the Counselor, and Jesus tells us how – **in Jesus' name**. Catechism review: What is Jesus' name? More than just the title! It's all God reveals about Jesus in his Word. Through that message, the **Counselor** teaches our hearts to do the impossible – to trust what we're hearing. And through that trust, we receive all Jesus won for us. Through that trust, we're saved.

I think it's important to remember that. We can begin to treat our relationship with Jesus as if it were more about getting the right facts in our heads. We can forget that it's really about Spirit-worked trust in our hearts. And we can neglect the Counselor's ongoing work as a result. After all, once we know the facts, why do we need to keep hearing them? Why pay close attention to a message I already know? "It's not like I'll forget that Jesus is my Savior if I don't hear about him for a while," we think.

But then we're not realizing that our problem often isn't that we don't know. It's that we don't trust. I'll give you an example of that: Our synod has a coaching network for pastors that I'm a part of. The director has been counseling pastors for years now. And according to him, do you know what the most frequent problem pastors struggle with is? Guilt. Feeling guilty. Strange, you might think at first! Pastors know the gospel better than anyone! We're sharing it day in and day out! But that's the thing. It's not that we don't *know* – it's that we struggle to *trust*.

And I'm guessing it's not just pastors. How many years have you known the good news that Jesus died for you and your sins are forgiven? Yet, how often don't you find yourself carrying guilt for things you've said, done or left undone, people you've hurt? It's not that you don't know – it's that you struggle to trust.

And it's not just guilt. How long have you known the promises Jesus gives you that mean you have no need to worry? Yet, how many times a day you find yourself worrying? It's not that you don't know; it's that you struggle to trust. And you know God says prayer is powerful and effective. But why is it that we don't pray as often as we should? We know that God's commands are truly what's best for us! But how often haven't we chosen to do the opposite and sinned...because even though we knew it in our heads, at the time, we didn't really believe that in our hearts.

I could go on, but are you starting to see? Our chronic problem isn't not knowing, it's not trusting. And without the Holy Spirit's ongoing work through the Word, it's a chronic problem that proves fatal: You might still know Jesus is the Savior, but you'd stop trusting him and be lost forever.

So isn't Jesus' promise wonderful? For all the ways we fail to trust him, he should leave us alone forever. Instead, he loves us. And in undeserved love, he doesn't leave us alone; he leaves us with the Counselor and the promise he'll keep doing for us what we need the most. **In Jesus' name** – through message of Jesus' work and Jesus' promises – he keeps teaching our hearts to trust.

He makes known the truth: Jesus died on the cross to pay for this world's sins. But he doesn't just fill your head with the knowledge; he fills your heart with the saving trust, "He died on the cross and paid for *my* sins." He tells you the fact that Jesus has removed your guilt from you as far as the east is from the west. But he also helps you trust it more and more, so you live with guilt less and less. He reminds you that Jesus loves you and lives and reigns over all things for your good. But he doesn't just remind you, he leads you to believe it more and more, so you live with less worry. He doesn't just state the fact that God's will for your life is best...he convinces you more and more that it's always true, so you live by it.

In the Word, God is still sending the Counselor we need. The more we hear it, the more he teaches our hearts to trust. And so the more we'll experience of Jesus' peace.

II. Gives you Jesus' peace

That's the precious gift Jesus says he's leaving his disciples with: **Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.**

Did you notice – Jesus contrasts what he gives with what the world gives? He gives you peace – the world can't. There's a reason he has to say it. We often look to this world for peace. Think that we can find it in the right earthly circumstances. A life with as few problems as possible would bring me peace. More money would bring me more peace of mind, less strife in relationships will mean peace at home and at work. A peace we can achieve if we get things in our lives just right.

But the peace we're after, this world can't give. The best it can offer is a feeling of peace that is as fleeting as your earthly circumstances are. For all you strive to get it, as Jesus says later in this same conversation, this world will keep on giving you trouble.

No, peace, real peace is found only in Jesus. It's not something we strive for, but something he gives as a gift. It's not something that depends on your earthly circumstances, but peace that's yours in spite of your earthly circumstances. Not a fleeting feeling, but a lasting status. Doesn't depend on what you do, but on what he has done and still does for you.

My peace, Jesus calls it, because he's the one who died to win it for us, and lives to give it to us. Peace of conscience in the forgiveness won by his sacrifice, blood-bought peace that we are right with God because of him, that God's anger is stilled and God's blessing is secured. Peace from our problems because Jesus does something about them – he turns them into

spiritual blessings, and once they've served his purpose, he brings them to an end. Peace of mind whether we have little or much, because we have Jesus, who will never leave us or forsake us. Peace that goes beyond the grave, the perfect peace of heaven.

Have you heard of Horatio Spafford? Horatio Spafford was a Christian businessman in Illinois in the 1800s. His business was booming. He and his wife had four young daughters. To celebrate his success, they planned a family vacation to England. That's when things took a turn for the worse. In a short period of time, his business tanked, and he lost most of his wealth. Since they had already purchased tickets to England, he sent his wife and four daughters on vacation, while he remained in Illinois to work. But the ship they sailed on crashed into another en route and sank. His wife barely survived; all four daughters drowned. As he traveled to England to meet his wife, he passed over the very spot where his daughters lost their lives. That night, he went to his cabin and wrote a hymn in our hymnals: "When peace like a river attendeth my way, when sorrows like sea-billows roll, whatever my lot, thou hast taught me to say – 'It is well, it is well with my soul.'"

That's Jesus' peace. Though I lose job and home and possessions, though I suffer sickness and sadness and loss, "it is well with my soul" because of Jesus. He's taken my sins away. Heaven is mine. His love for me never changes, and he's with me always.

My peace I give you, Jesus says. We all want to enjoy this peace more and more, don't we? Then we need to know how Jesus gives it! "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace..." Paul writes. Jesus gives his peace through the Counselor, and he gives the Counselor through his word. Let the Counselor do his work more and more in your heart. Amen.