The Helper for Trials

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Preacher: Matt Huckins

[0:00] It was just last week that we passed our one year of being up here, so if you said a year ago, this is where we would be, I would think you're crazy.

You know, we're meeting in Sean's apartment, and we had a small group, and preaching, I just wanted to help, preaching really wasn't on my radar, God's funny like that, but God has a plan for each one of us, and he weaves those plans together, and so I appreciate you guys for being on mission with us, and for us being able to take on this mission that God has together, so thank you all for joining me as well.
This morning as we go through chapter 16, we're going to be looking at three points, and that's going to be the plan, the purpose, and the power, and what John wants us to walk away with from this chapter is that true belief in Jesus comes with the benefits of unshakable joy and unshakable peace, unspeakable joy and unshakable peace, so that's what we get when we believe in Jesus, and it was awesome to sing the songs we had this morning because it was like everyone was just reinforcing that belief, so thanks, Taylor, for picking those out, that was helpful to me just ahead of time getting ready.
When I was younger, a lot younger, before I was a teenager, there were several conversations that our family had, and they started out something like this, well boys, it looks like we're going to be moving, and you know, as little boys, the first initial was like, what?
Mom and dad had been talking about it, but we didn't, so you know, when we learned, it was already happening, so we were shocked, and then what would follow would be, as you can imagine, a landslide of questions like, where are we moving?
[2:07] When are we moving? Do we have a house? How big is it? Do we have a yard? Do I get my own room? Do I have to change schools? Do I have to change schools? Which happened a lot, but as you can imagine, there would be a lot going on in a child's mind going through these, and after all the questions we're asked, you go through a period where, you know, you're talking to your siblings, your brothers about what's going to take place, but then there's also some sad time where you just, you get alone, and you think about what's going to change, what you're going to gain, and what you're going to lose by moving, and you know, in our case as a family, we had comfort in knowing that we were moving together.

Whatever heartache or blessing we were getting, we were doing it together, and as we look at this chapter this morning, we see the disciples' case is a little different.
They're not going with Jesus. Jesus is going away, and so they have a lot of the questions that we did moving, but they don't see any of the positives, and that's what they're struggling with here.
You know, all the ways that the disciples knew Jesus were physical. You know, there wasn't a place, a website, or any books that you could go and read about Jesus and really know him.
So to know him meant to be with him and to learn from him, and that's what the disciples had been doing. You know, they shared meals with him. They witnessed miracles. They heard his teaching, and for three and a half years, they followed him, and they knew him, and so now he's talking about going away and not being with him anymore.
[3:49] So as you can imagine, this is a pretty difficult time for them. And so what I'd like to do is open up starting in verse four. We'll start there and go through.

There's a lot packed into this chapter, and there's a lot of verses or phrases that I think are a little difficult to understand, but they're not very complex. So we're going to take some time to look a little bit of those as we go through those three points, and hopefully in the end, we'll come with agreement that true belief in Jesus comes with the benefits of unspeakable joy and unshakable peace.

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So verse four this morning. You know, one thing that jumped out to me as I was reading that verse was when he said, none of you has asked where I was going.
You know, one thing that jumped out to me as I was reading that verse was when he says, none of you has asked where I was going.
I struggled with it a little bit because it was just earlier that Peter said, Lord, where are you going? So that doesn't make sense to me. But I think what helps us see that that's not a contradiction is one of two things.
[5:14] One is Jesus says it in a present tense form. So by saying, none of you has asked me, he's not referring to before Peter said it, some things took place, and now nobody said it.

He sees Jesus saying, nobody has asked me. That's one thought. But the other thought, which I tend to believe, is that Jesus is seeing the overall response of the group, and that is a non-response.
Peter says, where are you going? But nobody else says anything. It's like they don't want to know. Nobody is curious where I'm going. It would be, as an example, if I told my family, hey, tonight we're going to somewhere new for dinner.
Obviously, somebody might say, hey, where are we going? But if I just kind of gave them a broad response and didn't really give them a good answer, and then nobody said anything, and hours go by, we drive there, nobody says, hey, where are we going?
What are we eating? When are we getting there? That would be odd, especially for a few of my kids who love food. But it would make sense for me to say, what? Nobody wants to know where we're going?
[6:26] Because overall, no one seems to be interested in asking that question. So I think in their sadness and thinking about themselves, they're not thinking about what's taking place in Jesus' life and the overall plan.

So why is God even, or Jesus even asking this question? He does seem to make a point of it. So it must be for a reason.
And the reason of that is because Jesus wants them to look past themselves. And he wants them to see the magnitude of where he's going and what's about to take place. Jesus knows that they're going to be filled with sadness and sorrow.
But he wants them to see that he's going to the Father and everything that that's going to mean to them as a result of that. So let's look at verse 7. 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.
[7:35] 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 the world is judged.

Concerning sin, because the ruler of the world is judged. Concerning sin, because the ruler of the world is judged. If Jesus had talked to his disciples, hadn't talked to his disciples already, this would easily be confusing to them.
They've known Jesus in the flesh, and now he's talking about leaving, and now he's talking about a helper. He's tried to walk them through, but they're saying, seeing this is like, what do you mean by a helper?
Isn't having you in the flesh better than having someone we don't know come in and help us? It's just not making sense to them yet. But if we remember that Jesus has already shared with them up to this point, they should have a little bit of a better idea of what's going on.
But for us, I just want to review a little bit so that we get a hold of what they should have gotten a hold of already. It's like in verse 7, when it says, I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I go away.
[8:46] Because if I don't, the helper can't come. Jesus must ascend before the helper can descend. And if we were to look back at chapter 14 and verse 16, Jesus calls the Holy Spirit another helper, meaning like Jesus himself.

Except this helper will be better, better in the sense that all believers will be able to have access to him at all times. Jesus, while he was God in human form, he was still limited to being with one person or one group of people at any one time.

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So when the Holy Spirit comes, he's able to be available to all believers anywhere all over the world. So the difference between that is just, it's remarkable.
But the disciples, they don't know that. It's easier for us to say that because we see it, but they don't. In addition, Jesus alone had the fullness of spirit during his ministry.
No one else had the spirit. At certain times, we see that prophets or certain people were filled with the spirit. But overall, there wasn't the spirit that was in each believer. And with the coming of the spirit after Jesus goes away and returns to the Father, we see that there's, especially in Acts, when the church starts to break open, there's this unprecedented outpouring of the spirit on believers.
[10:16] And that can't happen until Jesus goes back to his father. And that's what he wants the disciples to see. It's what he wants us to see today as well because of what that means in our lives.

So our first point this morning is the plan. Let's look at verse 8. Speaking of the helper, Jesus says, Now, to get an idea or exactly to know what the helper is being sent to do, there's a few of those phrases that I think it's helpful to unpack.
The first part, he says, He will convict the world concerning sin because they do not believe in me. So we know from previously that Jewish opponents accused Jesus of being a sinner.
They were looking for ways to have him put in prison, to have him killed. And it started from the beginning. They accused him of not keeping the Sabbath.
And in the end, they went as far as to say that he was a sinner and working with the devil. Which is ironic because their guilt before God is rejecting the very one who came to save him that they're calling a sinner.
[11:54] So the first thing that the Spirit will do is to convict the world for not believing in Jesus. Secondly, it says the helper will convict the world concerning righteousness because I go to the Father and you will see me no longer.

And what he means is that since he's going to the Father, he's not going to be able to teach the world true righteousness anymore. He won't be here. There won't be a teacher. But the Holy Spirit will come and continue that work in his place.
It seems a little odd because the Holy Spirit isn't a person, a form that we saw Jesus in. So how is that going to take place? And we actually get that answered in verses 13 to 15.
When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all truth. For he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears, he will speak. And he will declare to you the things that are to come.
He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you. All that the Father has is mine. Therefore, I say that he will take what is mine and declare it to you.
[12:59] So the helper or the Spirit teaches and convicts us through the word of God and through personal illumination. He also uses other believers to bring a word of conviction or a word of teaching to us as well.

So we see that the Spirit works in us personally and also through corporately through the church. It's helpful for us to see here that the Spirit does always only speak what he hears from the Father and through Jesus.
It's important because we use those as tests to prove what is right and what is wrong in the world. More in the area of false preachers or false speakers or people who are bringing a word that could sound good, but can also lead us away from Christ.
In 1 John 4, 1-3, John says, Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God.
For many false prophets have gone out into the world. By this you know the Spirit of God. Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God.
[14:10] And every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God. This is the Spirit of the Antichrist, which you heard was coming and now is in the world already. So the Holy Spirit never convicts the Father's revealed word.

He never contradicts Jesus in any way. His work or what he did as a person here on earth. So if there's anything that doesn't line up with that, that doesn't confess that, that's a false or an evil spirit. So that's helpful to us as we, especially in this age when it's so easy to find other preachers, to hear other sermons, to read good biblical books.
It's easy for us to know. You know, I just automatically think of like the prosperity gospel. There's a lot of good stuff that's in there. It's not all bad, but it can quite easily lead you off course and away

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from Christ.
So that would be, this test would be easy to help in that. So let's look back at the last section there in verse 8. It says that the Holy Spirit will convict the world concerning judgment because the ruler of this world is judged.
[15:22] The ruler here he's speaking of is Satan. So the world is wrong about judgment because Satan, the prince of this world, now stands condemned. This section took me a little longer to get my head around.

It just didn't seem like it quite made sense. So I just wrestled with it. That's fun at sometimes, just to dig in.
So I encourage you to do that. If you get to a passage in your devotions and it just doesn't make sense and you're wrestling with it, wrestle back.
Take some time to meditate. Come back to it the next day. Pray over. Find a commentary. There's a lot of resources, but dig into it. But what is going on here is the world that we live in, they judge wrongly, right?
The truth that they say that they have or the truth that's out there is not the right truth. They judge things and it's wrong. They judge us if we're doing what God calls us to do and they would say that's wrong.
[16:31] So things that used to be one way, they now say are something else. And that is all being run by Satan. Satan is the ruler of this world right now.

And Satan stands condemned. So if we live in a world that is judging wrongly because it's being ruled by someone who is condemned, that should give us a little bit of hope, a little bit of peace, knowing that we should expect those things to happen because the person in control, and I say in control because he's not really in control, but right now God is letting him run with the world, the person in control is condemned, has already been defeated, and has already been overcome.
So hopefully that helps to make sense for that section for you this morning. So we see from those three areas that the helper is coming to teach about true righteousness.
He's also come to convict, and that's the plan. So the next section we're going to look at is the purpose. We see in the beginning of this section that disciples really don't have an idea.
In verse 16, Jesus says, And again, we see the disciples kind of struggling with what that means.
[17:53] What does he mean a little while? But notice that they don't ask Jesus what he means. They ask one another, and it doesn't get very far. But Jesus, in all his patience and love, picks up on their questioning and says, Let me help you explain what it means when I say in a little while.

Actually, it doesn't really tell them what that means because Jesus doesn't want them to focus on that. That's not the issue. One thing I wanted to bring out, though, as we're thinking of that, disciples struggling with that question.
How often do we do that? You know, it's a simple question that they struggled with. That isn't what Jesus wanted them struggling with. So how often do we find ourselves, when we're looking for answers, we ask ourselves instead of seeking God?
So I would encourage you that if you come across times like that, and you will, to humble yourself, to take a minute and seek the wisdom from God, and he will help with those questions that you're struggling with.
But Jesus, knowing their struggles, just like he knows ours, wants to help them get past it, and says to them, Is this what you are asking yourselves, what I mean by a little while and you will see me?
[19:19] And again, in a little while you won't see me, and in a little while you will see me. And again, this isn't what Jesus wants them to be focused on. Let's look at verse 20.

He says, Now I'm not going to pretend that I know what the pain of childbirth is like, I know there's several women in this room who could tell you much better than I could, but I can share a few things with you.
And that is, most of the time, it's pretty painful. I don't... See? First-hand account.
I don't know of any woman who would say that they enjoyed the pain aspect of childbirth. And the third thing is that the pain that a woman experiences is predictable, and that it follows an established order.
There will be pain, and then a baby will be born. And once the baby is born, once mommy sees that the baby's okay, she gets to hold the baby, there's this...

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[20:47] Sorry, I got to see it kind of recently. There's this emotional overflow of joy. There's happiness that is unexplainable to the mom.

And it makes the pain worth it. It kind of makes it... The pain, I feel so bad. Oh, it was bad. But the joy afterwards is so much greater than the pain.
And this is the example that Jesus uses to help explain it to the disciples. He tells the disciples, Soon you will be sorrowful. Soon you will lament, and the world will rejoice.
Jesus here is referring to his death on the cross. But there will be an end. Jesus says, I will see you again, and your hearts will rejoice, and no one will take that joy from you.
He's referring to his resurrection, and the time afterwards when he comes back to see them, and the joy that they had in realizing what is taking place. Then in verse 23 and 24, Jesus says, In that day you will ask nothing of me.
[21:54] Truly, truly, I say to you, whatever you ask of the Father in my name, he will give it to you. Until now you have asked nothing in my name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full.

First we look at those verses, and wonder exactly what Jesus is talking about. And what does that have to do with the Holy Spirit? So, what I'd like to do is just explain a little bit, when he uses the word ask.
Leaning on some more better educated scholars than myself in the area of Greek, when he says the word ask in these sentences, he says it four times, but they all don't mean the same word. They look the same to us, but in the Greek, there's actually a different word. In the first sense, it's ask just in the general sense, somebody's asking a question.
And in the other sense, it's to bring a request to a superior. And so, when we plug those in, we understand why the word ask is used, because it's all asking that's going on, but it helps the passage make more sense.
[23:07] Looking at verse 23, in that day you will ask nothing of me. When Jesus is saying that after the resurrection, you're not simply going to ask me questions.

That's just not where things are going to be at that point. Truly, truly, I say to you, whatever you ask of the Father, he will give you. The word ask here means to make a request to a superior.
And then verse 24, until now you have asked nothing in my name. Ask and you will receive that your joy may be full. So both of those times, he's talking about making a request to someone great or someone superior to you.
And so he's telling them, you haven't made a request in my name up until now. You're not going to be asking those little questions anymore, but now you can make requests to the Father.
And that's what I want you to do, so that your joy may be full. So now the picture starts to become a little clearer, and we can start to see the purpose. Jesus says, I'm going away, and you will have sorrow and sadness, but I'm coming back, and you will rejoice.
[24:15] And that joy won't be taken away. You'll be able to pray to the Father. He will hear you. Prayers will matter. You will see that there's a God that's working in the world because of requests that we've brought to him.

And that's the purpose. So we've talked about the plan for the helper, which is to come and teach and convict, and also the purpose of giving joy and the ability to pray to the Father.
So from those, we can kind of see where that would lead us to our last point, and that is the power. Now, I struggled this week with this last point being power or peace.
I didn't set out to make them all peas. That's just how it happened. I chose power because of the power we have from the peace that we've been given through Jesus Christ.
But now I realize that each one of us, as we come here this morning, we all come, different things going on. We all come with different burdens.
[25:27] We all come with different struggles. So if you find yourself worn down and in need of strengthening, if you're feeling like you're just losing the battle that keeps coming up, maybe it's a struggle that seems like it doesn't end, then I would say make power your title for this section.

But if you find that you were, you need comfort and encouragement, a peace that is not what this world is going to offer, then make peace your title for this section tonight.
Because either one of those is right and good and find its remedies in the next few verses. And if you're not in either one of those positions, if you're here because you've, and you've never accepted Jesus for what he's done for you, accepted that he's your savior, then I want you to know the same power and peace that John is offering to us.

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He's offering to you as well. And it requires the same for everyone. It requires that we stop saving, trying to save ourselves, and we look to Jesus.
We can't save ourselves. We have to believe in what he's done because he's the only one that could go as the perfect lamb to the cross and die in our place.
[27:00] We needed to repent of being a sinner because that's what we all are. And we need to trust that only through Jesus can we be made bright and whole before God.

So let's look at verse 25. As we think about that peace and that power, and where you find that this morning, he says in verse 25, I have said these things to you in figures of speech.
The hour is coming when I will no longer speak to you in figures of speech, but will tell you plainly about the Father. Although we don't see John saying this, I think at this point the disciples are like, yes, he's going to talk normal.
Like, no more of this double talk. I mean, we kind of give disciples a hard time, but we feel it as well. It's like, what did he just mean? So they're excited.
Not only is Jesus going to start talking plainly and they can understand it, but it makes them feel better for why they struggled so long. Makes sense we didn't get it all this time. He's been talking figuratively. So now hopefully they'll get it a little bit easier.
[28:09] So in addition to Jesus speaking differently, he also mentions that they will be praying differently. And we talked about this briefly before. Verse 26 says, In that day you will ask in my name, and I do not say to you that I will ask the Father on your behalf.

What Jesus is saying here is that in that day, speaking about after the resurrection, those who believe in Jesus and who he is and what he's done will have direct access to the Father.
They won't have to pray through anybody. There's no mediator. It's just direct access to their Heavenly Father, their Creator. So let's follow a little bit further.
Verse 27. For the Father himself loves you because you have loved me and have believed that I've come from God. I came from the Father and have come into the world, and now I'm leaving the world and going to the Father.
So from this we can see a full circle of the gospel where God the Father is both the start and the end. Starts in heaven. The origin is God.
[29:14] Comes down to earth, and it goes back up to heaven. So he's the origin and the destination. Jesus was with the Father. He came to the earth to live a perfect life, to give his life up on the cross, to die, and then to be resurrected, and then to go back to the Father.

So our belief in Jesus and where he came from, who he is, and what he did, that's what gives us access to the Father. We're able to have that relationship.
We're able to have that fellowship. We're able to know God because of Jesus. And it's from that belief that gives us that joy and that peace that can't be found in this world.
So at this point, the disciples think that they're getting a little closer to understanding. In verse 29, they said, Ah, now you are speaking clearly. Now we know that you know all things, and we believe that you are from God.
They really didn't understand it yet, and we see Jesus correct them in the next two verses. Verse 31 and 32. Jesus answered them, Do you now believe? I almost feel a little bit of sarcasm there.
[30:25] Behold, the hour is coming. Indeed, it has come. When you will be scattered, each to his own home, and leave me alone. Yet I am not alone, for the Father is with me. He's basically letting them know that you don't quite have it because if you did, you probably wouldn't be running away scared as if you were going to be killed, and that's exactly what they end up doing as he's being crucified.

So I find that this dialogue is very helpful for us because we get a better picture of belief, of trust in Jesus.
Because when the trial and persecution came to the disciples, the faith wasn't strong enough. It wasn't deep enough, and they fled. But if we look at after the cross, after the resurrection, after the Holy Spirit is sent to them, then we see a whole new set of disciples.
We see disciples that stand firm in the face of persecution and even death. And that's the power. That's the peace that is available to us as believers.
Verse 33. Jesus said, I have said these things to you that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation, but take heart. I have overcome the world.

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[31:44] In me, implying faith and trust in Jesus. And in that there is peace. In the world there is tribulation. He says there, you will have tribulation, but take heart.

Take heart in the tribulation because it's okay. I've already overcome it. We notice the phrase take heart. It's the only time it's used in the book of John, but we see it in some of the other gospels. One of the times is when Jesus is with the disciples in a storm on the Sea of Galilee. So whether it's the disciples in a storm or us going through a tribulation, he says take heart.
So how is it that we can be comforted when Jesus tells us or if he's talking to his disciples, when he tells them to take heart? How is that any help? And that's because if we believe in Jesus and who he is, we know that he has the power over any situation.
That situation, our situation, any situation that's going to come up. He knows the struggles. He knows the suffering that you're going to go through. What you've been through, what you're going to go through, whether he has designed them to make you stronger or you're just part of it.
[33:03] He knows what's happening. None of that is new to the Lord. So before I close, to jump back to my childhood story from the beginning, when I was growing up, the first few times that we moved, I was younger.

You know, one, five, seven. So I remember the move, but I don't remember seeing God's working. I don't remember seeing God's hand and how he provided for us, but my parents told me about it, so that's how I knew.
When we didn't have food and it just showed up, I knew about it because my parents told me. And one of the biggest moves for me, not counting this one, this one was pretty huge.
But as a child, one of the biggest moves is when we moved from Alabama to New Jersey. Not only were we crossing the Dixon line, but it was a whole new world.
But I was almost 12 and I remembered it. And I remembered how God was in it, how he directed my parents and how he provided for us.
[34:28] And it's from that time, it's from those experiences that my faith, God grew and developed. It's those promises that God gives that we see are always kept.

And the peace that we have in Christ in the middle of the tribulation, whatever that is, that's what brings the victory and the storm that we find ourselves in. So I encourage you to trust and to take heart.
Trust in the work of Jesus Christ and what he's done for you. Trust in the Spirit's work to comfort. He's here to comfort, to convict, to teach, and trust in an all-powerful God that sustains you and loves you.
He loved you enough to send his only son to make a way for you to be able to have a relationship with him. Knowing that there's not anything in this world that's going to comfort us, it's that relationship that's going to comfort us, that's going to bring us real peace.
The world comes with comfort. And some of those aren't bad. We have retirement plans, we have health care, we have bank accounts, we have nice jobs, we have insurance.
[35:45] Those are all good. But in the end, they're not going to provide the peace and the comfort that you're going to get from Almighty God. There'll be a time when those things can collapse.

But if you're resting in Christ, if you're resting in what he's done, if you're resting in his overall plan and what he plans to do with us and through us, and in the end, once this world is done, that's a peace and a comfort that can be taken away.
There is joy, unmovable joy. And there's unshakable peace that's available to anyone who truly believes in Jesus. Let's pray this morning.
Thank you, Lord, for this chapter. Thank you for even the disciples and what we're able to learn from them because we struggle the same way they struggle. Thank you, Lord, that you're patient. Thank you that you comfort. Lord, that you lift us up, that you protect us, that you offer peace, peace that this world doesn't provide.
[36:54] And most importantly, thank you for Jesus and what he's done for us. Lord, we ask that as we leave this morning that you will just keep these thoughts in our mind.

Lord, this week as we run into tribulation, as Satan seeks to knock us off the truth that we've already heard, I pray that you would help us lean back on you.
That we would seek you in those times knowing that there isn't anything else that's going to answer those problems except for what is found in you.

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So, Lord, I thank you for this time. Thank you for your word. And I ask that you would bless each person here as we go. And we pray these things in your name. Amen.

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