



EMPOWERED | *AM I DESPERATE - CHRISTINA LOWERY*

So today, as we continue this series, Come Holy Spirit, I wanna talk to you today about desperation. Now, last week, pastor Joel brought such a challenging word and he was talking about expectation. And he read from John chapter 14, and we're gonna read from that again this week. But he explained who the Holy Spirit is and what we can expect out of him. And so this week, I wanna take it one step further, as we, in expectation, that means that when we expect something, we're looking for it to happen. We're waiting for it to happen. And when we are in this place of expectation, if we truly are waiting, if we truly are looking for the Holy Spirit to come when we invite him to, there does happen, something inside of us where we begin to feel desperate to have him move in our situation, to have him move in our life, to have him speak to us and fill us and meet our needs.

And so, again, I just wanna read this passage in John chapter 14, and this is Jesus. Just to give you a little backstory, again, Jesus is kind of trying to comfort the disciples because he's already told them that he's getting ready to be arrested and betrayed, and he's getting ready to go to the cross. And the disciples are in this moment of anxiety and pressure, and they're wondering, what in the world are we gonna do without Jesus? And this is what Jesus says to them. He says to his disciples, "I will ask the Father and he will give you another advocate." Another meaning like, I'm gonna replace myself. He says, "we are going to give you another advocate who will never leave you." So Jesus is saying, "Hey guys, I'm getting ready to leave you. I'm getting ready to leave this earth.

I'm not coming back for a really long time, but I've got good news for you. I'm sending another advocate who will never leave you." He will never leave you. He is the Holy Spirit who leads us into all truth. In the midst of the disciples' uncertainty, in the midst of their chaos, in the midst of their questions, in the midst of this fear of knowing that their Lord, their savior, Jesus, their friend, their teacher, that he's getting ready to leave them in a brutal and horrific way. And Jesus promises them in this moment of chaos and inner turmoil, he promises that he's going to send another advocate or a helper to take his place. Now, this word advocate, that's not a word that we use all the time. So let me just break down. We're reading from the New Living Translation.

Some translations say that I'm gonna send a helper. Another translation says, I'm going to send a comforter. Another translation says, I'm going to send a friend. But what exactly does this word advocate mean? See, the Bible wasn't written in English. Just so you guys know. The New Testament was actually written in Greek. And so it's really important to dive in and find out what did the author really mean when he used this word, helper, advocate, friend, comforter. The word that is used here in the original language for advocate is parakletos, which means one who is summoned to come alongside and aid. So Jesus is sending, saying, I'm sending you parakletos. Parakletos is going to come alongside of you when you call on him, when you summon him, he will come alongside of you and he will aid you.

I've heard this described many times, like when we're learning to ride a bicycle and, and dad being right next to you, keeping you steady, telling you what moves to make, kind of guiding you and leading you. And this is the, the way that the Holy Spirit works in our lives. When we call on him, when we summon him, he comes. That's why we pray, come Holy Spirit, because that's essentially what his name means. Parakletos means come Holy Spirit, I'm summoning you. I'm asking you to come. I need you to come to my aid. And Jesus promised us this gift. Jesus promised this gift of parakletos. Jesus promised the disciples, and we are disciples. He promised us this gift of one that we can summon and that we can call on, that we can say, come Holy Spirit, I need you.

I need help. I'm weak. I need you to come and help me and aid me in my chaos. Are you fearful and anxious? Then pray "Come Holy Spirit" and he will be your friend and he will comfort you and he will guide you, even in your anxiety. Are you isolated and lonely? Pray "Come Holy Spirit." He will be your guide and your teacher, and he will be your friend. Are you stressed and overwhelmed? Come Holy Spirit and he will carry your burden for you. And he will. He will guide you as you don't know what to do. He's gonna guide you in the right way that you should go. Are you guilty and ashamed? Come Holy Spirit. He will convict you and he will forgive you and he will wash you and he will heal you, and he will set you free. And this is good news that we have a helper that we can summon, that we can call on for anything. He will never leave us. This is Jesus' promise that he will never leave us. He will always be with us. This is good news. But the problem is that most of us don't think we need him.

Most of us, and I'm talking to Christians right now, I'm talking to the church. Most of us don't think we need him. We love to talk about him. We love to, to say amen when the preacher preaches about him, we love to sing about him. You know when things are going good, when life is going fine. No, we love to sing. Like "come Holy Spirit, dry bones awaken." And we get goosebumps. "The Lord is in this place" and we're singing and we're feeling it. And then life happens. And we love to declare that the Lord is in this place and come Holy Spirit. And we love to say amen. But what happens when we fall into the pit?

What happens when despair sets in? What happens when our friends betray us? What happens when we find ourselves all alone? What happens when we find ourselves weary and exhausted? You know, that song that we were just singing on Sunday, all of a sudden is nowhere to be found? It's because we think we need him, but we don't really think we need him. We love, in the good times, to declare that we need him. But when things get really hard, when things feel impossible, when things are beyond our control, we think we don't need him. And you may say, well Pastor Christina, how can you say that? That we think that we don't need him? Well, because we're not calling on him, we're not calling on him when we are in need.

If we really thought that we needed him, then we would be calling on him. When it hits the fan, we'd be calling on him when we face depression and anxiety and overwhelming fear, we'd call on him because Jesus promised him. Jesus promised him as a gift, as parakletos to be with he'd never leave us. He's always with us, he can always be summoned, he's always there to come to our aid. But when things get really hard, we fail to ask him to come. And we'll call on just about everything other than the Holy Spirit. We will numb the pain. We'll ignore the pain. We'll cover up the pain. We'll excuse away the pain. We'll even expect our spouse and our friends and our pastors to rescue us from the pain. We want them to like free us from the pain and rescue us from our distress. But yet here's the Holy Spirit waiting by the phone, waiting for you to call him, waiting to come to your aid, waiting to be everything that you need in this moment. And yet the phone stays silent.

Now, perhaps, and I know this is gonna be a hard word to hear, but perhaps in our distress, in the pit, in despair, in the moments that are completely out of our control, those moments of confusion and doubt, perhaps that moment is the very place that the advocate, that the Holy Spirit, that our helper, that our friend, that our comforter is wanting to come and meet us and come to our aid. So maybe in our desperation, we don't try to numb it or avoid it or make excuses for it or think other people should rescue us from it. Maybe we don't push away our desperation, but we embrace it.

That we embrace our desperation because the Holy Spirit, he's an advocate, he's a helper, and he's a comforter. And he is drawn to those who are desperate. It's like a magnet. He is magnetized to those who are not only desperate, but they recognize their desperation and they recognize that only he can meet their needs, that only he can fill this longing and this craving and this emptiness that's inside of them, the Holy Spirit, our advocate, he is so attracted to someone who is desperate and who recognizes their desperation. The psalmist, he knew how to do this very well. And we know David, he was a man

after God's heart. That means he was a God-chaser. He went after God. He searched for God. Listen to his prayer. Psalm 63:1 oh God, you are my God. I earnestly searched for you.

My soul, thirst for you. My whole body longs for you in this parched and weary land where there is no water. Now, I love the imagery that he uses here. And I don't know if he was really walking in a desert with no water, but the imagery, here is the place where his soul was at, that he was searching earnestly, looking for, calling out to God. He thirsts for God. His whole body is longing for God. This is a prayer of desperation. This is a prayer that says, "God, I don't know what to do with my life right now. I don't know what to do with everything surrounding me. The world is a mess. And it's not feeding me. It's not fulfilling me. God, you are all that I need and I'm desperate for you." Now, I don't know if you've ever walked through a desert before, but if you ever have and you get thirsty, as you are looking for water, you don't care what form the water comes in.

Like if you're really that thirsty, you don't care if, if the water is coming in rain or in a cactus or a water bottle or a spigot or whatever. You don't care where the water's coming from. You aren't looking for the dispenser of water; you're looking for the water. You're looking for the source. You're looking for the water. And that is the only thing that can quench your thirst. And we may think that we're desperate for God. We may like to sing the song and raise our hands and get the goosebumps and say, yes, God, I'm desperate for you. But, but the truth is, are we truly searching and thirsting and looking and longing for the Holy Spirit in a way that's like walking through a desert when you haven't had water in a long time? Like are you searching for the spigot or the water bottle like the dispenser of the water? Are you searching for the source? The only thing that can quench your thirst?

Let me ask you this. If I sent you into a room with your child and a starving child from a third world country. Your child, just picture them, and a starving child from a third world country and they're both crying to be fed, which one would you feed? Hopefully you would run towards the starving child and feed the starving child. Does it mean that you don't love your child who's very well fed and very well-nourished because you're feeding this poor starving child from a third world country? No. And just the same, God still loves us if we are not starving and we're not desperate, we're still his kids. He still loves us. But can I just assert here that he will come running to the aid of those who are desperate for him, who are crying out of such utter desperation and need.

He comes running. He is so drawn to the desperate one. He's so drawn to the needy one. He's so drawn to the dying one. And do you think that when we are desperate that he will deny coming to our aid? No. His very purpose Holy Spirit's purpose, our parakletos, our advocate, his purpose is to come to our aid. When we summon him, when we say Come Holy Spirit, he is drawn to those who are desperate. We see this all over the world. You know where revival is exploding right now in the world Iran, I don't know if you guys have read about this, but in Iran where people can be killed for their faith, like the church is exploding right now. They're desperate for God. Like for them to talk about Jesus or gather together. There's many times that they have to say, our church can only gather in groups of two or three and no more. And they are desperate for God. And people are being arrested and killed and persecuted. And the church is exploding and God's power is coming in a mighty way. Why? Because they're desperate for him. They need him. And God is looking for a church that says, "come Holy Spirit, we're nothing without you. We're nothing without you. We need you, God. We can't do this on our own. We're desperate, God. Nothing else will do. We just want you."

So I wanna just finish out my time with you today with three prayers of desperation as we're in this 21 days of prayer, as we daily are praying, come Holy Spirit, I wanna give you some language to use this, these prayers of desperation. The first one is this, come Holy Spirit, I need you. I need you. And if you're facing anything that is impossible right now, which most of us are, if you're facing anything that that seems too big for you to handle, be praying this prayer every day. Holy Spirit come. I need you. I cannot

do this on my own. I have tried, I've tried to manipulate the situation. I've tried to control it. I've tried to say the right words. God, nothing is working. I don't have what it takes to make it through this moment, this season, this year.

God, I need you. What happens when your child calls out in the middle of the night? Mama, I need you. And they're crying, daddy, I need you. We come running to them. When our child calls out in tears, we come running to them when they say they need us. And the Holy Spirit is no different. That's his purpose. And that is the promise that Jesus made for us, is that if we will summon him, he will come to our aid. Jesus actually said, and you guys, uh, uh, just to give you some spiritual foundation, Jesus, holy Spirit, father God, they are three in one. Okay? So if I meant, if I'm talking about Jesus, I'm also talking about the Holy Spirit. But Jesus actually said in his time on earth, "I'm not here for the ones who think they don't need me."

He said in Mark 2:17, healthy people don't need a doctor. Sick people do I have come to call, not those who think they are righteous, but those who know they are sinners. And what Jesus is saying, and what is true for the Holy Spirit as well, is that if we don't need him, he's not gonna come to us. If we think we don't, if we're like, I'm good, I've got it. I'll take care of it. Nope, I'm good. No, I don't need prayer. I'm good. I don't need my connect group leader to press in and ask me. I'm good. Got it. I I don't need you, God. I can take, I can take care of this. I'm just gonna keep drinking this thing. I'm gonna keep looking at this stuff on the computer. I'm gonna keep, you know, chasing after this and this relationship.

I'm good. I've got it. And Jesus is saying to those who don't think they need him, he didn't come for them. He came for those who know that they need him. He came for those who recognize that they're a sinner in need of a savior. He came for those who are willing to say, I am weary. I'm weak. I don't have what it takes to get over this mountain. God, I need you. Jesus also preach in the sermon on the mountain, Matthew 5:3. He says, God blesses those who are poor and realize their need for him, for the kingdom of heaven is theirs. Do you guys realize what this implies? Do you guys understand that we have nothing and when we can come to this place of realization that we have nothing, that we are nothing, and we bring that to God, in exchange he gives us everything. I mean, are you reading what I'm reading? Like he's saying, when you come to God as nothing recognizing that you are nothing in exchange, he gives you everything. He gives you the kingdom of heaven. Everything that is true in heaven, he gives to you when you recognize your need for Him. Prayer that says, come Holy Spirit, I need you.

The second prayer of desperation, come Holy Spirit, help me. Help me. This is a prayer that if we're not careful can trip us up. Because here's what happens is that when we pray, holy Spirit, come help me. Jesus, help me. I need you. I need you to fix this. I need you to come. Is that we, in that simple prayer, I mean it's a simple prayer, just a couple of words. But in our mind and our heart, it's actually very much layered.

It is very complicated because when we say, come help me, we're usually thinking of a specific way that we want him to come help us. We're usually thinking of a specific scenario, a specific person, a specific time and date. And, and when we say, Lord, come help me, this can trip us up because we're praying a simple prayer, but we actually have very complicated expectations. And it would be like if I were hanging off of a cliff, like all that's holding me on this cliff are my fingernails and I'm calling out for help. Help me, help me. And someone comes running up and they start to throw me a rope and I'm like "no, not a rope that'll blister up my hands. I don't do ropes." Or it would be like, you know, "help me.

What took you so long? Why did it take you so long to get here?" I mean, how silly and ridiculous would that be if we're in that much need of help and for us to criticize the way our helper came? But yet we do that We call to God for help and we have this expectation of how he's gonna come and help us. And then when he does, we criticize the way the timing, his motives, his methods. And we don't see that he has come to answer the prayer that we prayed. He's come to help us. Come Holy Spirit, help me. We need to

pray this prayer. We should pray this prayer every single day. But if we want the best results, we don't get to make the call on when and how and who. And we don't get to make the call on how we're rescued.

James 1:5 says this, if you need wisdom, and I'm just gonna insert help here. If you need wisdom or help, ask our generous God and he will give it to you. I love that promise. Just ask him, he'll give it to you. He's not gonna rebuke you for asking, but when you ask him, be sure that your faith is in God alone. Do not waiver for a person with divided loyalty is unsettled as a wave of the sea that is blown and tossed by the wind. Such people should not expect to receive anything from the Lord. Their loyalty is divided between God and the world. And they are unstable in everything that they do. When we need help. And when we ask God for help, the biggest key element in asking God for help is that we trust him. We trust him with the when, we trust him with the how, we trust him with the who, we trust him with the what. It's like when we say, God help me.

What we are doing is we are taking our hands off and saying like, you do it. Jesus, take the wheel essentially like you do it. I God help me. I need you. Come Holy Spirit. The third and final prayer of desperation is "God, Holy Spirit come. I am weak." I am not strong enough to carry this burden on my own. I can't do this by myself. I'm not strong enough to carry my family through this. I'm not strong enough to carry myself through this. I'm not strong enough to complete this task or do this work, this prayer that says, come Holy Spirit, I am weak. This is a prayer that will rattle heaven. Because when we are bent beneath our loads, when we can't go anymore and we're struggling to keep up with life and we pray this prayer, come Holy Spirit, I'm too weak for this.

What does God say? Perfect, perfect. You are exactly where I need you to be. I said this to the worship team a couple of weeks ago. We all just had a really crazy hard week. We were all tired and you could see it in their eyes. And we circled up and I said, guys, I know that you're tired. I know that practice was crazy today and things kept going wrong. But listen, I'm really glad that it did. I'm really glad that you, that you are where you are right now. Why? Because in our weakness, he is the strongest in our place of weakness is where God works best. The Apostle Paul, you know, like apostle church planter, the, the father of our, one of the fathers of our faith, this guy who's like been whipped a thousand times and he's like, he has done the the hardest, He's multiplying the Church of Christ all over the world in his day.

And listen to what the apostle Paul says. He says, I was given a thorn in my flesh. And we don't know what this thorn was, but we know that it was agitating him. We don't know if it was something like a physical ailment, like a sickness. We don't know if it was a relationship or a situation that was going on. All we know, it was something that he was in desperate need of God to help him in. He says, three different times I begged the Lord to take it away. And how many times when we yell help is what we're saying. God help take this away, take away the sickness, take away this relationship, take away this situation, and we're saying help take it away. And Paul says, three times I prayed this and every single time God answered, my grace is all you need.

My grace is all you need. My power works best in your weakness, Paul. God, make it stop. Please make it stop. God please, I'm asking you, make it stop. And God's answer was not relief. He didn't take it away. He didn't pull the thorn out of Paul's side. What he did is he came alongside of him and he came to his aid in his suffering, in his grief, in his loneliness. He came alongside of him to help him through that difficult time because he's saying, my grace is all that you need. You don't need my relief. You don't need me to take it away. I'm building something in you that is going to cause you to be great in the kingdom of God and do great things and bring greater glory to my kingdom. My power works best in your distress. My power works best in your weakness. And this is such an important lesson as we learn to have this relationship with the Holy Spirit, as we learn to walk and talk with the Holy Spirit. See sometimes he does come and pull that thorn out and man, it's awesome when he does, but most of the time, doesn't go that way. Hate to break it to you. Sometimes he calms the storm and other times he calms his child.

And this is what it looks like to walk with the Holy Spirit that when we say help, when we say God, I'm weak, that we know we've been promised he's our advocate. We know that he's come to help us. We know when we call on him, he will come. And regardless of the timing, regardless of how he does it, he will come. He will come and walk alongside of us and he will help us through the storm, the mountain, the desert that we're facing. And I would ask you today, what is the thorn in your flesh? What is that thing that's just agitating you? It seems like it won't go away and you keep asking him to take it from you. And he's saying to you this morning, my grace is all you need. My power works best in your weakness.