



03_MercySandwich

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0:00:00.8 Speaker 1: Are you dissatisfied with your spiritual progress, feeling stuck without knowing why, even after deliverance prayers or years of therapy? Recover your dignity, find your purpose, and discover the thrill of walking with God once again. Explore spiritual consultations with Sonja at biblestudyevangelista.com. Click "Go Deeper" on the home page, then "One-on-One" and find out how to cooperate more deeply with the Holy Spirit's action in your life with a Spiritual Consultation.

0:00:28.4 Speaker 1: If you like having bible study in your pocket, and you have an iPhone or iPad, why not leave a review? Search "Bible Study Evangelista" in iTunes and tell everyone how you're loving and lifting all you've been given. Here's Sonja.

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0:00:57.2 Sonja Corbitt: It's the Bible Study Evangelista Show, and I'm Sonja Corbitt, your Catholic Evangelista, coming to you from the sunny coast of North Carolina. We're on vacation this week, and everybody has left me here at the house so that I can do my show. And I'm excited to. I have spent most of the morning preparing, and things are going to sound a little different, and they will be a little different because I don't have all my usual accoutrements. But I am excited about this particular show because today we're speaking about the Holy Spirit as the Advocate, or the Counselor, or the Intercessor, or the Consoler. All of those words are included in the word "helper" or "advocate" that Jesus uses to describe the Holy Spirit, who will come. The context of chapters 4 and 16 of John is where the remainder, most of it, the remainder of the series is going to come from. And Jesus says there in John chapter 4 verses 15 through 18, this is where we were last week, "If you love Me, you will keep My commandments. And I will pray to the Father, and He will give you another counselor." So we're going to do the whole show today on that word "counselor" or "helper." And notice that He says "another counselor." Another counselor. He, Jesus, is the primary Helper, the primary Counselor. But He will pray to the Father so long as we love Him and keep His commandments.

0:02:25.4 SC: He will pray to the Father and He will give us, you, me, another Counselor. And it's tempting to think that Jesus is going to send the Holy Spirit in His place, or as a substitute for Himself. But as we'll see further on in the show, well today, today's show, that's not actually the case. He is sending the Holy Spirit, another Counselor. And He goes on to say that it's actually better for them that He does leave them and send them the Holy Spirit. It's better that they have the Holy Spirit than they have the actual physical presence of Jesus Himself. And that is, I always

wonder about that when I read it or when I meditate on it. That it's better to have the Holy Spirit in me than it is to have Jesus physically, personally, beside me or with me. And I think that the reason it's so shocking and wondrous to us is because we really don't understand the Holy Spirit and His function and who He is. I shouldn't even say function because He is the action, right? The Holy Spirit is the action. We've looked at that in the last two shows. But we're going to look at this term Counselor or Intercessor, Consoler, Advocate. And He says, "I will send you another Counselor to be with you forever, even the Spirit of Truth." Now He's just told them that He Himself is going to leave them.

0:04:00.6 SC: And He knows that they're full of desolation at this thought that Jesus is going to personally leave them. And of course they don't have any clue how brutal that is about to be. Because He's speaking to them, remember, at the Last Supper, just after He has washed their feet and they have received the Passover. And Jesus starts to talk to them about leaving and sending the Holy Spirit. "If you love Me, keep My commandments, and I will pray the Father, and He will send you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever, the Spirit of Truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him or knows Him, but you know Him. For He dwells with you and will be in you. I will not leave you orphans. I will come to you." I just think that is the sweetest, it's just the sweetest, most sensitive thing to say. Jesus knows that their hearts are breaking at even the thought that He would leave them, even temporarily. Because He says, "In a little while, I won't be with you, but then in another little while, you will rejoice." And it sounds almost absurd to be honest, but He's tenderly concerned with their heartbreak. "I will not leave you orphans or comfortless. I will not leave you comfortless. I will come to you." Another version says, "I will not leave you desolate. I will not leave you desolate."

0:05:34.3 SC: I just got a ping from the Holy Spirit, and I know that someone listening is in deep, dark desolation. And here is your promise, "I will not leave you desolate. I will come to you." So our promise in desolation is just to hang on. Just hang on. And as Ignatius told us in his rules for discernment, don't make decisions in desolation. Let the desolation pass, because it always will. Jesus says, "I will not leave you desolate. I will come to you." That is your promise. St. John Chrysostom, in speaking on that phrase, "I will not leave you desolate," he says that the Spirit does not depart even at death. I love that. So let's look at this word "comforter" or "advocate." And as I said, it includes a whole lot of meanings. But I want to just look at those two, "comforter" and "advocate." We'll get into the other stuff next week when we look at all the stuff that only the Holy Spirit can do. But we can already see, just in this word, "comforter" or "advocate," some of what the Holy Spirit does and His action in us, with us, through us, and for us. And I want to look at three ways that the Holy Spirit comforts and advocates for us. The first is poverty, the second is presence, and the third is pleasure.

0:07:02.8 SC: Now, as Jesus speaks of the Holy Spirit, the disciples who are with Him, immediately preceding Jesus' passion and death, He's speaking of the Holy Spirit, and they are going to hearken back to the Old Testament. Jesus is drawing them back to the beginning, to the creation, where the Spirit of God agitated the waters of chaos in Genesis chapter 1. So, just the term "Holy Spirit" reminds the disciples of the first creation. And the Spirit at that time was, we'll say, somewhat impersonal. The Spirit in the Old Testament came upon people for particular roles and offices and purposes, we'll say, throughout salvation history for God's people. So, for instance, the priests were anointed with olive oil from a ram's horn to show their selection by God and their anointing with the Holy Spirit. And so, the disciples recognized Jesus as being the anointed one, or the Messiah. The anointed one means to be fully anointed with the Holy Spirit. And that, of course,

comes from Isaiah, the suffering servant, the anointed one. The sevenfold Spirit. He is anointed with the sevenfold Spirit. And they saw him baptized, and the Holy Spirit descending upon him like a dove. And the announcement of God the Father that, "This is my Son." So, Jesus is not simply a servant of God who is anointed for a particular role and purpose. He is a Son. He is a Son.

0:08:53.1 SC: And so, the Holy Spirit is revealed physically at Jesus' baptism. So, we have God the Father there, God the Son, whom God the Father descends upon, we'll say, and speaks over this love and the manifestation of that love in the dove, the love dove, that descends on Jesus at his baptism. So, you can see the Trinity there. And so, the difference now, Jesus says, "I have to leave. If I don't leave, then the Holy Spirit can't come," is basically what he's saying. I must leave so that the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, the Paraclete, "para" meaning to come alongside, and "clete" meaning that advocate sort of thing, an alongside Helper, which is exactly what Eve was called for Adam, an alongside Helper. But in the Old Testament, the Holy Spirit was somewhat impersonal, and he had to be because of sin. When creation was created through the Holy Spirit's action, through the Holy Spirit himself, it fell immediately. And because it fell, the angels who fell and the humans that fell taught the earth to fall as well, so that even the earth groans, Paul says, under the weight of sin. And so, the Holy Spirit had to remain impersonal in the Old Testament because of sin. But look what Jesus says, "Because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your heart. Nevertheless, I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I go away. If I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you. But if I depart, I will send him to you."

0:10:42.4 SC: And then he goes on to say some of the things that the Holy Spirit does. When he has come, he will convict the world of sin and of righteousness and of judgment. So we're going to unpack each of those things next week in the next show. But it's really important that we understand this idea of Helper or Comforter or Advocate because this helps us understand the role of the Holy Spirit in our own lives. He is able to become personal for us because Jesus is departing. And because Jesus is departing and is no longer physically present with us, it is because of his crucifixion and his passion and resurrection that the Holy Spirit can come to us individually and personally and be this Comforter, this Advocate that we need so desperately. Another Comforter, another Counselor, another Advocate, like Me, but for you all now.

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0:11:53.8 Speaker 3: You're listening to The Bible Study Evangelista Show, bible study spinach that taste like cake.

[music]

0:12:04.3 SC: Let's get social! I'm no longer on Facebook, so come and connect with me in the new Catholic Evangelista community. Visit biblestudyevangelista.com and click "Community" on the menu or scroll down to the radio notes and click the link to our community. We're sharing picks and prayers, Love the Word takeaways and insights on the daily readings, and everything else social. Come share with me!

[music]

0:12:29.0 S1: Sonja created the Love the Word Bible Study method just for you. Based on Mary's personal practice and formulated for your personality and temperament. Get your Love the Word

meditations every Monday morning by signing up at biblestudyevangelista.com. Now, here's Sonja.

[music]

0:12:57.3 SC: So in that last segment, I said it was Jesus' crucifixion, death, and resurrection, and I failed to include the ascension because had Jesus not ascended, then the Holy Spirit would not have descended. But I'd like to return for a moment to the idea of the Holy Spirit in the first creation, the creation of the cosmos, and that sort of impersonal existence. Not that the Holy Spirit is an impersonal existence, but that He is the creator. He is the one that brings things into existence. And that existence is now going to become something more because of the descent of the Holy Spirit. Jesus is ascending to the Father, and because He is ascending to the Father, He is sending the Holy Spirit to us. And St. Paul says that that coming of the Holy Spirit to us is what sheds the love of God abroad in our hearts. This was in the readings this week. "Now hope does not disappoint because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us." So where in the first creation there was this sort of impersonal idea of the Holy Spirit with which the disciples were familiar and comfortable with that sort of idea, and the Creator Spirit, which brings things into existence, now there is a shedding abroad of love into our hearts through the Holy Spirit.

0:14:25.7 SC: So where Jesus was their rabbi, and He was their friend, and He was their counselor, and their advocate, and their helper, now they have a personal Holy Spirit that is going to be poured out inside them so that they know, that they know, that they know that God loves them. Oh, I cannot wait to get into this more fully at the latter part of this episode. But let's look at the idea of Comforter. What could the Holy Spirit comfort us in? And of course our first answer is probably suffering. He comforts us in suffering. Well, yes He does, but there's a particular reason why He does and why He can. Why can we even be comforted in suffering? Well, the first way is that the Holy Spirit comforts us by giving us a certain taste, we'll say, for poverty or littleness. The Holy Spirit teaches you to love your littleness. If you ever set out on trying to take the Gospel seriously, you're going to sooner or later come to this point where you stand face to face with your own absolute inability to do what God has asked you to do. I mean, we looked last week at, "If you love Me, keep My commandments." Well, we can't keep even the smallest one. And that poverty of spirit is what the Holy Spirit is. It's part of what He does in our comforting. He comforts us in our poverty.

0:16:01.6 SC: We discover that there's a whole lot more darkness in us than we thought. There's more evil in ourselves than we thought. And we know that we are incapable of living up to the demands of the Gospel, the demands that Jesus asks of us. And so if last week you came face to face with this poverty and you said to yourself, "I have tried and I have tried and I have tried and I just can't do it." Well, congratulations. The Holy Spirit has come to you specifically to show you your poverty to make you love it. Why? Because it is our poverty that obligates God to us. It is our poverty, our littleness, our incapability that draws God's mercy. And while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. It is that experience that we cannot produce any willpower, that our resources are not enough. It's that feeling of desperation that comes up, and that's the fruit of the Holy Spirit's work in you. It is the Spirit who comforts you. He doesn't just make us strong. In fact, He won't just make you strong right away, because as soon as He did, you would be proud of your strength. How quickly we forget, how weak we really are. It's the Holy Spirit who comforts us in our poverty, and He doesn't do that by making us strong, at least not at first. We go around with this idea that if we give our weakness to God, then He's going to transform it into strength.

0:17:36.0 SC: But God knows us well enough that He knows we cannot bear that kind of strength right away, because we would just be more proud. If you'll notice, Jesus didn't try to get rid of His weakness. He wanted His weakness to be made known. He was full of anguish and Gethsemane. He bled sweat. He fell under the cross, the weight of it. He couldn't carry it anymore. He offered up prayers and supplications with loud cries and tears to Him who was able to save Him from death. In the middle of His sufferings, the Father's power was at work in Him. Paul says, "He was crucified in weakness, but lives by the power of God. For we are weak in Him, but in dealing with you, we shall live with Him by the power of God." So, if you refuse to be weak, you don't get any of God's power. Because Paul also said, "My power is made perfect in weakness," God said to him. "And so I will all the more gladly boast," Paul says, "of my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may rest upon me." So, instead of making you strong, this Holy Spirit teaches you to accept and even love your poverty. That's why St. Therese of Lisieux's "Little Way" is so wise. "Because the littler you are, the more Jesus will love you," she said to her sister Celine. So, there's this joy, but not in a rejoicing sort of sense, just in this peace. There's a peace in being incapable of doing things for yourself and instead being dependent on God.

0:19:13.3 SC: And I'm not talking about laziness here. Although, I mean, it's true that most of the time we're lazy too, aren't we? We're just, we're yeetle. My husband says this all the time, "He's just yeetle." We're leetle, right? So, if you want to know what the gospel really means for you, just look at how you react when you discover your weakness. Do you feel happy and encouraged, or are you sad and discouraged? It's the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, the Advocate. He leads us to realize that this poverty, our weakness, is our true wealth. It's our true strength. It gives you a certain power over God. He cannot resist someone who is aware of His weakness and reaches for Him. It draws His mercy. This is the big secret of life with God. Don't run from your weakness. Stand in the misery of it and beg God for His mercy. I mean, as bald, vulnerable, truthful, weak, pathetic, miserable as you can possibly be. If you can be like that with God, He's drawn to that. And it's the Holy Spirit who reveals that truth to us and gives us the power to stand in that weakness fully. To own it. Not in a way that throws everything onto God. Although, I know I'm talking out of both sides of my mouth here and I don't mean to. But He wants us to know and understand how blessed we are when we are poor. Remember that beatitude from the Sermon on the Mount.

0:21:00.5 SC: It takes a long, long time for most of us to admit our complete weakness. And more so to accept it. It's one thing to admit it. Yes, we're all weak. We can all say that. But it's a whole different thing to truly accept it and lean into the misery of that weakness. And in fact, a lot of times we say, "I want the weakness of Jesus or the weakness of St. Paul or the weakness of St. Therese." Because their weakness is beautiful weakness. And any time we take a good, hard look at our own weakness, it's shocking. It's not just shocking, it's disgusting. It's real weakness. It's sin. It's misery. It's cowardice. It's pride. But here's the thing. If you have real misery, then you have a right to real misericordia or mercy. If you can truly stand in your weakness, you have a right to mercy. What God wants from you is humility, not perfection. He knows you're weak. He sees it more than you do. We push it away. We're disgusted by it. It's disgusting in ourselves. It's disgusting in other people. And it's disgusting in other people because we hate it in ourselves. It's that projection. We're constantly projecting on someone else. Those of us who walk around with judgment all the time, we have absolutely no idea that the very things that we're judging in other people are the very things that we hate about ourselves. God does not want perfection. He wants humility.

0:22:33.4 SC: And I'm not talking about a false humility that makes us sad and depressed about

how weak we are and how much we fail and this sort of way of pointing out all the deficiencies between the ideal of the gospel and the reality of who we are. That's a false humility. It makes us despair. It makes us depressed, which is a backward pride. And that's why we lose courage and we give up. And so that's what the enemy does. He wants us to be discouraged, but the Holy Spirit is the comforter. The Holy Spirit is the advocate in that weakness. He moves us beyond the sight and the experience of our weakness to the beauty of the mercy that is standing behind it, ready and waiting to fill in those gaps and to show God merciful. Oh my goodness, I'm getting really upset because I'm experiencing this in my own life through someone else. And it is a hard but very beautiful lesson.

[music]

0:23:52.6 Speaker 3: You're listening to the Bible Study Evangelista Show, bible study spinach that taste like cake.

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0:24:01.0 S1: Did you know you can get Bible Study Evangelista radio notes and podcasts delivered to your inbox every Monday morning? Redeem your Mondays. Join thousands of your fellow listeners by subscribing at biblestudyevangelista.com. Now here's Sonja.

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0:24:19.8 SC: If you're tired of being harassed by anxiety, fear and depression, if you're ready to end the constant drama and pain in your relationships and circumstances, if you're sick of pain and disease and constant fatigue in your body, you need the sacred healing master class. It's packed with practical tools for healing, anxiety and woundedness. Ten hours of biblical Catholic teaching on healing for the heart, soul, mind and body and the latest science in physics, neuroscience and somatic psychology. Healing is your promise and inheritance in Christ. Go to biblestudyevangelista.com home page and click on the sacred healing master class for details on how you can be healed. You will experience healing through this master class. And what you learn will dispose you from love, heart, soul, mind and strength for the rest of your life.

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0:25:17.0 SC: And I just know if I just leave it right there at that last segment, you're all going to be going, what is she talking about? Don't just leave us here. So I'll just tell you, I'm just now noticing as I'm speaking this message here about the advocate and the comforter in our poverty, what I'm realizing is how my life is sandwiched between two examples of God's mercy. One, I'm experiencing through someone else the difficulty of just allowing them to be who they are. And we had this conversation on the community and someone posted a quote. Dora posted a quote by Ruth Barrows, who said it is a sacrifice to allow someone to be who they are. And I was experience... I am experiencing that through someone else. I am sacrificing on behalf of allowing someone else to just be this messy process. Allowing them to stumble and fall and try to still be encouraging. Try to place boundaries but without the attitude of revenge or let me teach you something or let me correct you or anything like that. Just really allowing them to be who they are and being present to them and encouraging and merciful. On the other side, someone else who has been very, very challenging for me because they're so full of judgment all the time, is being forced to allow me to be who I am

and they are learning this mercy. Now I'm learning it too.

0:26:56.1 SC: I don't mean like I've already learned it. I'm just saying I'm experiencing this constant course correction on my end in trying to show someone mercy and allow them to just be who they are and sacrifice for them. But on the other side, I am seeing that someone else is having to do the same for me. So I'm getting the lesson from both directions and I didn't notice it until just now. Doing this teaching on the advocate, on the comforter. And here's what I love. This is why I call them pop quizzes y'all. Here's what I love about God. He always gives you pop quizzes, real life examples to show you what he means by what he's teaching. So I'm in a mercy sandwich right now and I'll be honest, it's tough but it's a beautiful tough. It is very interesting to be both the giver and the recipient of this kind of mercy. Because I know that as God's mercy flows through me to another person, that it's also flowing to me from someone else. And it's a very humbling realization and experience. But here's my point. Enough about me, right? God, this is the role of the Holy Spirit. The role of the Holy Spirit is to make you love that weakness because if you will love the weakness, then you can prevail on his mercy. The enemy wants you stuck in the misery of how the weakness feels and the wretchedness of it and the embarrassment of it and the humiliation of it.

0:28:43.2 SC: And the constant fear of defeat of it and not even necessarily the fear. Sometimes it is a constant defeat. He wants you just focusing on that. But it's the Holy Spirit's job as the comforter to help you see beyond the misery to the mercy. Beyond the misery to the mercy. If you don't get anything else out of this show or out of this whole series, please hear me say, "Look beyond your misery to the mercy." The Holy Spirit is our comforter because he teaches us to love our weakness. The whole truth of God is what the Holy Spirit gives us. And if the Holy Spirit shows us our poverty and our weakness and our misery, which is true, He does show us that. But it's a whole other thing when the Holy Spirit leads us beyond that to the mercy. The enemy only shows us the misery part. The Spirit leads us to the whole truth. Both our weakness and God's mercy. If you want to have more of God's mercy, all you need to do is go deeper into your weakness and show it to Him. Admit it to Him. Be transparent about it. I had this happen. Gosh, I don't remember where I was, but I was on a bus. I might have even been like on a pilgrimage. But I remember being on a bus, having this experience. I mean, it was brutal because I was reading about Jacob and Esau. And Jacob and Esau were twin brothers, remember? And Jacob was the younger by a couple of seconds.

0:30:21.1 SC: And so he was actually not the rightful inheritor of Jacob's inheritance. I don't know what other word to use. But the scriptures are clear that Esau sold his birthright to his brother Jacob. Now Jacob... I'm sorry. Yeah, Jacob. Now Jacob was sneaky about it, right? Jacob was sneaky and it was a providential selection of the younger over the older. And we can argue about the providence of God and if it's fair or whatever, but ultimately God is God. He can choose who he wants and the order in which He wants it. And Jacob was... He was chosen over Esau for whatever reason. But Jacob cheated his brother out of that inheritance by deceiving their father. And I was on this bus and as I read that story, I just felt this conviction of God in this particular area. This was years ago. Actually, it was many years ago. More than a decade. But I can remember it like it was yesterday because I was sitting on that bus and I suddenly had this... Like the Holy Spirit just brought this whole situation up. A situation that I had sort of laid to the side. It was a business agreement and there were terms to a contract. And the party that entered into the contract with me broke the contract. And I was not only hurt by this, I was angry and I became rebellious in the way that I decided, "Well, if they're not going to keep it, I'm not either." And so, I did it.

0:32:07.1 SC: I didn't keep my terms of the contract. And God... And I felt justified in doing that. It was fair to me. If they're not going to do it, if they're not going to look out for my best interest, then I'm surely not going to look out for theirs. And because it was a business type thing, it seemed more justifiable, I suppose. But either way, there was a confrontation between me and this entity into which I had entered into the contract. And they accused me of breaking the contract, which I had done. But I showed them that they had broken it first. So we were in this sort of argument about who did it first and who was justified and who was righted and who was wrong. So that had happened a while back. And here I am sitting on this bus and I'm reading about Jacob and Esau and how Jacob deceived both his brother and his father out of the inheritance and whether or not that was providential. As I said, we could argue that it was definitely providential, but was it fair? Either way, it happened. But God confronted Jacob by the river Jabbok and they wrestled. Jacob wrestled with the angel and he said, "I am not letting you go until you bless me." And the angel asked Jacob for his name. And he was clearly resistant to telling the angel his name because his name meant cheater. It meant deceiver or cheater. And so the angel was asking for a confession from Jacob of who he was.

0:33:48.9 SC: He was asking Jacob to stand in his weakness and his vulnerability and the truth of who he was and just claim it. Confess it is a better word. To confess the truth of who he was. And Jacob said, "I'm not letting you go until you bless me." And the angel said, "What is your name?" And I just, I mean, even thinking about that now, because the angel of the Lord could have slayed Jacob. I mean, what was the wrestling about, right? I mean, there really was no contest there. And yet the angel wrestled with Jacob. Here's that sacrifice, right? The wrestling with the other. The wrestling with the other so that the other can simply be who they are. Oh my goodness. I didn't expect this show to get like this, y'all. I'm sorry. The angel wrestles with Jacob, knowing the whole time he can win, until Jacob confesses his name. When he confesses to the angel, "My name is Jacob," deceiver, cheater, that's when the angel put his thigh out of joint just to show him that the whole time they wrestled he could have put him out. So he claims victory, but he blesses him. He blesses Jacob for confessing his name. This is what I'm trying to say. God wants you to stand in the confession of who you are. Totally. Vulnerably. Transparently. And he will bless you in that with his mercy. And you can wrestle as long as you want, but he already knows who you are.

0:35:30.1 SC: It's you that is too terrified to actually confess the truth of who you are. And that is the Holy Spirit's role: To draw us to the confession and to bring us forward from the experience of the misery of that confession to the mercy of God. The blessing that comes after that.

[music]

0:35:52.6 S3: You're listening to the Bible Study Evangelista Show, bible study spinach that taste like cake.

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0:36:01.7 S1: If you love having bible study in your pocket, you can become a friend of the show. Click on the yellow "Friend of the Show" button on biblestudyevangelista.com and become a supporter of any amount and any frequency. Now, here's Sonja.

[music]

0:36:27.6 SC: I want you to experience a mercy sandwich. So know that the Holy Spirit teaches us that God cannot resist our weakness. It's in this way that He gives to us the art of making the most of our weakness and eventually also of loving it. And that is one of the main roles of the Holy Spirit as comforter. He comforts us in our weakness. He gives us a taste for it. He teaches us to love it. The Holy Spirit comforts you in your weakness. But the Holy Spirit also comforts and advocates for us by bringing us a new presence of Jesus. Jesus was about to leave the disciples and He said, "I am going to him who sent me, yet none of you asks me where are you going. But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your hearts." Jesus knows that His disciples are feeling that desolation. They're feeling that fear, that worry. They don't understand any of it and they don't understand how awful it's really going to be in just a few hours.

0:37:37.9 SC: But He says, "If I go, I will send Him, the Comforter or the Advocate to you." How does the Holy Spirit advocate for us? He doesn't replace Jesus' presence with His own presence. He doesn't replace Jesus. He makes Jesus present to us in a new way. Jesus will be even more present than He was before. He's not going to only be with us, He's going to be in us. In John 16, 16 He said, "A little while and you'll see me no more. Again, a little while and you will see me." So thanks to the Holy Spirit, the disciples are going to, after a little while, see Jesus again. Not with their physical eyes, but with this inner knowing, this inner understanding and enlightenment by the Holy Spirit. So the Holy Spirit is not substituting for Jesus, He's making Jesus' presence even more real. Jesus said, "I will not leave you desolate, I will come to you." And it is Jesus Himself who comes in and through the Holy Spirit. How does He do that? Well obviously, surely the Eucharist came to mind. That is the whole point of the Christian life. It shows us more clearly than anything that it is the Holy Spirit who makes Jesus present. Just as God became man in Mary's womb by the Holy Spirit, in the same way that bread and wine are transformed into the body and blood of Christ by the Spirit. In that prayer that's called the Eucharist, it means to call.

0:39:13.2 SC: And so the church prays that the Holy Spirit will bring about this transformation. So when the Holy Spirit comes, He doesn't say, "Here I am." He says, "Here Jesus is." He comforts us by making Jesus present to us. So the Holy Spirit is our comforter and our advocate in our weakness or our poverty, in presence, in the presence of Christ, but also in pleasure. My son, when he was very young, I've told you guys this before, but it's taken on a whole new meaning now with this episode and studying for it. He told me when he was about eight, he said, "Mama, you're my pleasure. You're my pleasure." This is one of the roles of the Holy Spirit as comforter and advocate, to show us that we are God's pleasure and that God is our pleasure. If you think about the first creation and the existence of the cosmos and all of the beautiful things in it, we can all appreciate the beauty of creation, but it can't find its pleasure in us. We might find a measure of pleasure in it, but it can't find its pleasure in us. And so there's no reciprocal love happening there. It's not a relationship. But in the Holy Spirit, we have that sort of reciprocal relationship of love. And it's the Holy Spirit who brings this kind of quality to our love because he is love. He is the love gift. You can be as generous and self-sacrificing and eager and religious as you want to.

0:40:56.8 SC: You can work yourself to death in the service of the church. But if God is not your pleasure, then something very, very important is missing. If you give God everything, your money, your work, your time, you're giving what you have. But if you want to give Him yourself who you are, there has to be something else, right? He has to be your pleasure. Because if He's not your pleasure, then you can't give Him who you are. He says, "Where your treasure is, there your heart will also be." The whole idea of authentic love is almost completely lost in our culture. But at least we Christians understand the word agape, God's love for us, is sacrificial. It's to give oneself to

another for the good of the other. And that's the love that Jesus shows on the cross. He gives his life for us. And it's also the love that He shows us in the Eucharist. He's broken and He's poured out and He gives Himself totally to us because that's what's good for us. But love is not just this self-giving, that agape, the sacrificial part, the detached giving. I know I kind of emphasized that part while we were talking about the angels especially. But it's not just that. It's also a desire that the other should come into me. It's not just agape, it's also eros, which we shouldn't automatically associate eros with eroticism, even though that's where that word comes from. Love is a desire, a thirst.

0:42:36.1 SC: And that brings to mind St. Teresa of Calcutta. That thirst, right? Jesus' thirst for us. What is that? That is this desire that we be one. In the Eucharist, there is agape, the sacrificial detached love, but there's also this eros, this thirst, this desire to be one with. Jesus desires to be one with you in the Eucharist. And the Holy Spirit brings that presence of Jesus to us, both in the epiclesis of the mass, but also in the experience of it. I long for you. We must be together. In the Eucharist, there is both the agape as well as the Eucharist. It's a union. It's not just a sacrifice. It's also a presence, a presence of Christ. So, what does that mean for us? What about the Holy Spirit for us? Well, let's look at marriage, which is supposed to be the image of the Trinity. When a man and a woman enter into marriage and they promise to love each other in good and bad times, first of all, that's a question of agape, that sacrificial self-donating love. Husbands, love agape your wives as Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her. So, it's hard for anybody to promise that we're going to always be happy with our spouse, right? Or that they're always going to be a joy. They're not. This is why we need a mercy sandwich. But if the other person only thinks of himself, if he tramples on your feelings and he's not respecting you as a person, he's a burden.

0:44:23.3 SC: He's a cause of pain. And then you can't say to him, "You're my pleasure." You have to say, "You're my cross." That's when eros, this desire, this thirst for the other, is reduced to something smaller or else nothing. And what's left is agape. Agape is the only thing left then. And that is divine. We wait on the other. We sacrifice ourselves. We pray for one another. And of course, that's that sacrifice of letting someone be who they are, right? So, we can promise to agape. And if we've done so in our marriage vows, then it's just a question of being faithful. But we shouldn't just make it agape. Because that's not what marriage is supposed to be. That's not what our relationship with God is supposed to be. It's not simply a detached, non-emotional willing of good for the other, right? That's not satisfactory for any of us. When we think of that, we're like, "Mmm." And I bet you were feeling that when we talked about it with the angels. So, a person for whom you have greatly suffered and sacrificed, they become dear to you. As long as you can completely consent to that suffering and that sacrifice. If you suffer against your will, then you're going to become bitter. This is John of the Cross. But as that sacrificial love grows, that eros grows too. That desire for being one with. That thirst for the other. But it's not something that you can program.

0:46:03.5 SC: So, we can't even... We can't promise it. A love that is exclusively agape is not fully complete. That's my point. That's what I'm trying to say. A love that is just sacrificial, that is completely detached, that has no desire to be one with the other, is incomplete. Which makes for an unhappy marriage, because it's not really a true image of the love of Christ and the church or the Holy Spirit and God the Father and God the Son. It's not a good picture of the Trinity. We need both the eros and the agape to give us that full picture. So where that mutuality is lacking, then love is not truly full. And it's the Holy Spirit's role as comforter and advocate to bring us to that point, both with God Himself, where we desire to be one with Him, and we desire and know that He desires to be one with us, truly and fully. Both in that eros idea and also in the agape idea, so that we can therefore turn to those around us whom we love, and also offer them the agape love and the

eros love. I have so much more to say about this, and I'll have to do it next week, because we are out of time. Until next week, lean into that weakness, prevail upon the mercy of God through the Holy Spirit, and ask for a mercy sandwich.

[music]

0:47:51.1 Speaker 4: Thank you for listening to The Bible Study Evangelista Show. Find out more at biblestudyevangelista.com.

