

This little but “full” verse, John 14:18, having explained it somewhat, and urging for experiencing it in your life, let me encourage that further by mentioning yet also enjoying this text. Can’t this text be so enjoyed considering just how inexhaustible this promise is? As Spurgeon put it, “The first time a sinner looks to Christ, Christ comes to him. And what then? Why, the next minute it is still, ‘I will come to you, [I will not leave you comfortless]’ [And] here is one who has known Christ for fifty years, and he has had this promise fulfilled a thousand times a year, is it not done with [by then]? Oh no! There it stands, just as fresh as when Jesus first spoke it!” There is a continued freshness and force to this promise, looking to Jesus. It is a word you can trust and live by for as long as you live! Yes, also when you come into the valley of the shadow of death, and when you face eternity and the last judgment. Then to hear Jesus say, “*I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you*”, the worth of that is both inestimable and inexpressible. How blessed so to live and die, with such a sure refuge and fortress of hope, in reference to eternity. Who would want to live without this gospel as your hope and trust in our sinful, miserable, comfortless world headed for eternal destruction on its own course, as Jesus foretold.

John 14:18. Do you agree, what a word of salvation and comfort and love this is? How horrible to have it forever ringing in your ears while being left forever abandoned in hell because you would not hear while here on earth, you would not repent and believe, but you always dismissed God’s Word and call whenever it came to you. Don’t let such be true of you, my friend, but rather hear this gospel word and reach out for it, looking to Jesus and calling upon Him for His mercy and grace, yes, for yourself and for many others besides. Isn’t this what true Christianity is all about, understanding and experiencing and enjoying God’s promises in Christ Jesus, also this one, “*I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you*”? Amen.

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BANNER OF TRUTH RADIO BROADCAST

Radio Ministry of the FREE REFORMED CHURCHES of North America

Thou hast given a banner to them that fear thee that it may be displayed because of the truth. (Psalm 60:4)



NOT LEFT AS ORPHANS

Today let us think of Jesus’ promise in John 14:18 to His disciples in the night before His crucifixion, “*I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you.*” Here Jesus promises the Holy Spirit and though no longer physically present with His people here on earth, He is yet at no time absent from us. God never leaves His people alone. This is the precious gospel of Jesus Christ.

“*I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you.*” Isn’t this a rich word thinking just of the timing of it? Jesus spoke these words the night before His crucifixion. His disciples were anxious and burdened about the future as they sensed a crisis and a change. Jesus knew they were troubled in their hearts and minds and He would speak words of comfort and encouragement to them. If you ever desire real encouragement in life, I tell you, you can find it with Jesus the Saviour in a full and satisfying way that you could never find elsewhere. Behold how Jesus here, on a night when His own heart was exceeding sorrowful even unto death, yet He so reaches out still in tender love and care to His disciples, promising not to leave them comfortless in no way at any time. What a Saviour of sinners we find in Jesus Christ the Lord!

“*I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you.*” Notice it is a twofold promise here with each part so rich by itself, but together exceedingly rich beyond words. “*I will not leave you comfortless*” or ‘as orphans’, or as another translation expresses it, “I will not leave you desolate.” How heartrending it must be to be left as orphan children with no place really to call home, and no one to be there for you always and to embrace you and support you and help and guide you, to be left abandoned and alone in that way. But Jesus’ words make clear His promise, don’t they? He is telling His disciples, “I will not leave you abandoned and comfortless and left desolate and alone without hope and care and love. No, you can count on Me, always to care for you and to love and support you in all your needs. Indeed, Jesus’ promise is not just stated in a negative way, but He strengthens it powerfully with His added words, “*I will come to you*”. Actually in the Greek the second phrase is not in the future verb form but in the present tense, “I come to you.” You can count on it, Jesus pledges “I come to you, and I will come to you continually.” It is like His promise in Matthew 28:20, “*Lo, I am with you alway, even to the end of the world.*” Also, in Hebrews 13:5 along the same

lines we read about Jesus that *“He has said, I will never leave thee nor forsake thee.”* ‘I will not leave you orphans, I will come to you’. What a doubly precious promise, don’t you agree?

What did Jesus mean when He says to His disciples here, “I will come to you”? Commentators are divided on exactly what Jesus meant here, but perhaps A.W. Pink gets the full meaning of it when he writes in his commentary, “We believe that these words are to be understood in their widest [sense]. He came to them corporeally [visibly and physically], immediately after His resurrection. He came to them in Spirit after His ascension. He will come to them in glory at His second advent [in the last day].” Yes, let us not limit Jesus’ limitless words, but realize as another commentator also put it so well, “Every phase of His promised coming is embraced in this assurance, ‘I am coming to you’.”

At the same time we have to say from the context Jesus’ promise here about coming to His disciples and not leaving them comfortless or as orphans refers primarily and especially to the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. The Triune God is One God in three Persons and Jesus teaches here when the Holy Spirit shall come, it will be like Jesus coming to them in a real way. No, it’s not that the Holy Spirit is Jesus, but Jesus means the Holy Spirit is the Divine Agent and Applier of the gospel of Jesus Christ and as such, the ministry of the Holy Spirit is all about always glorifying Jesus the Saviour and making Him known and needed, felt and loved and adored above all! Jesus speaks in later verses in John 14 about the Holy Spirit as the “Spirit of truth” and as “another Helper” Who abides with His people forever, even for as many as believe. Here we learn though Jesus would depart to heaven yet He would by His Holy Spirit sent from Him and the Father ever be with His people to minister to them, especially also through His Word.

Do you see with me how rich is this promise of Jesus, *“I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you.”*? “Do you not see, dear friends”, writes Spurgeon in a sermon on our text, “that here is not only all you want, but all you think you can want, wrapped up in a sentence.” When you think too about this promise being given to the disciples, it is all the more overwhelming. Think of to whom this word is addressed. It is to a person like Peter who would deny Jesus so terribly even that very night still. And it is to people like Thomas, who would doubt Jesus so and forget His words so, that Jesus says, *“I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you.”* It is to the disciples who as a group all forsook Jesus, and those closest to Him couldn’t watch with Him even one hour. You see how it is to undeserving people, weak and wayward of themselves, yes, nothing really good about themselves at all, that Jesus pledges this word. His word of mercy and love is for undeserving and unworthy people in themselves, yes, for people like you and me too, by nature. Why should Christ speak a promise like this to anyone at all really? It is all just amazing grace and love that guides Him so,

and it is always based only on reasons taken from out of Himself and on account of His perfect saving work on behalf of sinners as Saviour of sinners.

Here it is most important to see this also from the perspective of our text now. Think of Jesus here promising His disciples, *“I will not leave you comfortless [orphans]: I will come to you”*. It is spoken in the context of Jesus Himself about to give His life a ransom for many which would involve also Himself being left as an orphan, and being left abandoned by all, forsaken and desolate indeed. Jesus is God’s only begotten, beloved, darling Son, and as such, He always enjoyed perfect love and fellowship with His Father from eternity even. But on the cross of Calvary, especially in those three hours of midnight darkness at midday, Jesus would experience in a measureless way the agony and angst of being left alone without any support and love and care from anyone at all as He then would endure the punishment of eternal hell in body and soul in the sinner’s place. This is the great salvation work of Jesus, He gave His life even to the death on the cross, enduring the agonies of hell in the place of His people, even for as many as will trust and obey Him. Hear Jesus cry from out of the darkness when hanging on the cursed tree, *“My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?”* and know this is the gospel truth, *“He was forsaken, that we might be accepted of God, and never be forsaken of Him”*. This is the gospel of Jesus Christ so comforting for all who do believe.

I have explained the verse somewhat, now let me speak about experiencing this verse and enjoying it, as Jesus meant it. Do you experience this verse as living gospel truth for yourself? The passage itself makes clear those who can’t and won’t experience this text for what it says and promises. For all those who refuse to repent from sin and believe in Christ as only Saviour and Lord, this verse won’t speak to you and makes little sense at all. Jesus speaks of the Spirit of truth, even this other Helper, the Holy Spirit in John 14:17 as One *“Whom the world cannot receive, because it sees Him not, neither knows Him: [says Jesus to His disciples], but ye know Him; for He dwells with you and shall be in you.”*

If you would have the Spirit in you and always with you, and have Jesus in your heart, this may be the case freely, for all who trust and follow the gospel of Jesus Christ, but outside of union and communion with Christ as your only Saviour and Lord, this rich text of John 14:18 does not and cannot apply to you. What a reason by itself to flee to Christ even today. All outside of Christ remain abandoned from God and justly so for all your sins and sinfulness. But God is merciful and gracious and still today He is calling for you to come to Him and be saved. Let no one delay in coming to Him, this day, while it is still the day of grace. Before you know it, that day of grace will be forever over. Harden not your hearts anyone through the deceitfulness of sin, but come to the Saviour, and make no more delay!