

The Parable of the Comforter - Nader Mansour

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<https://youtu.be/jAvYcGYQ7Wo>

Today's study is about the unknown parable, as most people have never heard of this parable. Jesus often spoke through parables and Luke recorded twenty-eight of them, while Matthew recorded twenty-three and Mark had nine. Many commentators of the Bible refer to these three gospels as the 'synoptic gospels,' as they give many of the same events, often with similar wording. They also say there are no parables in the gospel of John. John not only excludes the parables found in the synoptic gospels, but he made no record of events like Christ casting out demons.

Matthew, Mark and Luke recorded important events that John makes no mention at all, such as the sermon on the mount and the transfiguration.

On the other hand, John wrote many things the other gospel writers never mentioned, for example: Christ's early ministry in Galilee; the first miracle performed at the wedding where He turned water into wine; Christ's triumphant entrance into Jerusalem before His arrest and trial; also private interviews like Nicodemus or the woman at the well; and especially the famous miracle of raising Lazarus from the dead, all only appears in John.

What we are focusing on in this study is the lengthy discourse Jesus gave to the disciples at the last supper. The other gospel writers did not supply the details that John gives us, which covers four chapters. It was in this recorded discourse that Jesus gave, that John recorded "The Parable of the Comforter." What is this parable of the Comforter? First we need to establish something important and we need to read John 16:25, "**These things have I spoken unto you in proverbs: but the time cometh, when I shall no more speak unto you in proverbs, but I shall show you plainly of the Father.**" Most Bibles have either a marginal reading or explanation at the end of the verse that says (or parables). So Jesus, in coming to the end of His discourse, is telling them that these things I have been speaking to you, I have been speaking in proverbs (or parables which means the same thing).

What things was Jesus speaking to them in a parable? For one thing, the parable of the Comforter. Now we need to go back and read about what Jesus was saying. John is the only gospel writer that wrote about the Comforter. Now we need to explore what Jesus said about the Comforter, as this is one of the most misunderstood things that Jesus spoke about. There is a different meaning to the word parable in John than the meaning of parable in the other gospels. It is an overlapping meaning. What it is doing is speaking in a way that is not to be taken plainly.

In the verse we had read, Jesus had said the time will come when He will not speak in parables (proverbs); but will speak plainly. The word Comforter is found only four times and all in the writings of John. We are going to look at all four verses that say Comforter and find out what Jesus meant, when He used that word. We begin in the fourteenth chapter of John. Jesus does not announce that it is a parable at the beginning as He announced in parables found in the synoptic gospels, such as the parable of the sower. Rather in this case He announces the things as parables (proverbs) at the conclusion. We are looking at the context of His speech which is in these chapters, instead of individual verses, to understand what Jesus was telling us.

There are other parables in John, contrary to what the commentators may say, such as the 'Vine and the branches;' and another is 'the Good Shepherd.' These are parables.

This misunderstood parable of the Comforter has given rise to the most outrageous beliefs in God's church today, and that is that the Holy Spirit is another person than the Father or His Son. The popular and unbiblical person they refer to goes by the name of God the Holy Spirit. That idea is primarily based on the misunderstanding of the scriptures we are studying.

The first occurrence of the word Comforter is John 14 verse 16. This is the very first time the disciples are hearing this word coming from the Savior's lips. "**And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever;**" This is the number one verse

that people use to say that the Holy Spirit is someone else, because it says another comforter. This is what we need to explore. Jesus does explain Himself.

Why did Jesus speak in parables to His disciples? If we look at the introduction, it will help us to understand what Jesus was trying to communicate. John 14:6 **“Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.”** This is an important point that Jesus makes; that He is the way to the Father. Is there any other way? No. He said **no man** comes to the Father but by me. Verse 7 says, **“If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also: and from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him.”** Jesus is making it clear to them that since the Father is in Jesus, and they have known and been with Jesus, they have seen the Father. Jesus, before His capture, is trying to communicate to their understanding this great spiritual truth that the Father is revealed in Jesus.

But then in verse 8, Philip asks the disappointing question, **“Philip saith unto him, Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us.”** Even though Philip asked the question, it may have been in the minds of the others. The disappointment is obvious in verse 9, **“Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou [then], Show us the Father?”**

At this point Jesus will begin to switch from speaking plainly to speaking in a parable using a series of proverbs and allegories. Verse 10, **“Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works.”**

Now as we go deeper into the passage, we need to keep some key points in mind: #1. The passage is about revealing the Father to the disciples; #2. The only way we are to see the Father is through Christ; #3. Is in the passage that Christ is in the Father and the Father is in Christ. Now Christ is going into detail about this spiritual connection to help their understanding. If you fail to keep these three points in mind, you won't understand the rest of the passage. This is the launching point where He begins to talk about the Comforter. Verses 16 and 17, **“And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; 17 [Even] the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.”**

So, Christ will pray to the Father, that He will give them a Comforter that He may abide with them forever. Who will abide with them forever? The Father. The whole point of Christ's coming is to connect sinful man with the Father. So now Jesus is speaking in parables. You cannot take the passage as speaking plainly (another comforter) when He is speaking a parable. Verse 17 says, **“... ye know him; for he dwelleth with you ...”** Since the Father is in Christ, He is dwelling with them, then it says **“... and shall be in you.”**

In verse 18 Jesus says, **“I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you.”** How the Father would come to dwell in the disciples, and in us, is by Christ coming to dwell in them and in us. Christ does not come independent of the Father because the Father dwells in Him. The ONLY way for us to be connected with the Father, is through Christ and no one else. So, this other Comforter can be no one else, but the Son or the Father.

When an objector says, but it says another Comforter; well, that is because it is a parable. It is not to be read as plain speech when Jesus said He was not speaking plainly. Everyone who misunderstands this passage, reads it as plain speech. It is a parable and a parable, requires an explanation. It has a meaning that is not given in the parable. An example would be one of the most common errors in Christianity regarding what happens to you at death. It is believed that you either go to heaven or hell. They base their belief on a story Jesus told about the rich man and Lazarus. The two men both die and Lazarus goes to Abraham's bosom and the rich man goes to a place of torment. This illustration Christ gave was a parable. It ignores all the Biblical evidence that really explains what happens when you die, such as: the dead know nothing; they have no more memory; they are asleep;

there is no consciousness in death. All the evidence is negated by a false conclusion based on a parable.

And so, in spite of all the evidence given in the Bible that the Comforter, which is the Holy Spirit, is the Spirit of the Father and the Spirit of Christ, they still say 'another comforter' means another person besides the Father or Jesus, based on a parable. The same trap Satan uses to catch other Christians in, about what happens at death. In both cases a wrong conclusion occurs from a misunderstood parable.

Now the disciples understood 'Who' (Jesus) was coming from the passage, they just didn't understand how. So, the disciple asks an important question in verse 22, "**Judas saith unto him, not Iscariot, Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world?**" So, they were clear on *who* was coming as the Comforter, because Judas asked Jesus how is it that *thou* will manifest thyself unto us?

They understood that while Jesus was with them in the flesh, He was a great source of comfort to them daily. But now that He is going away, how will He manifest Himself in them as He had said in verse 17?

The disciples also understood that He was not talking about someone different to Himself or His Father. Some time ago a quarterly was produced by the General Conference about the Holy Spirit. The position was that the Holy Spirit was a person other than the Father or Jesus. The key passage used was John 14 verse 16 regarding "another Comforter." Basing a belief on a misunderstood parable, is the same mistake as made by those who misunderstand the parable of the rich man and Lazarus. An entire denomination is therefore drawn into the error, except the wise who will not be so easily fooled.

Now we will look at the second time John uses the word Comforter. John 14 verses 25 & 26. "**These things have I spoken unto you, being [yet] present with you. 26 But the Comforter, [which is] the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.**"

Jesus is speaking to them while He is still with them. There is an unspoken implication here which is, I will continue speaking to you, but not in the same way. It is not a change of the speaker, but a change in the manner of speaking. A lot of people think that Jesus will be done speaking and someone else will be sent to continue speaking. Do we have another speaker as qualified as Christ? Think about it, He said He is the only way unto the Father. And what is the point of the teaching? It is to reveal the Father to the disciples and Christ's followers through the ages.

Some may say since the verse says that "... **He will teach you all things.**" Therefore, it has to be someone else. It may sound like someone else, but it is a parable. The Bible has examples where Jesus is talking about Himself, when it sounds like He is talking about another person. Matthew 24:30, 31 "**... the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he shall send his angels ...**" It sounds like He is talking about someone other than Himself. And he shall send his angels. But He is talking about Himself and we see that. Another one in John chapter 10, Jesus speaks about a shepherd and how the sheep know his voice and that the shepherd gives his life for his sheep. It sounds like he is talking about someone else, however, twice he identifies Himself as the good Shepherd. So why do we say that when Jesus is talking about Himself in the third person, when we come to the Comforter, we say He is talking about someone else?

The teaching that the Comforter is someone other than Himself is an outrageous insult to Christ. Even though we hear it so often, it is a ludicrous and dangerous teaching. Let me (Nader) explain why. If I were a Bible teacher and told you that the Good Shepherd is not Jesus, it's someone else. You would say I am crazy and my teaching on the subject is outrageous. But there are Bible studies and quarterly lessons that try to prove that the Comforter is someone other than Christ.

In John chapter 15 we read the parable of the vine and the branches and there are three components to that parable, 1. The Husbandman. 2. The Vine and 3. The branches. The Husbandman represents the Father, the Vine is Christ and the branches are the disciples. This parable was given to teach the same thing about the Father. The Father is the source of life and He nourishes, tends to and

cares for the Vine and the branches. The branches can only benefit as they are connected to the Vine. The life (sap) flows from the Vine to the branches. The one connecting the followers (branches) to the Father (Husbandman) is Christ (the Vine).

Now we will look at the third time John mentions the Comforter. John 15:26 **“But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, [even] the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me:”**

Notice something very important in this verse. Now Jesus says when the Comforter is come, whom I will send. In this verse Jesus says that He will send the Comforter while in John 14:26 it said the Comforter whom the Father will send in My name. Notice a key point Jesus says in this verse 15:26, the Comforter that Jesus would send, the Spirit of truth. Jesus said in 14:6 that He is the truth, and then in 15:26 continues to say the Spirit proceedeth from the Father. The Father is the source of the Holy Spirit. Jesus is in the Father and the Father is in Jesus as we previously read in 14:10. Notice that 15:26 concludes by saying, **“... he shall testify of me.”**

So, this is where many will say Jesus is talking about another person, because He says He will testify of Me. Again, we must remember that this is a parable and we cited other examples in other parables, where Jesus spoke of Himself in the third person. This is a parable!

When the Holy Spirit is sent into the heart of the disciples, they will have the presence of Christ in the Father. Notice how this is confirmed in John 14:20, **“At that day ye shall know that I [am] in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you.”** What day? The day when the promise of the Comforter, the Spirit of truth is fulfilled. And it was fulfilled at Pentecost. Christ dwelling in them while Christ is dwelling in the Father is how the Father will be with them forever. This has been the burden of these passages that Christ is giving them the Father in a very personal, intimate way. He is not talking about someone else, some new player in the picture as if Christ was incapable to do that. Christ told them how He would do it by giving them the parable of the Comforter.

If you believe that the Comforter is someone other than Christ, than you must believe the Good Shepherd is someone other than Christ, to be consistent. However, if you believe that Christ is the Good Shepherd and the Comforter is someone else, you are a victim of tradition.

Now we will look at the fourth occurrence of the Comforter as found in John 16:7, **“Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.”**

Again, there are those that say when Jesus said, **“... I will send *him* unto you.”**, He was sending someone else. We are reading a parable! Now notice that this passage says the Comforter cannot come while Christ is with them. He says I must go away and something has to happen to Him before Jesus can send the Comforter. We know that He had to first be glorified. If the Comforter was someone other than Christ, it could have been sent sooner. However, the Comforter is intrinsically linked to Christ. Someone may say, but the Comforter is a person. Amen to that because Christ is a person. And when Christ comes to us, not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, He is no less a person. It is not a force or an essence or some nameless power. The Comforter is very much the person of Christ in a Spiritual manifestation.

What was it that made it so hard for the disciples to understand what Jesus was teaching them? It was what they were traditionally taught. That one day the Messiah would come and set up a kingdom and put down their enemies. They figured they would be reigning with Him. Many of the things Jesus taught them about His death and resurrection did not fit with what they thought to be truth and that is why they ran when He was arrested. The same problem exists in the church today as the people have been traditionally taught the Comforter is someone other than Christ. It doesn't matter how much scripture you show them, there is a wall of opposition and this is the barrier that Christ had to deal with, with His disciples. He expresses it in John 16:12 and notice what He says. **“I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now.”**

Why couldn't the disciples bear them now? Because they were stuck in the traditional beliefs that they were taught. It took the death of Christ, a very severe disappointment, to shake them awake, so that they were then ready to learn and understand what Christ would teach them. When Jesus said, **"I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now."** He knew that when He dwelt in them by His Spirit, the barrier would be gone. He said as much in the next verse, John 16:13, **"Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, [that] shall he speak: and he will show you things to come."** The Spirit of truth is how Jesus would continue to teach them, by the Spirit, internally. He is the only one qualified to guide into all truth, for He is the truth. The Father in the Son is how we are connected with heaven.

Many will say that the passage sounds like He is speaking about someone else. Once again, we must remember that He is speaking in a parable. If you think there is a teacher of truth outside of Christ, that is outrageous and ludicrous thinking, if you are a Christian. Think about it. We believe someone other than Christ will guide us into truth, and we call ourselves Christian? Unfortunately, we hear this error all the time and we have become desensitized to it. Jesus says, "I am the way, the truth and the life, no man comes to the Father but by Me." Utter exclusivity, and yet we believe there is another teacher that does this job, other than Christ? If you think that, that is not Christianity!

John 16:14, **"He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall show [it] unto you."** Again, the objectors will say, see, this is another person. Who is it that glorifies Christ? It is only the Father, for the Father is the source of the Spirit of truth (Holy Ghost) revealed in Christ. The Spirit of truth proceeds from the Father and that is how Christ is glorified. The Father is fulfilling what the Son will pray to the Father and ask Him for. In other words, Christ is glorified when the Father makes real the words Jesus is speaking here.

Let us look at a couple passages, one before and one after, to confirm this fact of what we have been reading here. Know this first, that when the Father gives the Spirit of His Son to the believer, that Christ is glorified, and that Christ is magnified and exalted, and the words that He says become a living reality. We need to see who it is that glorifies Christ. John Chapter 13, same evening but a little earlier. John 13:30-32, speaking of Judas Iscariot, 30 **"He then having received the sop went immediately out: and it was night.** (How many disciples were left? Eleven, now Jesus is no longer speaking a parable, but begins to speak plainly in the next verse) 31 **Therefore, when he was gone out, Jesus said, Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him. 32 If God be glorified in him, God shall also glorify him in himself, and shall straightway glorify him."**

Who is the one that glorifies Jesus? The Father. There is something about this connection of the Father being in Christ and Christ in the Father, who is the source of Christ's glory. So later when Jesus was speaking in parable in 16:13 and said, "He shall glorify me ...", was He speaking of someone besides the Father? No, He was speaking of the Father as we just read. Then in chapter 17 when Jesus is praying to the Father in verse 5 He said, **"And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was."**

In chapters 13 and 17 Christ was speaking plainly that the Father would glorify Him. In chapter 16 when He was speaking of the Spirit of Truth, He was speaking in parable. It was the Father all along that would glorify Christ and not someone else. When they say it surely sound like He was talking about someone else in chapter 16; the answer is: it does sound like someone else, because He was speaking in parable.

Now we will go back to where we started, John 16:25. These words should now make more sense, **“These things have I spoken unto you in proverbs (parables): but the time cometh, when I shall no more speak unto you in proverbs (parables), but I shall show you plainly of the Father.”** When is it that Christ will speak plainly of the Father? At that day when the Comforter comes.

When Jesus speaks in parable and you think He is talking plainly, you will believe it is someone other than the Father. This is why we had to look at the whole passage in its context.

Notice how Jesus gives His qualifications as to why He can be the only one who can reveal the Father. John 16:26-28, **“At that day ye shall ask in my name: and I say not unto you, that I will pray the Father for you: 27 For the Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God. 28 I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world: again, I leave the world, and go to the Father.”** Jesus was speaking plainly here because He said a couple verses before that He had been speaking in proverbs (parables).

What was Christ referring to in verse 27 when He said, “I came out from God?” He is referring to the fact that He is the only begotten Son of God. That is plain speech. He came out from God and as the only begotten Son of God, it qualifies Him to be the only one who can reveal the Father, the only way to the Father, no one else.

John 16:29, **“His disciples said unto him, Lo, now speakest thou plainly, and speakest no proverb (parable).”** Now the disciples understand because Jesus is speaking plainly and not a parable. What is it that they understood? Verse 30, **“Now are we sure that thou knowest all things, and needest not that any man should ask thee: by this we believe that thou camest forth from God.”** Now they truly believe that Jesus was born or begotten from the Father. But the people today say no, it is an allegory, a metaphor. Here Jesus is speaking plainly, and the people today turn His plain speech into a parable. The words Jesus spoke in a parable, today people make them literal and plain. The conclusion is that they deny Jesus is the truly begotten Son of God and that someone else is the Comforter. That is NOT Christianity. But as we see in verse 30, the disciples believed in the Sonship of God.

Christ as the only begotten Son of God, by virtue of His coming out of God, begotten from the Father in eternity past, is the only one qualified to reveal the Father and be the Comforter to His people. If the Comforter were someone other than Christ, who was not begotten of God, then what would be his qualification to reveal the Father?

Some may say well you believe what you want to believe, and I'll believe what I want to believe, and when we get to heaven, we will find out who was right. That is not what God would have us do. We are to investigate the matter, searching diligently, rightly dividing the word and proving all things.

Whoever you choose to be your comforter, will reveal your father to you. If Christ is not your Comforter, then your comforter is the father of lies.

Galatians 4:6 – This is not a parable, this is Paul speaking plainly, **“And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.”** That is the Comforter that the Father sends, the Spirit of His Son. Remember Jesus speaking in parable saying I will pray the Father and He shall give you another Comforter; the Spirit of Christ is that Comforter God would send. Also, in this verse, Christ is crying Abba Father. When we receive the Spirit of His Son we are adopted into the family of God and the Father becomes our Father. No one else can make that possible. If you receive another spirit, are you receiving the spirit of adoption? The Father has only one

Son and by receiving His Spirit, you receive the Spirit of adoption. To receive the spirit of someone else; your sonship can only be a metaphor, a role play, and it is not real. It is a very serious matter.

The final witness or verse in our study is in 1 John 2:1. This is the same John who wrote the gospel of John where we find the parable of the Comforter. He is advanced in years and he is writing these letters to the churches. In his letter, he reminds them of Christ and tells them something about the Comforter. **“My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous:”** Comforter is used in this verse, but it has been translated “advocate.” If you look it up, the Greek word for advocate is exactly the same word translated comforter. “Paraclete” an advocate; intercessor; *comforter*.

This is the fifth and final time that John used this word. He was there when Jesus gave the parable of the Comforter. And he heard Jesus when He spoke plainly, and they understood Him. As an elder, he is telling the churches and us, who he understood the Comforter to be. Saying it is Jesus Christ the righteous. John understood that, but do we understand that? John is telling us we must remember that if we fall, we have a Comforter, Jesus Christ the righteous. Knowing this is important, but even more important is having the Comforter because He connects us with the Father. It is the only way that we can become an adopted son or daughter of God. This is what the gospel is about, restoring. God gave His Son to restore, not someone else to finish off what His Son didn't finish off. His Son Jesus Christ is the entire plan of salvation.