

It All Begins with God – “God Beside” Me [#4]

By Bob Young

Life is difficult – not easy. Life frequently presents a lonesome journey. Moving forward with confidence is challenging, difficult. At times I confront seemingly impossible odds. I experience problems, setbacks, failures. I want -- I need -- a companion, someone who understands my needs and the nature of the journey. The last two sermons in this series remind me that God meets that need in Jesus, and subsequently in the promise of Jesus to give us a Comforter to be at our side. Not only is Jesus beside us, in Jesus' presence with the Father we receive adequate counsel and our case is mediated.

Time for a quick review--

- The God who throughout Scripture promised again and again, “I will be with you,” in Jesus’ birth and ministry came to be “with us.”
- The God who is “for us” has done everything necessary to assure our victory; he has indeed fought on our side against the enemy. In Jesus’ ministry and death, we clearly see the God who is “for us”, a concept so powerful that Paul's rhetorical question affirms the conclusion: no one can stand against us.
- This God -- Father, Son, and Spirit -- takes up residence, dwells, is at home, “in” us, in an inexplicable and mysterious truth. This truth changes everything about our lives as we listen to, focus on, respond to, and anticipate the glory of our God.

Lesson Four -- God Beside Us. God has promised to be at our side. Why is it important to know that God is “beside us”? The understanding that God is beside us leads to two important Bible teachings.

First, this beside us confidence points us to Jesus Christ--our Advocate with the Father. Jesus Christ serves as Advocate, Encourager, Exhorter, Comforter.

- Jesus Christ is beside us as our advocate, 1 John 2:1-2
- Jesus Christ presents our case based on his continued action on our behalf, 1 John 1:6-10
- Jesus Christ intercedes, Heb. 9

Second, beside us is an Advocate, Encourager, Exhorter, Comforter -- the Holy Spirit. We focus here to the exclusion of the first truth. We miss Jesus as Comforter, sending the Holy Spirit as Comforter. In Jesus’ Ascension and absence, his presence is certain. Jesus’ promises point to the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is sometimes referred to as the “Paraclete.” This word comes from a Greek verb (*parakaleo*) that means to comfort or console. The word is sometimes translated exhort or encourage.

- The Spirit comforts us
- The Spirit encourages us
- The Spirit exhorts us, perhaps this connects to how the Spirit guides us

Therefore, we can correctly conclude that God is “at our side” in every part of life. You cannot think of any time in your life when God was not at your side. It does not matter how far you have wandered or strayed, God through Jesus and the Spirit can be at your side. It does not matter how difficult the stretch of life you are going through; God is beside you. Problems--God beside you. Failure--God beside you. Overwhelmed--God beside you. Confused, doubtful, struggling--God beside you.

Three takeaways--

- God stays put. God never gives up on us no matter what we have done or are doing.
- God empowers us. He encourages us and enables us to experience the power and presence of God
- God supercharges us. We come to understand that God uses ordinary people to do extraordinary things.