

# Small Groups

## SERMON-BASED STUDY GUIDE PENTECOST – Week 2 – *Comforted* June 4, 2023

Basic questions for discussion are in the “Digging In” and “Making it Real” sections. “Digging a Little Deeper” has suggestions for further Bible study you might want to use with your group or suggest as possible individual study during the week.

### DIGGING IN:

1. Consider this quote from John Stott:

“As a body without breath is a corpse, so the church without the Spirit is dead.”

- Do you agree or disagree with this statement?
- How do you know if a church has the Spirit of God or not? (What does it look like?)
- What examples have you seen of a church living *in* the Spirit or *not* living in the Spirit?

2. What does *comfortable* mean to you?

- When/where do you feel the most comfortable?
- At this point in time, would you say your life is comfortable?

### MAKING IT REAL:

3. Alex gave several different uses/definitions of the Greek word *Paraclete*, which is used to describe the Holy Spirit.

- Someone who comes alongside you
  - Defense attorney/Advocate
  - Comforter
  - Helper
  - Counselor
- Which of these descriptions (if any) best fits the way you have understood your relationship with the Holy Spirit?
  - Which of the above relationships do you desire most from the Holy Spirit at this point in your life?

4. In John 13 Jesus creates *discomfort* (by telling the disciples that he is leaving them). In John 14 Jesus promises *comfort* (by promising the coming of the Holy Spirit).

- Why might Jesus *create* discomfort in us?

- Alex suggested that we pray, “God, create in me the right amount of discomfort.”
  - What kinds of emotions rise up in you when you consider praying that?
- In what ways might the desire to be comfortable keep you (or someone) from truly living life in the way that God designed?

5. Read 2 Corinthians 1:3-4. “Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God.”

- God is described as “The Father of Compassion,” and “The God of All Comfort.” What stirs in you as you consider these descriptions of God?
- Have you experienced comfort from God? Share what that was like for you. If not, share an area of your life where you need to receive God’s comfort. (If some in your group share this, stop to pray for them to receive comfort from the Holy Spirit).
- Is there a way that God has comforted you and you have then been able to support someone else going through a similar issue? If so, what was that like for you?

## PRAYER IDEAS

- Pray for God to “Comfort the afflicted and afflict the comfortable” within your group. As Alex said, we can bring our affliction to the table, to the One who knows how to comfort, and we can bring our comfort to the table, to the One who knows how to “stir up the nest.” Ask the Holy Spirit to give each person what they need in order to live more fully in His presence and power.
- If group members have shared ways that they are in need of God’s comfort, pray specifically for those members. Consider having multiple people pray just one or two sentences rather than one person praying a paragraph.

## WANT TO DIG A LITTLE DEEPER?

(Extra Bible study ideas)

- 1) Read Isaiah 61:1-3 (printed on next page). Jesus quoted this passage in Luke 4:18, making it clear that this passage was about *Him*. As you read,
  - Make a list of all the things that Jesus came to do.
  - Write a sentence or two to describe that aspect of Jesus’ care.
  - Highlight the actions of Jesus that you need most in your life right now.
  - Circle the actions of Jesus that describe what someone you care about needs in their life right now.
  - Turn the items you highlighted and circled into prayers.

2) Do a topical study on comfort in the scripture. Here are a few verses in the Old and New Testaments that you can use. Look up the verses and record what you discover about the comfort that comes from God.

Matthew 5:4

John 14:1-3

2 Corinthians 1:3-5

2 Corinthians 7:6

1 Thessalonians 2:11-12

Psalm 23:4

Psalm 119:50-52, 76, 82

Isaiah 40:1

Isaiah 49:13

Isaiah 51:12

Isaiah 61:1-3

Jeremiah 8:18

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

### *Red Couch Theology Podcast*

If you or group members have questions around parts of the sermon that are not included in the discussion guide, it's always helpful to listen to *Red Couch Theology*, where Alex and Aaron talk about the sermon and answer questions that come in from people in the congregation. <https://guysdrinkingtea.podbean.com/>

### *Chronicles of Narnia – The Silver Chair*

Read the section of the book where Puddleglum and the prince are in the underground lair and are being bewitched. Pay attention to how Puddleglum takes action to stop it. What action(s) might you need to take to break free from complacency and begin afresh to live by the Spirit of God?