

## **John 14:8-17 (25-27)**

<sup>8</sup>Philip said to him, “Lord, show us the Father, and we will be satisfied.” <sup>9</sup>Jesus said to him, “Have I been with you all this time, Philip, and you still do not know me? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? <sup>10</sup>Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own; but the Father who dwells in me does his works. <sup>11</sup>Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; but if you do not, then believe me because of the works themselves.

<sup>12</sup>Very truly, I tell you, the one who believes in me will also do the works that I do and, in fact, will do greater works than these, because I am going to the Father. <sup>13</sup>I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. <sup>14</sup>If in my name you ask me for anything, I will do it.

<sup>15</sup>“If you love me, you will keep my commandments. <sup>16</sup>And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, to be with you forever. <sup>17</sup>This is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, because he abides with you, and he will be in you.

<sup>18</sup>“I will not leave you orphaned; I am coming to you. <sup>19</sup>In a little while the world will no longer see me, but you will see me; because I live, you also will live. <sup>20</sup>On that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you. <sup>21</sup>They who have my commandments and keep them are those who love me; and those who love me will be loved by my Father, and I will love them and reveal myself to them.” <sup>22</sup>Judas (not Iscariot) said to him, “Lord, how is it that you will reveal yourself to us, and not to the world?” <sup>23</sup>Jesus answered him, “Those who love me will keep my word, and my Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them. <sup>24</sup>Whoever does not love me does not keep my words; and the word that you hear is not mine, but is from the Father who sent me.

<sup>25</sup>“I have said these things to you while I am still with you. <sup>26</sup>But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said to you. <sup>27</sup>Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid.

## **Acts 2:1-21**

<sup>2</sup>When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. <sup>2</sup>And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. <sup>3</sup>Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. <sup>4</sup>All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability.

<sup>5</sup>Now there were devout Jews from every nation under heaven living in Jerusalem. <sup>6</sup>And at this sound the crowd gathered and was bewildered, because each one heard them speaking in the native language of each. <sup>7</sup>Amazed and astonished, they asked, “Are not all these who are

speaking Galileans? <sup>8</sup>And how is it that we hear, each of us, in our own native language?

<sup>9</sup>Parthians, Medes, Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, <sup>10</sup>Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, <sup>11</sup>Cretans and Arabs—in our own languages we hear them speaking about God’s deeds of power.” <sup>12</sup>All were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, “What does this mean?” <sup>13</sup>But others sneered and said, “They are filled with new wine.”

<sup>14</sup>But Peter, standing with the eleven, raised his voice and addressed them, “Men of Judea and all who live in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and listen to what I say. <sup>15</sup>Indeed, these are not drunk, as you suppose, for it is only nine o’clock in the morning. <sup>16</sup>No, this is what was spoken through the prophet Joel: <sup>17</sup>‘In the last days it will be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams. <sup>18</sup>Even upon my slaves, both men and women, in those days I will pour out my Spirit; and they shall prophesy. <sup>19</sup>And I will show portents in the heaven above and signs on the earth below, blood, and fire, and smoky mist. <sup>20</sup>The sun shall be turned to darkness and the moon to blood, before the coming of the Lord’s great and glorious day. <sup>21</sup>Then everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.’

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## Sermon - June 9, 2019 – Pentecost – St James

Good morning. This is Pentecost, the day we celebrate the coming to us of the Holy Spirit. Red is the colour for Pentecost, the colour for Spirit...and I am glad to see some have worn red...the colour of the tongues of fire which appeared that day. We call Pentecost the birthday of the church. Like all good birthdays, there are gifts involved. In this case, the gift is the Holy Spirit and all the Spirit benefits! Even though Jesus must leave this world bodily, God loves us so much, God wants to remain close, so God sends the great gift of His Spirit. Let's focus on what Jesus says about the Spirit in this morning's Gospel.

Let's step outside of that great event on the Day of Pentecost which we heard about in the reading from Acts: the rushing wind, the tongues of fire, people of different languages filled with the Spirit, so excited because they understood one another, so animated that onlookers thought they were drunk. This, Peter says... was the 'pouring out of the Spirit' promised of old by the prophet Joel... God will pour out his spirit on all flesh, young men will see visions, old men will dream dreams. Both men and women will receive the Spirit and prophesy.

But the setting of our Gospel is more subdued. Jesus is speaking to his disciples in their last hours together. What lies ahead is a huge and frightening upheaval. They will scatter. Jesus will be tried and will endure a brutal death. They will fear for their lives. This is the end of their time together. He is reassuring them..but telling them not to be afraid because their foundations **will** be shaken, they will be afraid and they will need to hold on tight.

He says that God will give them another Advocate, to be with them forever. <sup>17</sup>This is the Spirit of truth, the Advocate will come. The word Advocate is 'Paraclete' in Greek. It translates as someone who comes **alongside**, as legal counsel comes alongside and stands with the accused in the crisis. This Spirit Jesus calls the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in Jesus' name. This Spirit will teach them everything, and remind them of all that he said.

If the Spirit, comes alongside and stands with the accused in the crisis, then the spirit comes alongside us, especially in the messiness and difficulties of life. Isn't that good news? Jesus says this Spirit (His Spirit, in fact) will never leave us orphans because this Spirit is actually **in** you.

Pope Francis is writing little messages all through this Easter season. The other day, this is what he wrote:

***"Sometimes we may feel we are alone in facing difficulties. But, even if He doesn't intervene immediately, the Lord walks by our side and, if we keep going forward, He will open up a new path."***

Every time we are told not to be afraid...that is when the Spirit is there, because we **are** afraid, very afraid, because life has gotten messy. When we see the grave look in the doctor's eyes, when it is our pet's last journey to the vet, when the job we loved evaporates, when relationships break down and people let us down...that is when the Holy Spirit shows up! The Spirit blows where it will. The Spirit is there through all the messiness of life...both the joys and the sorrows. The Spirit is there in the big moments and the small moments. When we sell 30 necklaces at the church Yard Sale to a woman giving them to seniors in nursing homes to brighten their days...when we hear how neighbours on a certain street get together winter and summer and have German, Italian and Japanese themed parties.

What the Holy Spirit does for believers by coming alongside of us is to open our eyes, to prod us in the ribs to recall the things Jesus said, and to remind us of the larger truth that in Jesus, God the Father really was revealed to this world in a way never before. With the Holy Spirit of Pentecost at our side, all of life is transformed—some of those transformations may be very subtle but that in no ways undercuts their power!

Helmut Thielicke, the late German Protestant theologian writes:

To be sure, we cannot make the wind blow.

But we do not need to do so, for it is already blowing.

Wherever the Son of God goes, the winds of God are blowing,  
the streams of living water are flowing,  
and the sun of God is smiling.

He is the...guarantee that the sun and streams and wind of God are round me.

I do not need to seek them.

I am already encircled by the rush of wind and water and the radiance  
of light which is Jesus.

The Spirit works for us; the Spirit works through us. We are like a glove. The Spirit is like the hand in the glove, providing form and vitality. Jesus called the Spirit the Advocate. An advocate speaks on our behalf. The Spirit is also our comforter, our teacher, helping us to understand and to believe. The Spirit prays within us when we don't know what to say. It is the Spirit of the risen Christ working in us.

In an article in Decision magazine (July, 2002), Tony Evans tells of rushing to catch a plane. He was walking as fast as he could -- really straining to get to the plane on time. Then he glanced over his shoulder and saw a man walking at a much easier pace -- but moving much faster. The other man was on a moving sidewalk. Evans comments:

"When we walk in the Spirit, he comes underneath us and bears us along. We're still walking, but we walk dependent on the Spirit."

When we walk by our power, we move at one pace.

When we walk by God's power, it is an altogether different pace.

You may have heard of Maya Angelou, American poet, singer, memoirist, and civil rights activist who died just a few years ago. In Maya Angelou's classic essay "I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings," we see a vignette of what peace from the Holy Spirit in troubled times may look like for those who know the Lord and the Spirit of the Lord. Set in the South back in the late 1940s, the essay tells of a time when Maya's Momma was taunted and insulted by a group of white girls while Momma was doing no more than sitting in a rocker on the front porch of the small grocery store they ran.

The girls said nasty things to Momma, laughed at her for being black. One thirteen-year-old girl even did a hand-stand so as to let her dress fall down. She wasn't wearing any underwear and so she mooned Momma with her bare bottom and front. Watching her Momma, young Maya was furious that Momma didn't do something. Yet Momma stayed calm and as Maya moved closer, she heard Momma singing quietly, "Bread of heaven, bread of heaven, feed me till I want no more." The girls tired of the show and left eventually, and as Momma left the porch to return to the store, Maya heard her singing again, "Glory hallelujah when I lay my burden down."

Momma could see deeper, farther than just those nasty girls and their despising of her. She saw the Lord, high and lifted up, and it changed everything. And she knew all that and could see all that because the Spirit of the Lord was with her whispering “Let not your hearts be troubled . . .”

So on this Pentecost, I invite you individually and as a parish, to walk in the Spirit, letting it bear you along where it wants you to go.

God’s Spirit is truly here in each of you and in this place. God’s Spirit will not abandon you ever, of that you can be sure. The risen Spirit of Christ continues to move and to call you to love one another and to leap out for the sake of that love.  
Amen

**Author: Scott Hoezee**

This is our Pentecost text, of course, but the setting in John 14 takes us back to that last night before Jesus died.

What that means is that even though this text ends up talking about peace and of Jesus telling the disciples “do not be afraid” (Jn. 14:27), let’s just state the merely obvious that in the next 48-72 or so hours of their lives, the eleven disciples still with Jesus in that room that night would have *plenty* of occasions to be very, very afraid, frightened, disoriented. Feeling “at peace” about anything would shortly for these disciples feel like the remotest of all possibilities.

Maybe that’s why in John 14:1 (“Do not let your hearts be troubled . . .”) and in verse 27 (“Do not be afraid . . .”), I imagine that Jesus’ voice is choked with emotion and that just maybe there was something a little desperate about the way he urged his friends to be calm. It’s the tone of voice you’d expect to hear right after the bus had slid off a snowy highway and landed perilously on its side in a ditch near a ravine: someone might stand up and with real fear in his voice and with eyes widened by fright might shout out to everyone on the bus, “OK, everybody, now **DON’T PANIC!!!!**”

The truth is that in my life—and probably in your life—every time someone has told me to not be afraid or to not panic it was because all things being equal, fear and panic were live possibilities at the moment.

You had just fled to the basement because the news said a tornado was roaring toward your neighborhood. “Don’t be scared,” your Dad says. Yeah, right. The doctor sits down with you with a grave look in his eyes and says, “Now, I don’t want you to go to pieces but the lab results show . . .” Well, maybe it’s the time to go to pieces. Maybe.

The fact is that we take Jesus’ calming words in John 14 and we transfer them to pretty Hallmark-like Christian greetings cards or we decorate the den with a counted-cross-stitch version of it and we thereby make it a calming word for quiet afternoons whilst we sip a nice cup of chamomile tea or something. What we forget in so doing is that Jesus HAD TO say these things precisely because the world in which we live seems calculated more days than not to knock the holy stuffing out of us.

And perhaps this leads to a much-needed Pentecost reminder, too. Too often we envision Pentecost—at least the original event—as being ever and only about events that were both novel and quite literally earth-shattering. Whatever happened on that original Day of Pentecost, we think, is most decidedly VERY different than my average Tuesday morning or Friday afternoon. But maybe this causes us to miss the everyday nature of the Holy Spirit in our lives that we can detect here in these Lectionary verses from John 14.

You see, Philip asked, “Show us the Father. Show us the Father and it will be enough for us.” Jesus seemed taken aback by the question. “What do you mean? Have I been with you so long and still you do not know me? You’ve been seeing the Father all along. If you’ve seen me, then you have seen the Father.” This, in turn, leads Jesus to talking about the upcoming abiding presence of the Holy Spirit and how that Spirit will reveal truths and show the disciples things that the world neither sees nor knows but that they will see and know.

But what if what that means is that we will sense the Spirit and our not being alone in the most ordinary moments of life? After all, just when had the disciples failed to see the Father in and through Jesus? Well, probably most all the time! Probably they had a hard time seeing the Father when recently Jesus had bawled his eyes out at the grave of Lazarus. Or they hadn’t guessed they were seeing—and so were in a real way in the presence of—the Father all those times when Jesus got sleepy and nodded off in the back of a boat or when after dinner Jesus used a small stick to work out that chive that had gotten lodged between his incisors.

They hadn’t realize that the Father was there in all that and so maybe in the context of John 14—a troubling, frightening context that would soon turn into a nightmare of fright and terror for the disciples—what Jesus is really saying is that when life gets tough, when the bottom falls out, the Father (via the Holy Spirit after Pentecost) would as surely be there in those (ordinary) circumstances as well.

When the doctor steps out of surgery with bad news . . .

When the boss ushers you into a room where the Director of Human Resources is sitting there with a letter for you to read . . .

When you are huddled under a desk in the basement while a twister shatters the glass in the house above you . . .

When you sit at your desk and feel such overwhelming boredom with your work that you discover tears have started to run down your cheeks . . .

. . . in all these times the Father (via the Spirit of Pentecost) will as surely be there as on all those other days of Jesus’ ministry even though the disciples did not typically have the eyes to see or the ears to hear. But by the Spirit one day they will and so in a world that constantly tries to steal peace from us and in times when our hearts really do become troubled and for powerfully good reasons at that, this is the good news to which we cling.

There really can be a peace that passes all understanding. There really can be a way for troubled hearts to become calm again. It may not come through tongues of flame or roaring winds or earthquakes such as you can read about in that other Lectionary reading for Pentecost Sunday in Acts 2 but it can come. It does come.

That may be the best message of all for Pentecost. And the main reason that's such Good Gospel News is because it is by no means a truth for just that 50th day after Easter: this is a truth that goes home with you and moves in with you and stays with you, even to the end of the age.

### **Textual Points**

The word often translated as “Counselor” in John 14:16 and again in John 14:26 is the Greek word PARAKLETOS, which literally means “the one called alongside.” A Paraclete (don't let your spellchecker convert that to “parakeet” by the way!!!) was the one who stood along side the accused person in court—an attorney, a counselor in that sense—but in John 14 it is clear that what the Holy Spirit does for believers by coming alongside of them is to open their eyes, to prod them in the ribs to recall the things Jesus said, and to remind them of the larger truth that in Jesus, God the Father really had been revealed to this world in a way never before true. With the Holy Spirit of Pentecost at our side, all of life is transformed—some of those transformations may be very subtle but that in no ways undercuts their almighty power!