John 14:16-18 *Wind and Fire: The Presence of the Holy Spirit*

***Not Alone***On the night before Jesus was betrayed—right after the Last Supper, which the disciples didn’t know yet was the Last Supper—Jesus was trying to prepare His disciples for what was coming. He had been hinting about His death, which they didn’t want to hear, and then He let them know that He would be leaving them. They really didn’t want to hear that, and the Bible says they were filled with grief.

Jesus knows that they are anxious about what is coming next. He knows that they are going to be filled with uncertainty. He wants to reassure them. So here’s what He says. He says:

**Even though you may feel alone, you are not alone**.

That’s Jesus’ message to the disciples. And it’s His message to us. Even though you may feel alone, you are not alone. Even though these disciples who have been walking the beaches and footpaths of Palestine with Jesus will no longer have Jesus walking beside them; even though they have spent pretty much every day for the past three years with Him and now He is going to be gone—even though they are going to feel alone—they are not alone.

And the same goes for us. Sometimes we wish we could just have a face-to-face conversation with Jesus. We wish we could walk with Him and talk with Him like those earliest followers did. But He’s in heaven, we’re down here. But Jesus says: even though you may feel alone, you are not alone.

Jesus doesn’t phrase it exactly like that. He doesn’t use those words. But that’s what He is getting at. **John 14:16-18:**

**16**And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever— **17**the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you. **18**I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.

Jesus promises to send the Holy Spirit. He promises that even though He will be gone, the Holy Spirit will come. We are not abandoned. Rather, the Holy Spirit will be present in our lives. The Holy Spirit will come to us and live with us and in us; and He won’t just be someone we can make an appointment with or go meet for dinner, but He’ll be with us all of the time.

Today we are finishing our 6 week series on the Holy Spirit. We’ve been talking about who the Holy Spirit is and what He does. We’ve talked about how He is a person, not a force; and He is God (a member of the Trinity), but His primary objective is not to call attention to Himself but to Jesus. And we’ve talked about how the Holy Spirit has an empowering ministry, and He gives gifts to us to enable us to glorify Jesus and build up the church. And we’ve seen that the promise of the Holy Spirit is to everyone who calls Jesus Lord. If you believe in Jesus, then you have the Holy Spirit living in you.

And that’s the ministry of the Holy Spirit that I want to focus on as we close out this series: the ministry of the Holy Spirit’s presence. If you are a Christian, then that means the Holy Spirit is present with you now and forever. So that, even if you feel alone, you are not alone.

Jesus uses an interesting word for the Holy Spirit in this passage that we haven’t talked about yet in this series. It’s the word translated here as “advocate.” The word in the original Greek is ***paraclete*.** It’s an interesting word because translators can’t decide on a single English word that corresponds to it. In fact, I randomly looked up this passage in 6 different English translations and found 5 different words: Advocate (NIV and NLT); Counselor (NIV 1984); Comforter (KJV), Friend (The Message) and Helper (ESV). In the original language, the word is a compound word made of two words that mean “to call alongside of”.

Basically, Jesus is promising that when He leaves He will send another (who is similar to Him) to come alongside of His followers and be a friend, helper, advocate and counselor. And this *paraclete* will not only be with His followers, but actually live inside of His followers. Do you see that, at the end of verse 17? “For he lives with you and will be in you.”

It seems like the disciples are about to be left alone, but Jesus wants them to know that will not be the case. In fact, God is about to be present in their lives—and He is promised to be present in your life—in a way that the disciples never could have imagined.

So let’s think about that amazing truth today. The Holy Spirit dwells inside of all genuine believers. The Holy Spirit is present in the life of all followers of Christ. Yes, He lives everywhere. The Holy Spirit is omnipresent because He is God. The Old Testament said that we can’t go anywhere to get away from the Spirit. But now, we learn in the New Testament that the Holy Spirit lives in a special way within the bodies and hearts of the children of God.

The Holy Spirit dwells inside of us.

This may be obvious to you. Maybe you learned this long ago. But I don’t think that we operate our daily lives enough on this basic gospel truth. I know that I don’t! What does it mean that the Holy Spirit of God has taken up residence within me?

Let me suggest four things this morning:

***It is for Your Good***First, **the presence of the Holy Spirit makes us… Happy.** Jesus actually says that the disciples should be glad that He is going away (John 14:28). He says that it will be better for them, and for us. Consider **John 16:6-7,** still part of Jesus’ instructions on that last Thursday night:

**6**Rather, you are filled with grief because I have said these things. **7**But very truly I tell you, it is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Advocate will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you.

This is really an amazing thing for Jesus to say. Again, put yourself in the disciples’ place. They have been with Jesus. When they were out in the boat with Jesus and the wind started whipping and the waves started rising, Jesus woke up and stilled the storm. The disciples were protected because they were with Jesus. When they were hungry, along with great crowds of people, Jesus supernaturally fed them with the loaves and fishes. They were provided for when they were with Jesus. When they were with Jesus, they were comforted, they found courage, they learned so much about God. And now, Jesus says that He is leaving, but it will be for their good that He is going. Because the Advocate—the paraclete—will come in His place.

I don’t think it is that hard to identify with the disciples. My guess is that most of us, if we were given a choice between having Jesus in the flesh, standing right in front of us, advising us and teaching us; or the Holy Spirit, whom we cannot see or touch or audibly hear…I’m guessing most of us would choose a physical Jesus over an invisible Spirit every time. That just seems like it would be better. It seems like it would make our faith easier.

But Jesus says differently. Jesus says that having God’s presence inside of us is better than having God’s presence beside of us. What these verses are saying is that God in you is better than God with you.

Think of it this way. Sometimes we talk about all the Bible characters we want to meet when we get to heaven, and all of the questions we’ll have for them. You know, we think of Moses or Daniel or Elijah, and we wonder what it must have been like to see God work in their lives the way He did. We say: “I can’t wait to ask Moses what it was like to talk to God on Mt. Sinai.” Or we say, “I want to know what it was like when that angel showed up in the lion’s den.”

But I wonder, if we do get that chance, what will they say? I can imagine Moses saying: “Yeah, it was something, but I had to a climb a mountain to see God. What I want to know is, what was it like to have God with you 24/7?” I wonder if Daniel would say: “I had to go into the lion’s den in order for God to show up next to me. I want to know what it was like to have God inside of you all the time.”

The people in the Old Testament had some pretty amazing encounters with God, but they were just that: encounters. They happened, and then they ended. But what we have as Christians is something different, something better! We have the Spirit of the Living God dwelling inside of us full-time. We are never alone. We are never apart from His presence.

God in you is better than God beside you. Do you believe that?

***Temple of the Holy Spirit***Second: **The presence of the Holy Spirit makes us…Home**. That is to say, the Holy Spirit’s presence with us means that we are a home for God Remember John 14:17, Jesus says that the Holy Spirit will live in us.

Quick question: what do you call a “home for God”? What do you call the place where God dwells?

The answer is: “a temple.” In the Old Testament, the place to go and meet God was at the temple.

Let’s look at **1 Corinthians 6:19-20:**

**19**Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; **20**you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your bodies.

You can see how this verse picks up on the promise of Jesus from John 14. The Holy Spirit is in you. If you are a believer in Jesus, then the Holy Spirit has entered your heart and He is with you full time.

And that makes you a temple.

In the Old Testament, if you wanted to be in the presence of God, you had to go to the temple where God’s presence was said to dwell inside the Most Holy Place. That was the only physical place where God was believed to be.

But now, things are different. Now, every believer who is walking around here on earth is a little temple of God. Now, each one of us who has the Holy Spirit dwelling in us is a physical container of God’s presence.

You know, we call this room that we are in right now a sanctuary. That’s because it is a special room that is set apart for the worship of God. It is a ministry tool, that helps us serve God as a community. But don’t make the mistake of thinking that God dwells here in some special way.

We make that mistake a lot as kids. We hear the church building referred to as “God’s House” and so we infer that God must live here. We start to think that in order to meet with God we have to come, physically, to the church building.

But as wonderful as this room is, and as helpful as it can be to gather together in this space to worship and pray and hear from God’s word, God does not live here in this room—He lives here, in my heart. And there, in your heart. And your heart. And your heart.

We are temples of the Holy Spirit. God calls us His home.

And one of the implications of that is that everything we do can be, and should be, a form of worship. You are never out of God’s presence. He is with you all the time. You are a walking, talking temple of God and so everything you do can be seen as an offering to Him.

We’ll come back to this passage in 1 Corinthians in just a moment, and we’ll talk about the caution this truth should give us. But first, let me take you to Colossians 3:17 and give you an encouragement. **Colossians 3:17:**

**17**And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

Whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus. Or, if you want, do it all as though Jesus were standing right there beside you. Because, in the presence of the Holy Spirit, He is.

If we were really aware of the Holy Spirit’s presence, how it would it change the way we work and serve? How would it change the way we do even the most mundane tasks, if we think about the truth that the Spirit is always with us?

My friend Dave Bartlett likes to tell a story about his early days as a youth pastor. His youth group was raising funds to go on a trip, so he signed up with one of those fundraising companies. And the one he picked seemed like a good idea at the time. It was a company that sold frozen pizzas, and the hook was that customers could customize what they wanted on their pizza. So the kids would go out with this list of ingredients, and they would get customers to mark how many pizzas they wanted and what they wanted on each one. You know: pepperoni and green peppers or mushrooms and sausage or sausage, peppers and onions and so on.

What Dave didn’t quite grasp—or maybe he knew this in advance but underestimated just how complicated it would be—was that after the kids took all the orders, the company would deliver a bunch of empty pizza crusts along with cans of sauce and bags of toppings. Before delivering the pizzas, then, Dave and the kids would have to assemble all these pizzas, to the exact specification of every order they had taken.

As Dave tells it, it didn’t go well. He scheduled a night for pizza assembly, but it took way longer than expected. Eventually, all the kids and sponsors had to go home, and it was just Dave in the church kitchen with hundreds of pizza shells and all these little order slips. And Dave wasn’t happy. He was angrily grabbing the spatula and splattering the tomato sauce on the crust and then throwing the ingredients down and muttering under his breath. “Stupid pizzas. Stupid fundraiser. Stupid idea.”

But then he started thinking about why he was doing this. He started thinking about the kids who would be going on this trip, and the opportunity they would have to meet Jesus, and how the whole thing really was about serving Jesus. And then he started thinking about how Jesus was with Him right now, and really he was making these pizzas for Jesus. And Dave said his whole attitude changed. Suddenly he started talking to Jesus as he made the pizzas: “Would you like a little extra cheese on this pizza Jesus?” “Would you like some pepperoni to go with that sausage?”

Realizing that he was working for the Lord changed his whole attitude. It didn’t make the number of pizzas he needed to assemble go down. It still took him until 3 in the morning. But remembering that the Holy Spirit lived inside of him and everything he did was an offering to God helped him put everything in a better perspective.

***You Are Not Your Own***Third, **the presence of the Holy Spirit makes us…Holy.** Knowing the Holy Spirit is with us should make us mindful of the choices we make. If knowing the Holy Spirit is with us encourages us to honor Him; it should also serve as a warning against dishonoring Him.

If we go back to those verses from **1 Corinthians 6** I should tell you that the context for these verses is a discussion of sexual immorality. Some of the Corinthians had embraced the idea that they had been spiritually set free from sin, and so they believed that what they did with their bodies was irrelevant. Thus, they were engaging in promiscuous and scandalous behavior.

Paul’s response is that our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit. If God now lives with us, what we do with our bodies is not irrelevant. Instead, we should be mindful that whatever we do—whatever activities we engage in or whatever words we says—God is always right there with us.

Paul is saying that if there is some activity that you would feel strange about doing if Jesus were standing right there beside you… well, with the Holy Spirit living inside of you, it’s pretty much the same thing.

Think of it this way: have you ever been in the presence of someone that, just their presence, makes you see things a little more clearly? I think of this. When I was in High School I’d go to a movie with some friends. And I enjoyed the movie. And then, two or three months later that movie would come out on VHS tape and I’d remember it so I’d go to the video rental store (that was a whole thing, there were machines that hooked to our TVs and stores that just rented these tapes and you’d have them for a night and then you’d have to be kind and rewind and bring it back the next day, it’s different now) but we’d rent the movie and maybe have a movie night at home and I’d be watching it with my Mom.

And suddenly, because I was sitting there with Mom, this movie that I thought was good the first time around would suddenly look very different. Mom wouldn’t say anything—she wouldn’t have to—but just her presence in the room would make me see things in a different light. Some of the language, maybe—“Sorry Mom, I didn’t remember that was in there.” Or some of the scenes—“Sorry Mom, I think maybe this is a different version then the one I saw.” Just her presence can make things that didn’t seem inappropriate the first time around seem wildly inappropriate now because I’m sitting next to my Mom--“Sorry Mom, let me just fast forward through this part.”

Her presence could make me aware of some things that I probably should have been aware of from the start. That’s how it can be, and should be, with the Holy Spirit. Especially the more we become aware of the holiness of God, and the more we become conscious of the fact that He is always right there with us, the more we become aware of some areas in our life that need attention. Some of what we used to rationalize and minimize and justify, we realize that it’s a big deal. Things that we used to think were no big deal, we start to see they are such a big deal that, actually, Jesus died because of those things.

The Holy Spirit is always with us. I’m not saying that to scare you. I’m not saying that to make you feel guilty. I’m just saying that as a fact. How would really believing that the Holy Spirit is always with you change the way you sin?

There is an interesting turn of phrase in Ephesians 4:30. In the middle of an exhortation to put off the old self and put on the new self of holiness and righteousness, **the Apostle Paul says this**:

**30**And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.

Do not grieve the Holy Spirit. It’s an interesting turn of phrase, because I think it tells us something about how much God cares about us.

You see, we have the potential to sadden the Holy Spirit by the way we live. If He didn’t love us, if He didn’t care for us, it wouldn’t work this way. The people we love and care for the most are the ones with the greatest potential to hurt us or cause us sorrow. Kyle Idleman says:

If the Holy Spirit were an acquaintance, we might annoy Him.  
If He were a business partner, we might be able to insult Him.  
If He were a distant family member, we might be able to offend Him.  
If He were a stranger, we might be able to aggravate Him.  
But He loves us, so the way we live can make Him sad.  
It’s one thing to break a rule, it’s another thing to break a heart. <https://www.southeastchristian.org/sermons/wind-and-fire/the-presence-of-the-holy-spirit-sermon>

If we really live our lives with an awareness of the Spirit’s presence, it’s going to change a lot of the choices that we make.

***Guarantee***Fourth and finally, **the presence of the Holy Spirit makes us…Hope**. The truth that the Holy Spirit is with you right now should fill you with all kinds of confidence about your future.

I want to put up the verses we started with again. **John 14:16-18**. And I want you to notice a word there at the end of verse 16: “Forever.” Jesus says: “I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you…forever.”

If you are a genuine believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, you have the Holy Spirit within you, and He’s never leaving!

Have people left you? Have other people disappointed you and drifted out of your life? He’s never leaving. He’s in it for the long haul.

And part of the reason for the presence of the Holy Spirit in your life is to confirm for you the reality of your salvation. He’s there so that you can be confident that you belong to God and He’s not going to let you go.

Let’s look at **Ephesians 1:13-14:**

**13**And you also were included in Christ when you heard the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation. When you believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, **14**who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God’s possession—to the praise of his glory.

There are two images for the Holy Spirit in these verses, and they are both driving at the same point.

One is that the Holy Spirit is a seal. You see that in verse 13: “you were marked in him with a seal.” Not the sea animal that barks and has flippers and loves to eat fish. Not that kind of seal. But a seal of ownership. Like those old time drops of wax on an envelope and then a special ring would be pressed down into it to indicate that this document belonged to this person and no one but the appointed person could open it.

Did you know you have a mark of ownership on you? If you have come to believe the gospel and have come to Christ, the Holy Spirit has come to mark you and seal you–a seal of ownership.

Do you think of yourself as owned? Do you think of yourself as “God’s possession?” (That’s in verse 14!) I think that Americans, especially, have a hard time with this idea. We think of ourselves as free and independent. “Nobody owns me! I’m my own man! This is a free country!”

But that’s not Christianity. Christians are owned. We are marked. We are sealed.

When you believed the gospel, you were marked as belonging to God. And God doesn’t take that lightly! He doesn’t lose track of His possessions. He doesn’t leave them lying around. He greatly cares about them.

But, more than that, the Holy Spirit is also pictured here as a deposit. Verse 14: “the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance.”

The Holy Spirit is a deposit. Or a down payment. Or an earnest.

Most of us who have ever bought a house get what this is. If you are going to buy a house, you make an earnest payment. You put some money down, which is an indication of your intention to deliver the full price of the house. You make a down payment, which serves as a sort of guarantee that you will come through with the rest of the money.

And the Holy Spirit is God’s down payment to us. It is His earnest payment guaranteeing that everything else He has promised us—redemption, restoration, eternity in the new heaven and the new earth—will also come our way.

So the presence of the Holy Spirit in our lives guarantees our hope. Knowing the Holy Spirit is with you and in you should fill you with assurance that you belong to God and He is not going to let you go.

As we wrap up our series on the Holy Spirit I want to encourage you to really reflect on the truth that the Holy Spirit is in you. If you are a believer in Jesus Christ, then His Spirit dwells in you right now. Even though you may feel alone, you are not alone.

How would it change your life if you really lived with an awareness of the Spirit’s presence in you? How would your outlook change if you paid attention to the Spirit’s presence?

He’s really there. He’s there marking you as Christ’s own, comforting and challenging you, empowering and praying for you. Live like it.