

Ghost - Friend

Josh - March 1

Series Big Idea: There is an unseen power available to every believer. That power transforms us on the inside and empowers us to do the very things God wills of us. But this power is not an “it”, but a person who is the third person of our one God. Old English translations called him the Holy Ghost. Today we refer to him as the Holy Spirit. When Jesus returned to his Father, he sent us the Spirit because he knew that would be so much better for us. The Holy Spirit comes alongside us to make us stronger so we can do greater things than we could on our own. The Spirit is God who came to live inside to guide, protect, convict, coach, instruct, counsel and empower us. This is a “ghost” we do not fear but depend on to love God and serve others well.

Message Big Idea: We are never alone! However, too often, we try to live like a Christian on our own power and that is futile as well as exhausting. God gave us a life coach to help us, guide us, teach us to live the life he’s calling us to live. He gave us the Spirit to empower us to do things that are beyond the ability of a mere human. The Spirit is the very person of God that lives inside us so that we experience a living and freeing relationship with him. The Spirit is God is your forever Friend. Get to know your forever friend in the most personal way possible. He’s a friend that will always be with you, support you, protect you and enable you to do what is humanly impossible.

Main Idea: The Holy Spirit gives us God’s presence, truth, and peace.

Main Text: John 14:15-18

Supporting texts: Galatians 5:25

Reflection/Discussion Questions:

1. What are your experiences with the Holy Spirit? What things have you been told about the Holy Spirit that is confusing?
2. Read John 14:15 - 18. What stands out to you in these verses?
3. The Holy Spirit is described as an advocate and a helper. Can you give an example of how you have seen that in your life?
4. Why do we need an advocate and helper in the Holy Spirit?
5. Josh also mentioned that the Holy Spirit is an encourager, comforter and the spirit of truth. Why is that important?

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Message:

Have you ever wondered what God is doing right now?

At different points in our lives, regardless of what we believe about God, we'll ask questions like:

- Does God hear me? When I ask for something, does he hear?
- Is God present right now as I'm dealing with my teenager that won't listen? As I walk through the pain of another broken relationship?
- We stand at funerals and wonder, is God here right now?
- When we are abandoned or betrayed. When someone walks out on us. When we fail or are successful, is God there?

Over the next 4 weeks, we are going to seek to answer that question: What is God doing right now?

- Today, we are kicking off a brand new series called *Ghost*.
- We're talking about the Holy Spirit. It was the old King James Bible, written in 1611 using old English, that referred to the Holy Spirit as the Holy Ghost. So we thought we'd call this series Ghost.
- God has revealed himself in three persons - Father, Son, and the Holy Ghost or Holy Spirit. God is essentially one, but he manifests himself in these three persons.
- The Holy Spirit is the most misunderstood, most neglected and for some, the most feared of the three.
- In some churches, like the church I grew up in, you'll hardly ever hear about the Holy Spirit - it can seem as if he doesn't even exist. Or that you can follow Jesus without the Spirit.
- Maybe some of you came from other churches, some have experienced control and abuse in the name of the Spirit by people who were misguided. Some of you are exploring or new to faith and you just aren't sure who he is and what he does.
- Maybe you didn't grow up in church and have no context about the holy spirit. But have you ever wondered, is there a world I don't see? Are there angels? Demons? A spirit world that you aren't aware of?

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No matter where you are in your journey, our hope is that you will experience the Holy Spirit in your life in a fuller way than before.

One way we're doing that is on March 22nd, Pastor Glen, our lead pastor will be doing a **deeper dive** into the Holy Spirit at the East campus at 4 pm. You can go to mypantano.church/DeeperDive and post questions there that he will be answering that night.

So, who is the Holy Spirit and does it matter in our lives? And the answer is, Yes, more than you might know.

John 14:15 - 18 - p. 737

The context of John 14 is important. Jesus has just predicted his death in John 12 and then in John 13, he predicts that someone will betray him and that Peter will deny him. What he tries to do in John 14 then is comfort them.

- I want you to imagine what this was like.
- I would imagine this was like an intense family meeting where everyone is kind of looking around waiting for someone to talk.
- People are wishing they were somewhere else and those who hate conflict the most just want it to be over.
- And Jesus tries to comfort them.

15 "If you love me, keep my commands. **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.

It would be easy to skip verse 15, but Jesus is saying something important about not only what God is doing right now, but how to be a *part* of that.

- It is impossible to separate loving God and obedience.
- One of the important works of the Spirit is obedience in our lives and following through on what God commands us to do.

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- Loving Jesus, being a follower of Jesus means keeping his commands and being obedient.

But how do we know?

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.

Jesus says, I will ask the father and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever.

- **Gift:** God the Father will give us.
- The holy spirit is a gift from God the Father.
- This is important because we love gifts. Gifts tell us that someone thought of us loves us and the best gifts are something we want and need.
- **Kids making their birthday and Christmas lists months in advance.**

But what will he give us? An **advocate**. Some translations say, helper. Both work.

Jesus is telling us what the Holy Spirit will do.

- An advocate stands up for someone, speaks for someone who can't speak for themselves. It can also be seen in the words: counselor, lawyer or even a life coach.

One of the common themes when Jesus talks about the Holy Spirit is that, as we'll see next week, we need the Holy Spirit to become all that God wants us to become. Jesus returned to heaven to work on us from there, through the Spirit in us.

So what does God, the holy spirit do?

- **Helps.** Helps us to see the way forward, helps us to have the words to share the gospel with someone, to comfort someone. Helps us to make decisions and know which way to go when our world feels cloudy. Helps us to follow Jesus and be obedient. The holy spirit also draws us to God and woos us with the love of God.

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- Has someone ever asked for your advice? Or asked you about Jesus and you didn't know what to say but then you started talking and they said, "Wow, that's helpful, that's just what I needed." and you think, how did that happen? That's the holy spirit.
- A great prayer to pray when you don't know what to say, how to answer a question or respond to something is to say, "Give me the words."
- Helper carries the idea of...helping.
- Helping carries this idea of "coming alongside to help."
- Helping us to see what we need to see, to move forward. To give us direction, instruction, counsel when we need to move forward or are stuck.
- Helping us to be obedient.
- **Comforter**. The holy spirit comforts us when our lives feel like they are falling apart. When we grieve, when we aren't sure how we'll make it through the moment, the day, week or month, he is there comforting us. He comforts us with a peace that is unexplainable. When someone is in the valley of life and says, "I have peace about this and know God is with me." That's the holy spirit.
- **Counselor**. He counsels us, gives us advice, wisdom and guidance.
 - We see a counselor for help and direction. That's one way we engage the Spirit.
- **Encourager**. Urging us, pointing us in the right direction, bringing people into our lives that need to hear about Jesus or that we can show the love of Jesus to and connect to. This also gets into how the Holy Spirit teaches us through scripture and community. When we read the bible or hear a sermon and think, that was just for me, the pastor was talking right to me. That's the holy spirit. I'd love to take the credit, but I can't.

And the Spirit will be with us forever.

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Now, if the verse stopped right there, we're all in. Someone, to help us see what we need to see? Advice? The words to say? The know-how for a decision? Help in my time of need? Yes!

What does the Spirit help us to see?

Truth.

Now we are back to the beginning of the passage of obedience.

- The Holy Spirit helps us to see truth, to live it out and move forward in it.
- The Holy Spirit brings us to truth. Even when we don't want to see it.
- Those moments when you read the bible and think, that's the verse I needed to hear. Or you read the bible and think, I don't want that verse, I want a different one. The Holy Spirit knows what you need.
- This means that the Holy Spirit knows our souls, our stories, the places we keep hidden and knows what truth we need to hear, what truth we need to apply, what needs to change and be revealed.

This is why, in this series we'll see some of the other things the Spirit does: he teaches us when we need it, guides us when we need to see the way, consoles us in our despair, convicts us when we've done wrong, shows us the path forward.

If you're taking notes, write this down: **The Holy Spirit gives us God's presence, truth and peace.**

Depending on your personality or church background, you will prefer one of these to the others, but they are all needed in our lives and the Holy Spirit brings.

- **Presence.** When we pray for more of God or ask God to move in our world and lives, that is the Spirit's job. So, ask "Spirit give me the words. Spirit, guide me. Spirit, show me. Spirit, please move in my world."
- **Truth.** When we read our bible, ask the Spirit to speak to you through Scripture. When you come on a Sunday morning or show up at your group,

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ask the spirit to show you the truth you need to hear, to change you and mold you. That's the spirit's job.

- **Peace.** We experience God's peace through the Spirit because the Spirit is in us and with us. God can't get any closer than in you.

But we need to follow His lead. Paul tells us in Galatians 5: [Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.](#)

- So it is possible to be out of the step with the spirit, remember obedience.
- But we are to stay in step with the spirit.
- So, when we feel that conviction, repent. When we see his guidance, take a step. When he teaches us, be glad that God saw what you needed and provided.

Jesus finishes telling his disciples about the Spirit in verse 17: [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.](#)

There are two incredible statements in these verses I don't want us to miss:

1. As a follower of Jesus, the Holy Spirit lives in you. That's how we can count on all the things the spirit does. He is in us.
2. Jesus says, "I will not leave you as orphans, I will come to you." These words can refer to the promise of Jesus to return or also the promise of the spirit to come to us. Both though are the reminder of something important God the Spirit does, he is with us.

When Jesus says, "I won't leave you." That's what he is telling us. While Jesus is in heaven, we have all that we need in the Holy Spirit and as we'll see over the next few weeks, it is better for us to have the Holy Spirit in us than Jesus beside us, which sounds odd but it's true.

Orphan is a powerful word.

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The disciples felt like they were being made orphans. Jesus was going to die. But Jesus said, I'll come to you in the form of the Holy Spirit. We are never alone! The Holy Spirit wants to be intimately involved in every aspect of our lives.

- We adopted our two youngest boys.
- I remember their first moments with us.
- Nehemiah was a hospital call. After waiting we got a phone call at 10 am to bring a car seat and some clothes to the hospital and at 4 pm that day we walked out with Miah. He was so helpless and little.
- When we brought Judah home from Ethiopia, who is the same age as Ashton, he was a foot shorter. Now they're the same height. He didn't know any English, he probably saw more white people on that first day than he did in the 4 years of his little life. I remember holding him at the airport, trying to comfort him as he just looked around, so scared. Even though he couldn't understand me just saying, "I'm here buddy. I got you."
- **The spirit is the same. He holds you and says, "I got you, buddy. I got you, sweetie." In the same way that I brought comfort and safety to a scared little boy at that moment in the Phoenix airport, but the Spirit does the same for us.**
- Maybe you showed up this morning and God felt distant and God the Spirit is pulling you in close.

Don't take the holy spirit for granted, God is with us. That is significant. I'm asking you to engage and embrace the holy spirit. Maybe for the first time.

- Open yourself up to the spirit
- Reconcile abuse you went through

Let me bring this all together. Yesterday on Instagram, one of my favorite pastors posted this: **The Holy Spirit is not a performance-enhancing drug for Olympic Christians. He is life for the dead, strength for the weak, hope for the exhausted, cleansing for the filthy, wisdom for the wayward. Our dear friend the Holy Spirit is, through the merit of Jesus, for us!**