

Tuesday, May 19, 2026

The Holy Spirit as Counselor

John 16:13

As you enter your time with God today, take a moment to quiet your mind. Breathe this prayer: "Come, Lord Jesus, come. Fill me with your Spirit. Open my heart that you might share your words of life with me."

We read today from John 16:13. Read the passage now or at the end of this devotion. What does this passage teach us about the Holy Spirit as our Counselor?

Arlington Cemetery in Washington D.C. is a special space. In the lines of gravestones and other historical markers you feel the gravity of the price of freedom, the weight of sacrifice that led us to be a nation, and burden that is ours to care for others enough to live beyond ourselves and for the sake of something greater. I have been to the cemetery several times and will return every chance I get.

Upon a trip with our family to DC to see Troy play, we chose to spend a few hours on the tram meandering through the hillside overlooking the Potomac. Our goal was to listen to the tour guide introduce us to the history of the grounds and get off the tram to see the changing of the guard at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. This ritual is powerful and I recommend it to you all.

So, we started off. I, being who I am, took command of the situation and indicated that I would know what stop to get off at to see the guard. We listened for several moments to the tour guide speak of presidents interred on the grounds, entertainers and celebrities of old whose graves can be seen, and stories of anonymous heroes that shape our history as a nation. We began to slow for a stop, and I indicated to the family that it was time to get off. We did. We started off and the tram left.

And I quickly realized we were in the wrong place. We were at Lee's mansion, not at the tomb. They are only separated by a half a mile or so, but when you force your family to make an unnecessary walk because of your impatience, it feels much longer. Some heavy sighs and a glance or two let me know that I was relieved of my responsibility, and we would be deciding things now as a group.

I had taken the place of our guide and failed to hold up my end of the bargain.

Praise be to God, our Counselor gives us guidance that does NOT force us off at the wrong stop.

"But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come."

Most believers prioritize this aspect of the Spirit's work in us as most important for life. We want guidance. We want to know what to do. We want to know what not to do. We want to understand what ways are better than others and be equipped to take the steps that have been indicated to us by the Spirit. We do not need to find our own way. The Spirit promises to help us discover it.

This verse gives us much comfort in that desire. As we focus just on this verse itself, several important aspects of the Spirit's promised guidance are shown.

It is again affirmed that the Spirit is one that shares truth. We can trust what the Spirit speaks because that is the essence of the Holy Spirit. It IS the Spirit of Truth. It can never speak otherwise.

The Spirit's guidance leads us towards truth. Not only can we believe what we hear from the Spirit, but we can trust where the Spirit is leading because that too is a place of truth.

The Spirit engages with us in participation with the fulness of the Trinity. When we hear the Spirit, we hear the Father. When we are led by the Spirit, Christ is participating in the leading. I could have used some community in providing guidance. The Spirit never speaks to us without community.

The guidance we are given by the Spirit leads us to the intended future that God has for us. In the truth we hear, the Spirit is fulfilling the promise move us towards the future blessings that are ours in Christ Jesus.

We can and should wisely discern any guidance we receive from anything besides the Holy Spirit. While we may receive wise counsel, what we hear may instead lead us off at the wrong stop.

Not so with the Spirit of truth. We can trust what the Spirit says. His guidance where always lead us where our loving God wants us to go.

May the Lord bless you and keep you. May the Lord make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you. May the Lord turn his smile towards you and give you his peace.

In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen.

I love you all. Blessings.

Feel free to share this devotion with others.

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