

Wednesday, June 3, 2026

The Holy Spirit as Keeper

Acts 24:27

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 Acts 24:27. Read the passage now or at the end of this devotion. What does this passage teach us about the Holy Spirit as Keeper?

There are few things that Kristin enjoys less than when I get stressed out in a restaurant. If something is not going right when we are out for dinner, I can handle it fine for a few minutes, but eventually, I let my anxiety show. This stress can be caused by an order that is not well-prepared (Kristin's steak salad at the restaurant near the Watergate hotel), stress at other tables that begins to bleed out to others (the almost brawl at Coco's in Visalia), or small feral children who significantly impact your dining experience by throwing rice in the air (Bubba Gump's in Breckenridge. Truth: it was one of our kids.)

One of our more difficult experiences while my anxiety boiled over was at a restaurant in Victoria Garden. We were there celebrating the birthday of one of our kids and had given our server our order. Then we waited...and waited...and waited...and waited.

When I must wait like that and something is not going the way it should, I start looking around and fidgeting. I began to chew on my fingernails. I disconnect from the conversation in front of me and start to figure out what the problem is by what I see. "They ordered after us, but they got our food. Did one of us have a complicated order? Did our server upset someone back in the kitchen and now we're paying the price? Speaking of our server, I haven't seen him in a while. What's going on?" I was about ready to lose it and create a scene.

Kristin sees me go into this process, disconnect from what's happening in front of me, start complaining and nit picking, and get frustrated by something outside of my control. Like I said, it is not her favorite thing.

It turns out that while we had given our order to our server, he had gone on his half-hour break without submitting our order. He came with the manager to apologize with a guilty look on his face. They gave us free food and a gift card to return which we did not for several years. We have since gone back and the service was better, but it is still not our favorite restaurant because of that night.

We were delayed by an hour at a restaurant, and I was ready blow a gasket. I cannot imagine how Paul handled his experience in Caesarea.

"When two years had passed, Felix was succeeded by Porcius Festus, but because Felix wanted to grant a favor to the Jews, he left Paul in prison."

Yes, you heard that right. Two years. Paul languished in prison for over 700 days and nights because his case was a black eye for the political structure that had put him there and because quid pro quo with the Jews meant keeping him locked up meant that the Jewish leaders owed Felix. They got this trouble making gospel speaker off the street and they could help the governor keep peace.

How did Paul feel? Paul is intelligent. He had friends and other leaders he was interacting with. He had to know that he was being left in the pit for someone else's pleasure. That had to be so frustrating!

But we never hear Paul complain. What we do hear is him speaking boldly, when given opportunity of the gospel of Jesus and the hope that is offered to those who believe in his grace. (26:2-29) He interacts with Felix, Festus, Agrippa and ultimately Caesar hear the truth that Christ's death offers life and it is the only way to be redeemed from the sin of this world.

He's not complaining. He's not railing at the injustice of his circumstances. He's not claiming a pound of flesh, free food, or a gift card as recompense for 2 YEARS of waiting. He's submitting to the Spirit, the Spirit who has kept him and been present with him all those long nights. The Spirit who encouraged Paul when he needed it and gives him words of proclamation when the opportunity to speak is given.

Paul knows the Spirit's protection. He knows the Spirit's presence. He knows the Spirit's equipping. Being obedient to the Spirit gives him opportunities to share Christ that are staggering for us to understand.

May the Spirit meet us when we are impatient. May the Spirit equip us with words less marked by complaint and more marked by grace when we have the opportunity to speak. May the Spirit keep us in his care always even protecting us from ourselves when our impatience or injustice moves us fulfill our own selfish agenda.

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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