

Friday, June 5, 2026

The Holy Spirit as Keeper

Acts 28:30-31

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 28:30-31. Read the passage now or at the end of this devotion. What does this passage teach us about the Holy Spirit as Keeper?

I had some interesting conversations with Jean after her husband Harv died. Theirs was a beautiful love story and she missed him terribly after being married for over 50 years. Her grief was deep, but after a couple months of feeling deep and paralyzing sadness, Jean decided to reenter life and get back to the business of living.

She put up Harv's picture above her mantle and started talking to him pretty much all the time. When she told me about it, she laughed because she was convinced that her neighbors thought she was crazy. "Sometimes I get mad at Harv and raise my voice a little bit. They must wonder who the crazy old lady next door is yelling at!"

She bought a new car for herself; a Nissan Juke. "It makes no sense to anyone except to me. It's smaller than my other car and it's easier to park. It's got gadgets that warn me when I'm driving like a lunatic and I like that. Besides, it's cute!"

She got a tattoo. She made me swear not to say anything about it at her funeral, but time has passed and I think she'll understand. It was a little flower, the kind Harv always gave her. She didn't weigh more than 90 pounds, so I must believe that getting the tattoo was painful. But she did it because she wanted to. "My kids think I'm going cuckoo, but that's their problem, not mine."

To the end of her life, Jean lived joy. Life was not easy. Her grief remained heavy. Her body failed her. There were loads of challenges along the way, but every interaction I had her was marked by the buoyancy of joy despite the circumstances. "I know in a little while that I'm going to be with Jesus and Harv. I'm looking forward to that. I'm just getting ready by starting the party a little sooner!"

I have to say that her final chapter, as she wrote it, was one of the best endings I've ever witnessed. She felt the presence of Jesus and her beloved husband. That impacted her, and by extension impacted those around her.

I think that Jean and Paul were cut from the same cloth.

"For two whole years Paul stayed there in his own rented house and welcomed all who came to see him. He proclaimed the kingdom of God and taught about the Lord Jesus Christ – with all boldness and without hindrance."

These are the last two verses of the book of Acts. This is the end of the story of Paul as the Bible writes it. It is only from other historical texts that we learn that Paul was beheaded by Nero. He was not crucified because he was a Roman citizen and the authorities "mercifully" spared Romans from that type

of torture. Given the choice, I'm glad that the book ends the way it does instead of "And Paul was brought to the courts of Nero where he was beheaded before the people for proclaiming the name of Jesus."

While the book doesn't end that way, I expect that Paul anticipated the end as it came closer. In his intelligence, he could read the political climate. He could hear conversations change and I'm sure he noticed who came to visit him, who did not visit, and who stopped visiting after a period of time. In places of political intrigue, all those things speak volumes to those who are listening.

So, in his own way, Paul doubled down. He "burned the ships" and committed completely to the task that remained. Instead of seeking audiences that would benefit his case, he sought audiences that would grow the kingdom of God. Instead of begging for his life, he begged that others might know life. Instead of involving himself with the "superpower" of Rome and supplicating himself before it, he bowed before the transforming power of Jesus and made sure that everyone he met heard of him.

Paul lived joy. He knew the end was coming. He could anticipate the path ahead. Instead of being consumed with the power and people around him, he was consumed with proclaiming the saving power of the grace of Jesus Christ within.

That's a pretty good way to end the story.

Most of us are not where Paul and Jean were as they lived out their last chapters. We are in a different space. But our hearts can seek and proclaim that same joy that we have in Christ. When we know the joy that he offers to us, and intentionally seek to proclaim it, his presence equips us with great confidence and peace despite our circumstances.

Like Jean said, if we know Jesus, we know we are going to see him and a lot of others that we love very soon. May that knowledge equip us to proclaim joy today and always.

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.

To contact the author, please email: elgersma@therivercrc.com