

WSS, Part 12
Week 5
Tuesday

The Spirit Who Comforts
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Today's Treasure

The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.

Genesis 1:2

See, I have called by name Bezalel the son of Uri, son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah, ³ and I have filled him with the Spirit of God, with ability and intelligence, with knowledge and all craftsmanship, ⁴ to devise artistic designs, to work in gold, silver, and bronze.

Exodus 35:30-32

And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, ¹⁷ even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be^l-in you.

John 14:16-17

After Mike's diagnosis of terminal cancer, we knew we were on a journey of God's design. One of the deep truths that guided us during this journey was God's covenant promise to his people, "I am with you." There is story after story during the five years of Mike's illness where God showed this promise to be true.

I clung to this truth after Mike died. I asked God to show me a "happy" every day. I knew in my head that He was with me, but my heart longed to see it in tangible ways. On most days, even as I grieved deeply, I saw evidence of God's presence with me. Sometimes it was in reading His Word or a song, or the care of a friend, or a note I received. Sometimes it was a thought that just entered my mind.

About a year after Mike died, our church went through a sermon series on the Apostle's Creed. Our senior pastor did the sermon on "I believe in the Holy Spirit" and my understanding of the role of the Holy Spirit and God's presence grew.

In Hebrew, the word spirit is ruakh which can be translated as wind, breath, or spirit. It is used first in Genesis 1:2 where “the ruakh of God hovered over the waters.” The word pictures of the Holy Spirit being “the breath of life” fascinated me. I have seen both the breath of life at birth and the loss of breath at death. It suddenly made sense to me that God’s presence resides in the believer in the ruakh, breath of the Holy Spirit. Those comforting thoughts that had come into my head were from the Holy Spirit breathing life into me by His presence. In this space between when Mike’s breath left his body and when God calls me home to Him, God’s personal presence is with me in the breath of the Holy Spirit!

I went digging deeper and listened to an entire podcast series from the Bible Project on the Holy Spirit. I had always known that the Holy Spirit convicted, guided, and comforted the believer, but this word ruakh, breath, made me want to understand more.

When the word ruakh is found in the Old Testament, it often indicates creative divine activity where God creates, empowers, emboldens, and sustains all things, An example of this is found when God’s Spirit filled the craftsman so that they were empowered with the ability and skill to do the work needed for the tabernacle. It is seen again when Joshua receives the spirit, ruakh, to lead the people of Israel.

It began to occur to me that God’s enabling, empowering presence was bigger than I had understood before. With every breath I take, I am reminded that my very life exists because of Him. Those of us who have seen death understand our deep dependence here. The ruakh, breath, spirit gives more than just existence – He gives existence with purpose. I can live my life seeking to serve God in everything I do because He is empowering me and giving me the ability to do so.

My vocation as a children’s director in our church is empowered by the Spirit. In the years since Mike’s death, our church has built a Children and Student Center. As that responsibility came, I longed for Mike’s presence with his words of guidance and wisdom. However, God provided even better. In the still of the night, I would wake up with a “knowing” to answer the problem I was trying to resolve. Ruakh. Breath. Spirit. Presence.

So, in this space between, the Spirit, ruakh, hovers over me and breathes life into me. This life sustains me when life without Mike just seems too much. It convicts me of sin where I become more focused on myself than is wise. It enables me to do the work and live the life the Lord has set before me, and it comforts me through the sorrows of my soul. And my friend, He can and will do all these things for you too!

To Think About: Where do you see evidence of God's spirit in your life? What difference does it make in grieving to know that God's presence is always with you?

PRAYER

Breathe on me, Breath of God, fill me with life anew, that I may love the way you love, and do what you would do. Breathe on me, Breath of God, until my heart is pure, until my will is one with yours, to do and to endure.