

October 8, 2023

An Invitation to the Divine: Week 1

In our previous series, 'Braving Change', we not only looked back at the past 15 years, but promoted a challenge for our next 15 as well!

One of the comparisons we drew came from the Lewis and Clark expedition. What they understood foremost was **THEY COULDN'T DO IT ALONE!**

They understood the need of Strategic Partnerships, and likewise when we look at the forming of the CHURCH in the book of Acts, Jesus understood our need for a Strategic Partner as well! It was an **INVITATION TO THE DIVINE!**

It would come to the Disciples and the Early Church by way of the ministry of the Holy Spirit, and it is the partnership the church still needs today!

John 14:16-17 (NIV)

And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another ADVOCATE to help you and be with you forever—the Spirit of truth.

This month we are not only going to learn, but experience the PERSON, POWER, PROMISE, and PRESENCE of the Holy Spirit!

Here's the irony: the Holy Spirit was given to the church to Unite us; but discussions about the Holy Spirit in many ways have Divided us!

Last week, Debbie and I had the chance to go aboard the Lettie G with another couple from the church. We were excited because it was a windy day and we were excited to sail! But as the night went on, the winds died down, and the captain had to fire up the engines.

When that ship was built, it had no engines. They were completely dependent on the WIND to propel them, and that's a great analogy for the Holy Spirit in light of the believer and the church. We are dependent on Him for everything, and he has more available than we are usually accustomed to ASK!

Years ago a Southern plantation owner left a \$50,000 inheritance (equivalent to about half a million dollars today) to a former servant who had served him faithfully all of his life. The estate's lawyer notified the old man and told him the money was deposited at the local bank in his name.

Several weeks went by and the man never called to ask for any of his inheritance, so the banker called him and told him he had the \$50K available to draw upon at any time. The man said, "Sir, might you be able to spare me \$0.50 for a sack of cornmeal?" I think this illustrates the state of many Christians living today. Still thinking like an orphan, like a poor man, with no grasp at ALL on what is available to us.

I. Who is the Holy Spirit?

John 14:16 (NIV)

And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever.

There are two different words in Greek for “another.”

Allos= another of the same kind.

Heteros= another of a different kind.

Jesus used Allos: He is another of the same kind; specifically and equally God.

There is One God who exists eternally in three persons.

What it's NOT:

- It is not three Gods
- It's not one God in three modes.

It is One God, existing eternally as three persons. The Father, Son, and the Spirit are distinct Persons, so you can talk about them separately; but they are all God, so that in having one, you have the presence of all three.

We believe in the Trinity, not because we understand it, but because it has been revealed.

II. What the Holy Spirit does

A. He Inspires and Illuminates (John 14:26)

This verse is a promise of two different things for two different groups:

1. For the Apostles: it's a promise of Inspiration.

He promised to bring back to their memories, flawlessly, all that Jesus had taught and to clarify it.

One of the questions people have about the Bible is how can we trust what men wrote: Maybe they corrupted it; maybe they just didn't understand things.

This promise shows you that Jesus promised supernaturally to guide their minds as they wrote. What you have in your hand is a reliable record of Jesus' work, because Jesus promised He would guide the Apostles to accurately record it.

Think about it: What good would it be for Christ to have come to earth and died, if there was not a reliable record of the truth of the Gospel?

2. For the church: it's a promise of Illumination.

The Holy Spirit is not revealing new things to us. He is helping us to understand what's already there: that's called “illumination”.

In *Luke 12*, Jesus is warning his disciples that there is a time coming when they'll be dragged before courts, and he says, "Don't worry in that hour about what you'll say, the Holy Spirit will tell you what you should say."

Question: Has that ever happened to you? You step out and God fills In?

B. He Is Our Advocate (*John 14:16*)

We don't have a great word in English to translate it, so you may read it as Comforter or Counselor: Paraklete literally means someone who stands beside you. to speak on your behalf.

1.) When our Sin demanded Justice, this is what Christ did FOR us in the Throne Room.

2.) Now, the Gospel reveals in our everyday life that we have Another Advocate just like Jesus.

C. He is our Intercessor

Romans 8:26 (NIV)

We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans.

III. What is the Role of the Holy Spirit?

He ALWAYS points to Jesus.

John 15:26 (NIV)

When the Advocate comes...—he will testify about me.

He has ONE primary job! LOOK TO JESUS!

Here's where I want us to land; the big takeaway for you this week: You need to realize He is the HOLY Spirit, that He is a Person, and He has a Mission.

He's come to do work in US. Will you accept the INVITATION to spend some time with the Divine of Heaven?