

Hold On
Sunday June 15, 2025
John 16:12-15; Romans 5:1-11

In this message, Pastor Joel invites us into the upper room with Jesus and his disciples on the night before his death — a moment heavy with disruption, grief, and fear. Jesus, their beloved teacher and friend, tells them he is leaving. But in the same breath, Jesus promises the gift of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit will speak only what he hears from Jesus, who receives it from the Father. We are promised that God's presence remains real and personal through the indwelling of the Spirit. The sermon reflects not only on Jesus' words to his disciples but also considers how these words would have resonated for John's later Christian community — a group pushed to the margins of synagogue life and under pressure from surrounding culture. They, too, felt the disorientation of suffering and asked, *"Where is Jesus in all of this?"*

We feel it too. Life today can feel overwhelming, and faith can be hard to hold onto. Whether it's the fatigue of daily struggle, personal grief, there are days when getting out of bed is the victory. Into that real pain, Paul's words in Romans resound: *"We have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."* Not because we earned it — but because God loves us. While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. And more than that: God has poured his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit. This love is not a fragile feeling or an abstract promise. It is rooted in the cross and confirmed by the Spirit who dwells within us and gives us hope.

John 16:12-15:

¹² "I have much more to say to you, more than you can now bear. ¹³ 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. ¹⁴ He will glorify me because it is from me that he will receive what he will make known to you. ¹⁵ All that belongs to the Father is mine. That is why I said the Spirit will receive from me what he will make known to you."

Romans 5:1-11

Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, ² through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we boast in the hope of the glory of God. ³ Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; ⁴ perseverance, character; and

character, hope. ⁵ And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.

⁶ You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. ⁷ Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous person, though for a good person someone might possibly dare to die. ⁸ But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

⁹ Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him! ¹⁰ For if, while we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life! ¹¹ Not only is this so, but we also boast in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.

Questions for Conversation

1. Reread John 16:1-15. What do you imagine those first disciples were thinking as they listened to Jesus? Why do you think Jesus chose this moment to say these things?
2. What does it mean to say that the Spirit is *already* in us — not just a future promise but a present reality?
3. Can you recall a time when life felt “more than you could bear”? How did God meet you — or how do you wish God had?
4. When in your life have you felt the presence of God most clearly? What did it feel like?
5. Where in your life right now do you most need to hear Jesus say, “You are not alone — the Spirit is with you”?
6. In what ways has the church community helped you hold onto faith during difficult seasons? In what ways might you need it now?

Prompts for Action & Response

1. **Community Check-In:** This week, reach out to someone in the church you haven’t spoken to in a while. Ask them how they’re doing. If they’re in a hard season, simply offer to be with them in it — no advice, just presence.
2. **God-Sighting Journal:** This week, journal daily and reflect on this prompt: *Where have I noticed the Spirit of God at work in my life lately?* (It could be in a conversation, a moment of calm in chaos, or unexpected joy.) Next week you can share your responses, and consider: *How can I become more attentive to the Spirit’s presence in daily life?*