

Years ago, I visited the ranch of a wealthy man who grew up poor. He showed me a small pair of old cowboy boots that had been bronzed. He said that as a young boy in East Texas his parents couldn't afford to buy him boots. In fact, he only owned one pair of shoes. One day in the 1930's, a massive oil and gas deposit was discovered under the family property. An oil company dug a well and hit it big. It was rags to riches but not at first. Months went by before this man's parents ever cashed one of the royalty checks. In their ignorance they couldn't conceive of being paid a fortune for what was under the farm. They were not convinced the checks were real money.

I sometimes wonder how many Christians are ignorant of the priceless treasure that is within us. If you are a follower of Jesus, you are the container of a priceless resource. But if you are unaware of what you possess you will be condemned to live in spiritual poverty. Jesus knows His time on the earth is drawing to a close. So too is His time in the upper room with His disciples. His final instructions here in John 14:15-31 focus on the role of the Holy Spirit.

This section is unmistakably Trinitarian...14:26. The Trinity is what makes Christianity Christian. The God of the Bible is revealed in three distinct persons. We will never comprehend this idea but we can apprehend it. This mystery is so difficult to explain some religions reject it out of hand. I recently heard a story told by a man who works in majority Muslim countries. He was having a conversation with a Muslim man who respects Jesus as a prophet but cannot accept Him as the Son of God. Muslims think we believe that God had sex with Mary and that Jesus is their son. The Christian man explained it this way: "Do you know what I'm thinking right now? You can't know until I tell you, until I put my thoughts into words. You might say my words are the offspring of my thoughts. My thoughts and my words are one. That is how it is with Jesus. He is one with God in human form. He is the very Word of God." If you want to test the validity of any group that calls itself Christian, just ask, "What do they believe about the Trinity?" Groups like the Mormons or JW's or Christian Science do not believe in the tri-unity of God. The doctrine of the trinity is foundational to our faith. Our passage this morning focuses on the third member of the Trinity, the One Francis Chan calls, "the forgotten God" or the Holy Spirit.

One of the ways we can summarize the grand narrative of the Bible is to understand it as the history of redemption with three major divisions that reveal the three persons of the Trinity. Before the coming of Christ, the great testing truth was the oneness of God and His rule as our Heavenly Father. When Christ came, the great question was whether a people committed to the first point would recognize and receive the incarnate Son of God in whom all the fullness of deity dwells. After the Son gathered those who received him, he was put to death, resurrected, exalted at the Father's right hand. From there He sent the Holy Spirit to indwell the new people of God or the church. So, before Christ's coming, God the Father is prominent. During the days of Jesus' earthly life, God the Son becomes prominent. After the resurrection of the Son, the Holy Spirit takes a prominent role. We are living in a climactic period of redemptive history, the days of the Spirit. We have a responsibility to know and make room for the Holy Spirit. The brilliant seventeenth century theologian, John Owen, warned his congregation of being indifferent to the Holy Spirit, "The sin of despising His Person and rejecting His Work now is of the same nature with idolatry of old and with the Jews' rejection of the Person of the Son."

In that upper room, Jesus wanted His disciples to know that they would never fulfill their God-given purpose without the empowering presence of the Holy Spirit. Neither will we. In this passage Jesus accentuates two essential contributions the Holy Spirit makes to our lives that we can count on in times of change - direction and protection; direction to navigate our way through an uncertain future and protection to settle our troubled hearts.

When facing a life-altering transition we need someone to lead us...14:15-18. The literal meaning of the word translated "Helper" is one who is called alongside. It is translated with many English words in the Bible - advocate, counselor, comforter, helper. In our modern vernacular we might even translate it, "wingman." Jesus is reassuring His disciples that, even though He is going away, they will not be left alone. That is why He says, "I will not leave you as orphans." An orphan is vulnerable lacking supervision and protection. When Jesus promises that the Father, "will give you another Helper," he means another just like Him. John had two words to choose from and he chose the one that means another just like the first one. If I ask, "Would you care for another dessert?" I might mean another piece from the same pie or I may mean a different dessert altogether like ice cream. Although there is one significant difference.

Jesus and the Holy Spirit have been "with them" they will soon be "in them." Some of us can remember the days when you were lost in an unfamiliar city or part of your own city and you would have to stop and ask for directions. Or, you might call someone on the phone who could give you directions. Today, if you have a phone WITH you have a map IN you. Jesus is telling His disciples that being IN them is a superior experience to being WITH them. That is why He says in John 16:6-7, "Because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your heart. Nevertheless, I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you."

Not only does the Holy Spirit guide us but He teaches us. In v. 17 the Holy Spirit is referred to as "the Spirit of truth." **When facing a life-altering transition we need someone to feed us...**v. 26. The fact that we have these words preserved for us is a fulfillment of this verse. John wrote His gospel long after these events took place but the Holy Spirit faithfully brought to his remembrance these things Jesus taught. He will do that for you and me too.

When your heart condemns you the Spirit says, "There is therefore no condemnation..."
When you feel a profound sense of guilt over your sin, the Spirit reminds you, "though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall become like wool." Is. 1:18. Your "advocate," the One who has been called alongside, stands beside you and says, "Father, You cannot punish Gary for that sin because you have already punished your Son."

When you feel powerless, "His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness." 2 Pe. 1:3

When you don't know where you're going, the Holy Spirit reminds you, "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want." Ps. 23:1.

But hear me - The Holy Spirit can't bring to your remembrance what you have not committed to remember!

The apostle Paul speaks of being filled with the Spirit as synonymous with letting "the word of Christ dwell in you richly." In other words, we should be biblical pinatas, when we get whacked by some life event, the word of God should spill out.

The Holy Spirit provides direction to help us find our way in times of uncertainty but He also provides protection for our troubled hearts. **When facing a life-altering transition we need someone to comfort us.** There are times when no human on the face of the earth can comfort you. But you have a Comforter on board. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. For as we share abundantly in Christ's sufferings, so through Christ we share abundantly in comfort too. If we are afflicted, it is for your comfort and salvation; and if we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which you experience when you patiently endure the same sufferings that we suffer. Our hope for you is unshaken, for we know that as you share in our sufferings, you will also share in our comfort." 2 Cor. 1:3-7

When facing a life-altering transition we need someone to calm us...v. 27. It is unfortunate that we often separate v. 26 from v. 27. We quote 27 as if the subject is peace. But the subject is still the Holy Spirit. He is our peace.

I can't prove the presence of the Holy Spirit like I can prove the presence of people in this room. He is invisible. Discerning the presence of the Holy Spirit is like discerning the presence of the sun. C. S. Lewis once said, "I believe in Christianity as I believe that the sun has risen: not only because I see it, but because by it I see everything else." That is how I know the Spirit of God is within me. Not because I can feel Him or see Him, but by Him I see everything else. Without His presence there would be no sense of direction and no protection for our troubled hearts.

Every believer has the Holy Spirit living within them. When you invite Jesus to take control of your life you are inviting the Holy Spirit to come along. But we are not always controlled by the HS. How can we be full of the Holy Spirit? Do I have to come forward and have someone slap me on the forehead? Do I have to speak in tongues? Do I have to have an emotional experience and get a liver quiver? Paul uses an example to help us. "And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery (reckless behavior resulting from an absence of thought), but be filled with the Spirit." Eph. 5:18. Paul draws a parallel between being drunk with wine and being filled with the Spirit. How do you get drunk with wine? You drink it. Lots of it! So how do you become full of the Spirit? You drink deeply. "For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit." 1 Cor. 12:13.

"On the last day of the feast, the great day, Jesus stood up and cried out, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, 'Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.' " Now this he said about the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were to receive, for as yet the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified." John 7:37-39

How can I tell when someone is full of the Holy Spirit? Just as there are certain characteristics demonstrated by someone who is controlled by too much wine, there are also certain

characteristics that identify someone who is under the influence of the Holy Spirit...love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control." Galatians 5:22-23

When facing a life-altering transition we need Jesus. The Holy Spirit glorifies the Son. John 16:14...where the Holy Spirit is present, all the attention is on Jesus. Where the Spirit is Jesus is glorified. So, lift Jesus up. **Make Jesus your all-consuming passion and your soul-satisfying obsession.** You and I were created to make Jesus famous. When you make much of Jesus you are keeping in step with the Holy Spirit. When you are walking in the Spirit you are treasuring all that Jesus is and all that Jesus has done for you.

Let's focus on Jesus. Let's not focus on being a great church. Let's focus on having a Great Savior. Let's not focus on transforming our community, we don't have that kind of power. Jesus does. Let's not focus on diversity, let's rejoice that we enjoy unity not because we share the same ethnicity or political views but because we share a common Spirit. Don't focus on what people should do but on what Jesus has done. Don't expect Kurt to get up here week after week and change your life with his preaching. Preaching doesn't change lives. Jesus does. My daughter told me last week, "Dad, it's your last sermon. You really need to preach a good one." No I don't. I need to preach Jesus. I need to desire Him because He is infinitely desirable. I need to admire Him because he is infinitely admirable. I need to treasure Him because He is infinitely valuable. I need to be satisfied with all that He is, because He is infinitely satisfying.

"I sometimes wonder that you do not get tired of my preaching because I do nothing but hammer away at this one nail. That one nail is the glorious news of Jesus Christ crucified in our place and that, in response, He is worthy of the highest devotion and most fervent worship." Charles Spurgeon.

So, hammer away Fellowship.

Communion... **Make room for the Holy Spirit.** How? By emptying yourself of anything that is not the Spirit. Make your life attractive like you do when you want to sell a house...declutter it. Poor old farmer and the stock broker...it all depends on what you have been trained to listen for. We need training on how to listen for the voice of God. This world is a noisy place. In all the craziness of our busy lives it takes tremendous effort to find a quiet place, be still before the Lord and listen for His voice.