

Holy Spirit Guide Service

John 15:26-27; 16:4b-15

15:26 But I will send you the Advocate—the Spirit of truth. He will come to you from the Father and will testify all about me. 27 And you must also testify about me because you have been with me from the beginning of my ministry.

16: 4b “I didn’t tell you earlier because I was going to be with you for awhile longer. 5 But now I am going away to the one who sent me, and not one of you is asking where I am going. 6 Instead, you grieve because of what I have told you. 7 But in fact, it is best for you that I go away, because if I don’t the Advocate won’t come. If I do go away, then I will send Him to you. 8 And when He comes, He will convict the world of its sin, and of God’s righteousness, and of the coming judgment. 9 The world’s sin is that it refuses to believe in me. 10 Righteousness is available because I go to the Father, and you will see me no more. 11 Judgment will come because the ruler of this world has already been judged.

12 There is so much more I want to tell you, but you can’t bear it now. 13 When the Spirit of truth comes, He will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on His own but will tell you what He has heard. He will tell you about the future. 14 HE will bring me glory by telling you whatever He receives from me. 15 All that belongs to the Father is mine; this is why I said, ‘The Spirit will tell you whatever he receives from me.’

Travel experts have two categories for the adventure vacation: the soft and the hard adventure. Jesus invites us to the hard adventure, and we are going to need a guide. On this Pentecost Sunday, many people are anticipating the unofficial start to summer-- Memorial Day weekend! With the advent of summer comes the anticipation of vacation time.

But what sort of vacation? If you take a brief survey of the congregation, you’ll likely discover that many folks will embark on relaxing trips like the beach, camping or soaking up the sun by a pool somewhere. After all, vacation is supposed to be a time to decompress and "get away from it all," right?

An increasing number of people seem to disagree with that conventional wisdom. One of the fastest growing segments of the tourism industry is "adventure travel." Rather than looking for some down time, more and more people are looking to actually get out and experience the world. They want to get up close and personal through exciting, arduous and risky adventures. This might mean trekking through a jungle, climbing a distant mountain or cycling through a developing country. Whatever the nature of the adventure, the common theme is the desire to be connected to nature, engaged with another culture and/or challenged to their physical limits.

Travel experts divide these adventures into two categories: "soft" and "hard" adventures. A "soft" adventure involves getting out there but not getting too far away from the evening buffet. Think of going on an African safari, for example. Out there on

the savannah, you are not the highest life form on the food chain, but you have the advantage of being in a protected vehicle and get to view the danger through a camera lens. Or, snorkeling. You can get up close and personal with sea life in shallow water without worrying about a pulmonary embolism ruining your vacation and your life.

A "hard" adventure, on the other hand, would involve actually hiking and camping on the savannah with no steel bars to protect you, or donning scuba gear and heading down into the depths of the sea. Think of mountain climbing, riding your bike through the Middle East or taking a 1,000-mile walk, for example, and you get the idea of a "hard" adventure.

For these types of adventures, it's best to have a guide service to direct you and keep you on track. A good adventure guide service will help you plan your trek and even make some of the arrangements for your lodging, meals and dealing with your baggage. The service will provide a good packing list, the extra equipment you might need, maps and directions and even monitor your progress.

Bob Kaylor, senior writer for *Homiletics*, says he has used such a guide service when hiking the Jesus Trail in Israel and for the 96-mile West Highland Way hike he is planning for a trip just a few weeks from now in Scotland. "It's really helpful to have someone charting the way and giving you good advice," he says. "All we have to do every day is keep walking and relish the experience!" [NOTE 1]

When we look at Jesus' last words to his disciples in the gospel of John, we might see them as an advertisement for the "hard" adventure the followers of Jesus have ahead of them. The Twelve had followed Jesus up and down the hills of Galilee, on the long road to Jerusalem and through the deserts of Judea. They had been in storms that might have drowned them, confronted demons that terrified them and seen miracles that blew their minds.

They had been with Jesus every step of the way as their guide and friend, but the time was coming soon when Jesus would trek to the cross, the grave and then to the right hand of the Father. He would soon be leaving his friends behind to continue the adventure. Both Peter and Thomas had previously requested Jesus' itinerary (13:36; 14:5), but as Jesus gives his parting words, he keeps the focus on how his disciples would continue the mission and the journey ahead.

For that adventure, they will need a Guide. and Jesus promises to send them the "Advocate," the Holy Spirit, "the Spirit of truth who comes from the Father" (v. 26). As the Spirit has testified to Jesus' person and mission, the disciples will now take that testimony to the rest of the world. It will be a "hard" adventure because that testimony won't be welcome in a world that is hostile to the truth about Jesus. "They will put you out of the synagogues," Jesus warns. "Indeed, an hour is coming when those who kill you will think that by doing so they are offering worship to God. And they will do this because they have not known the Father or me" (vv. 2-3). You wouldn't blame the disciples for thinking that heading for the beach and some drinks with umbrellas in them would be a safer use of their time.

This is going to be a tough trek, Jesus warns them, but it's a necessary one if the

good news about Jesus is going to reach the distant cultures and remote places of the world. It's going to take some willing adventurers who will travel light with gear but be burdened with the need to speak the truth about what God has done in coming to the world in the flesh to bring light to the darkness and life in the midst of death (1:1-18).

Jesus had come into the world and was on his way back to the Father, but the disciples were now focused on themselves and what they would be doing. They don't ask Jesus where *he's* going anymore; the question for them is, "What's going to be our destination and how do we get there?" (v. 5). [NOTE 2]

It used to be that hiring a guide meant that you would have someone directly on the ground with you in whose footsteps you would follow to get to the destination. While that's still true for many adventures, technology has made it possible for you to be guided virtually instead, tracked by GPS and connected via radio, or mobile or satellite phone to a guide who is always monitoring your progress with the big picture in mind.

Jesus is saying something similar to his disciples. They won't have Jesus as their on-the-ground guide anymore, but Jesus tells them that's a good thing. Sensing their sorrow and confusion, Jesus promises them a new Guide who will help them expand their trekking capacity and keep the big picture in mind. "It is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Advocate will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you" (v. 7).

The original word for Holy Spirit was Paraklete or *parakletos* -- which means literally "the one called alongside." ...Now, think about that. Do you remember when your teacher -- maybe it was first grade or second grade -- would say, "Line up single file." Remember that? I used to dread that. It meant no standing beside your friend. It meant no talking and walking alongside someone else. ...

And what we know is that much of life involves single file -- we have to find our own way ... we have to figure out what comes next for ourselves, whether it is college or some other path. And then we find our way after that, with what comes next; and this is how life unfolds. It may involve friends and family, partners and spouses, community and care. But we still have to find our own way. ...

So when Jesus says, "I will ask the Father, and he will give you the *parakletos*" -- this is powerful good news: "the one called alongside." This is the Holy Spirit. In a single-file world, we are given the grand gift and powerful promise: the very essence of God will be alongside us. ... In commenting on this passage, Bible scholar Frederick Dale Bruner says this. "I struggled long and hard to find the most appropriate contemporary translation for the Greek noun *parakletos* (see Bruner, *The Gospel of John, A Commentary*, 834). ... He finally settled on "Encourager" or "True Friend" as the best translation for *parakletos*. ... This is the Holy Spirit. This is the gift of God that Jesus asks the Father to give to each of us in our single file lives. --Alex Evans, "Spirit-filled people in a spinning world," sermon preached on May 19, 2013 at the Second Presbyterian Church, Richmond, Virginia.

The Holy Spirit Guide will point out the twists and turns in the route ahead and help the followers of Jesus know what to look for as they trek into the world. Jesus tells the disciples that their Guide will point out four wrong paths that the world has taken --

paths that their proclamation of the gospel, in the power of the Spirit, will correct (v. 8). **[NOTE 3]** *The Holy Spirit Guide will help us with the problem of sin (v. 9).* The metaphor, if you want to extend it, is that the Holy Spirit will help us not to stuff anything into our backpack that is essentially worthless for the trek we're taking. No need to be overburdened. We don't need the hairdryer, the laptop, canned goods, or a butane curling iron on this trip.

My first wife and I, Don and Christine Battjes and another couple took a group of Junior Highers on a canoe trip to the Boundary Waters in Minnesota. Nearly a million acre area with 1200 miles of canoe routes with thousands of campsites, portages, and lakes. No motors aloud. It is rugged camping and you tie packs up in trees to keep Bear out of your campsite. We had two girls complain about how heavy their backpacks were. They had butane curling irons. Talk about not listening to instructions and bringing unnecessary items!

The world's idea of the nature of sin is that sin is something that a person *does*, or commits. On one level this is true. But the Holy Spirit helps us understand the *cause* of sin. Too many people think that all we need to do is work harder and do more good things than bad things and that someday, God will decide that we qualify for heaven.

Wrong. The world has it wrong. The problem of sin is not what we do with our hands, but who we are in our hearts. *Not what we do, but who we are.* Acts of sin are caused by a sin nature, by a predisposition to sin. The Holy Spirit helps us conserve a lot of spiritual energy by understanding that in the path of life, Jesus has done everything for us and before us. This will help us to tell others on the trail that Christ's preparatory work has freed us from the burden of "trying our best" so we can simply do the work God has given us to do. **[NOTE 4]**

The Holy Spirit Guide will help us with the problem of doing good (v. 10). This is the flip side of the above. The Holy Spirit helps us stuff our pack with good things. Many people think that goodness is something we do. Thanks to the Guide, we know that goodness is not doing, but being. For our journey, the Holy Spirit Guide provides us with a new nature, a new heart. It's like we're a "new creation"! Unfortunately, the world's idea of righteousness is that the more good we do the more righteous we are. The Guide, Jesus says, will help the disciples see what true righteousness looks like, using Jesus himself as the model. He may be returning to the Father, but through the Spirit he will continue to guide them and empower them to do what he has done. Indeed, they will do even greater things (14:12-14). **[NOTE 5]**

The Holy Spirit Guide will help us with the route (v. 11). The Holy Spirit Guide knows the route. We often make poor route choices because we begin with faulty premises and a poor understanding of the terrain. What the world thinks is important is usually not important. What the world thinks is wise is often pretty foolish.

- The world thinks success is measured by material things.
- The world thinks that greatness is when people are your servants.
- The world thinks that the one with the most toys wins.
- The world thinks that wisdom comes from being highly educated.

- The world values a "me-first" mentality. The world values the pleasure principle.
- The world values popularity, power and position.

The Holy Spirit Guide helps us reverse these judgments. Success is not measured by material things. The greatest among us are the servants of others. The wisdom of the world is foolishness to God. Selfishness is not a virtue in God's world. Because it feels good doesn't make it right. And so on. By understanding how God judges or looks at things, the disciples will be able to make good decisions. **[NOTE 6]**

Finally, the Holy Spirit Guide will help us with the Truth (v. 11). "When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth; for he will not speak on his own, but will speak whatever he hears, and he will declare to you the things that are to come," says Jesus (v. 13). "Truth" is a major theme in John's gospel. In fact, it will be Pontius Pilate who asks the question on the world's mind as they are confronted with Jesus: "What is truth?" (18:38).

The truth is, however, that Jesus himself is the way, the truth and the life (14:6). In other words, if we emulate Jesus, our lives will not be a lie. Our lives instead will be lives of integrity, honesty, service, selflessness and humility -- all counterintuitive from the world's point of view.

If the disciples want to follow Jesus where he is going, then that means following his way, his truth and his life in spite of the dangers, twists and turns ahead. The only way to navigate that way is with a Guide who will take what Jesus has said and done and "declare it" to us so that we will glorify him (vv. 14-15). The kingdom of God is not going to be advanced by our churches becoming filled with people, but by people in our churches becoming filled with the Holy Spirit. --Duncan Campbell. **[NOTE 7]**

On this Pentecost Sunday, we remember that when the Guide arrived, he launched the disciples on a new adventure. Following Jesus has never been about retreating from the world to a tropical island and "getting away from it all." It's always been about following the way, the truth and the life of Jesus for the purpose of changing the world for God's glory. It's a tough adventure, but it's the only destination that ultimately matters.

How is the Spirit guiding you in these turbulent times? What has the Guide pointed out to you about the world that challenges your assumptions? To what journey is the Guide inviting you? Join us as we go on the adventure to become disciple-makers in the power of the Holy Spirit by standing on the Word, walking in love, and resting in the arms of Jesus! It should be no secret that I just read the Mission Statement of our church. It is Biblical! It is God's Call on us as a church, a family of Jesus followers! What are you going to do about it? A great place to start is praying every day to be filled with the Holy Spirit! Pray every day for the 5 people God has in your life. Pray that God will help you listen and see. Write down what you will do this week to plug in. Watch what happens to your life if you try to live it unplugged. (Unplug amplifier and see how quiet the guitar is) Your life is too quiet and not effective for the Kingdom of God if you are not plugged in to the Holy Spirit, the power source, for life. Plug in to God's portable power supply. Now let's gear up and move out! Let's pray...AMEN

BENEDICTION: As you enter a new week, may you experience God's presence. May you feel God pouring out the Holy Spirit over your heads and your thoughts and the words of your lips, over your hearts and your feelings and emotions and your compassion for all others, and over your hands and your feet as you put into action all that God commands you. During this week, may the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with each of you. Amen. --Presbyterian Church of Canada website. presbyterian.ca

Sermon Notes for Holy Spirit Guide Service based on John 15 & 16
Given on Pentecost Sunday May 24, 2026 in Doster Community Church

- I. Jesus calls us to go on a hard adventure that will require a guide. The disciples had Jesus and He tells them they need a guide! While Jesus was with them they were fine, but Jesus knew that He was heading for the cross.
- II. Jesus tells the Disciples that He will send an Advocate, "Paraclete" in Greek, encourager, true friend. The Holy Spirit was to be their "guide".
- III. The Holy Spirit Guide will help us with the problem of sin.
- IV. The Holy Spirit Guide will help us with the problem of doing good.
- V. The Holy Spirit Guide will help with the route, the Pathway.
- VI. The Holy Spirit Guide will help us with the Truth
- VII. What are you going to do about it? Write down something you will do to better follow the Holy Spirit this week! How about we start with praying to be filled? If you are never filled with the Holy Spirit you are trying to live Jesus' way without being plugged in!

The Holy Spirit is God in the present tense. The Holy Spirit is the affirmation that God is not back then, but God is now. The stubborn witness of Christian faith for these two millennia is that God is a Living Present Presence -- proximate, palpable and well, (this is an overhandled word) "real." "Holy Spirit" is the traditional name for this immediacy of God.

--Michael Lindvall, "So how do you really know?" a sermon preached at Brick Presbyterian Church, New York City, May 31, 2009. brickchurch.org. Retrieved December 5, 2017.