

SUNDAY May 10, 2026 “IS the Spirit with You?”
Psalm 66 784 vu (Pt2-3) Ephesians 1:15-23 John 14: 15-21 and Luke 24:44-53

A parody of I Corinthians 13 for today by James Fowler: *If I live in a house of spotless beauty with everything in its place, but have not love, I am a housekeeper--not a homemaker. If I have time for waxing, polishing, and decorative achievements, but have not love, my children learn cleanliness - not godliness. Love leaves the dust in search of a child's laugh. Love smiles at the tiny fingerprints on a newly cleaned window. Love wipes away the tears before it wipes up the spilled milk. Love picks up the child before it picks up the toys. Love is present through the trials. Love reprimands, reproves, and is responsive. Love crawls with the baby, walks with the toddler, runs with the child, then stands aside to let the youth walk into adulthood. Love is the key that opens salvation's message to a child's heart. Before I became a mother I took glory in my house of perfection. Now I glory in God's perfection of my child. As a mother, there is much I must teach my child, but the greatest of all is love.*

And love is at the heart of every home- and we pray that this love comes from God and is shared with hope for a better life to come.

Last week we talked about the difference between house and home and the home that Jesus and God the Father has prepared for all who believe in Christ as Messiah and saviour. We continue in the discussion Jesus shared with His disciples during the last Supper. Jesus knows that soon the events leading to his death on the cross will come into reality. He states, “Don’t let your hearts be troubled. He then states, “You believe in God; believe also in me. Don’t worry or be afraid. I will be with you.”

His disciples - Philip and Thomas were not sure what he was really saying but in reading the next half of chapter 14 Jesus again makes promises based upon the premise that if they/we love him we/they will keep his commandments. And if we do, God the Father will give another Advocate to be present forever. This advocate is the Spirit of truth. This Spirit cannot be received by the entire world- because they do not know God. Yet as followers and believers, we know him and he abides in us and will be in us. Jesus also promised, I will not leave you orphaned. I am coming to you. This Advocate will come only after Jesus returns to the father. Jesus tells them that in a little while the world will no longer see me but they will. Because I live you also will live. When this occurs it is a mutual understanding- a full circle moment per se- when Jesus is in the Father, we are in Jesus and Jesus is within us. Father Son and all who believe will be reconciled one with each other in peace. But we must also be patient and enable Jesus to do what has to occur.

Jesus tells his disciples these things while he is with them but the Advocate/ spirit will teach them whatever they need to know and remind them of what he has said. So what is Jesus telling

them? Jesus is speaking about that space between love and absence. Jesus has told His disciples that He is going away. Their world is shifting, and they don't know how to hold on to Him when they can no longer see Him, hear Him, or follow Him down the road in the same familiar way. Into that fear, Jesus does not offer vague comfort. He gives them promise. He tells them that love will continue through obedience, that His presence will continue through the Spirit, and that they will not be abandoned.

So often is this the case in the ministry of the church. One may attend a wonderful conference about a topic close their hearts. They are rejuvenated in this element of serving Christ. But when it comes time to share it with others- it is like the air has gone out of a balloon. What had given a new life is no longer present. Jesus has lead these people for 3 years- from being a group of people who had experienced 'God moments' for themselves to become a group of disciples- willing to take the challenge of what Jesus was teaching and putting it into action. As they travelled together, they listened, he taught and all was good. But things shifted as people outside of acceptance questioned what was happening with this man Jesus. Jesus knew that his ministry was building up to something big- yet devastating, yet filled with hope because He knew he would rise again.

It may also occur as people wonder about the future and whether Jesus will still be there for them when they grow older, when sickness enters or even when leadership changes in churches. Will the Spirit be present?

17.5 years ago I was meeting with a group of people from Glenwood Church about coming to be your minister. This group had many questions for me about worship, pastoral care, family interests, ideas for sharing in music and community outreach. When they asked me if I had any questions, I asked one. "Where do you think the Holy Spirit is in relationship to Glenwood United?" One person answered quickly-- on the outside looking in. My answer was simply-- it's time to invite the Spirit in. I'm not sure if this was why I received the call to serve or not, but throughout these years together it has been always in the back of my mind and heart-- to ask where is the Holy Spirit in this moment/ time- whether in a meeting preparing for a baptism or funeral, meeting with young people about confirmation; or with adults wanting to learn more about the Bible, or in worship time and is the Spirit here or not?

Where is the Holy Spirit for you? Jesus said, "You know the Spirit of truth because he abides with you and he will be in you if you believe." Jesus called the spirit the Advocate which indicates or carries the sense of one called alongside to help, defend, strengthen, and guide. Jesus is not leaving His followers to manage faith by grit and willpower. He promises an Advocate, which

means the Spirit continues the very presence and ministry of Jesus among His people .The disciples will not see Jesus in the same way the world sees. They will know Him through the Spirit, through love, through obedience, and through the life of God made real within them. But this Spirit is God and Christ too.

Jesus also says, “I will not leave you *orphanous*.” Like orphans who were people that would lose legal standing, economic security, kinship protection, and public honor. In the ancient world, being orphaned wasn’t primarily a matter of grief it was also a social and political condition that meant you were undefended alone in the world. Jesus isn’t offering the disciples a mood booster.. The Advocate he promises, the *paraklētós*, is something closer to a defense attorney than a spiritual weighted blanket.

Today we hear and read about the millions of people who live in cities around the world and are alone. They go about their daily routine yet are alone when work is done. Whether there is a spouse or not, there is loneliness because there is uncertainty around their origin or to whom they may relate.. not just family members, but the one who made them and all that there is. Families who care don’t stop caring when their children leave home for further education, but this is not always the case. Being able to launch into a new chapter in one’s life is not easy but if each person has this Advocate/ the Spirit within them, the promise that Jesus doesn’t leave us as orphans, we can be certain that we are not alone. The Christian life is not built on Jesus being physically present in front of us. It is built on the living presence of God with us and in us through the Holy Spirit. We are not orphans. We are not left to guess. We are not trying to keep faith alive on our own. Jesus comes to His people, and the Spirit keeps making Him known.

When Paul wrote to the people in the church at Ephesus he states, ‘I do not cease to give thanks for you as I remember you in my prayers.’ These words are filled with hope and comfort just like what Jesus offered through the Spirit which would come. NO matter where we go- you may be comforted to know that people are praying for you; people love you and this is what Jesus wanted the disciples to learn and teach to others. HE had gifted him all that he could knowing that his time with them was limited. He was going to fulfill prophecy and become the saviour. But they like us soon learned that he had to die a horrible death in order to achieve this. They like us needed to experience his death in order to experience new life, the new life he still offers to those who believe.

Jesus was going away; he had prepared the disciples but knew that the spirit would come and help them. This is true for churches as well- God's spirit is here at Glenwood and I know and believe wholeheartedly that intentions are wonderful of the people here. The only thing that needs to be checked- is a reminder of who it is we worship, who died and rose again, and who it is that teaches us how to love. As Paul writes, God put his power to work in Christ and has made him the head over all things for the church which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.

After his resurrection, Jesus appeared to his disciples and talked about the day which would come when he would ascend to the Father. He needed to leave in order that the spirit would come. So on that Ascension Day- Jesus opens their minds to understand the scriptures. "You are witnesses of these things," he says. "I am sending upon you what my Father promised; stay here in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high." Then he led them out near Bethany, blessed them and was carried up to heaven. The disciples worshiped him, returned to Jerusalem with joy and continually present in the temple blessing God.

Then the disciples stayed in the city- and waited. They had received Jesus' blessing; he had opened their minds to the scriptures and they worshiped him with joy. And they waited for something to occur.

Jesus asked the disciples to wait after he ascends into heaven. IN the meantime, what did they do? They had been with Jesus for all this time, they witnessed miracles, people being healed and made whole. They saw people see Jesus as they did and they learned and grew in faith. They truly were disciples of Jesus- people of faith and were filled with hope.

In this season of Easter we can do many things-- tell the story, share ideas about what to do in time, or we can sit and wait. Recently there have been situations where people are seeking to be right instead of doing right. That is, when we consider what Jesus taught us we are to do right by him and follow his teachings of living and loving and sharing openly. Jesus knew who was going to betray him, but he did not stop Judas because this needed to set in motion the arrest and trial. Jesus also showed us that if one insists on being right it means others are wrong. Jesus resurrection story tells us that yes Mary did see Jesus. But the time this occurred, Mary's witness of the risen Christ was not seen as sufficient. The disciples did right by going with Mary and seeing the empty tomb.

Jesus calls us to do what is right- to teach, share and communicate effectively and to be accountable for one's actions. Jesus taught in an inquisitive way- he asked questions and use parables or stories. Jesus did this so that we learn to do right by him. TO know what is best for all. In this moment of time, where is the Holy Spirit for you? Within you? What about for this church family? Let us consider this as disciples of Jesus, experiencing His spirit and preparing for what is to come. Let us give thanks that we are God's children and are part of the family of God.

PRAYER