

“We will thank you because
we are marvelously made;
your works, O God, are wonderful.” AMEN!

This passage in the Gospel of John is
part of Jesus’ farewell discourse.

The words read are part of a speech
Jesus made to his disciples on the night
before his death.

I think of it as Jesus’ final
sermon to his inner circle.

The folks listening, who will be the most hurt,
troubled, scared, insecure when
he goes to the cross.

Jesus tried to tell them that he was leaving...
but not *leaving* them orphaned.

He said, they should be rejoicing because
he was going to God, for it was then
that God would send another to fill the void.

That the Spirit of Truth would come and dwell,
rest on, and abide with, among... in them.

Understandably, these intimate followers of
Jesus questioned this need for departure.

They did not rejoice upon hearing Jesus'
message of truth.

Truths, like this, bring this response sometimes.

You can feel their insecurities because
they are our insecurities.

You can taste their fears because
they are our fears.

Then this “other” Judas (not Iscariot) asks
the question: Lord, how will you reveal yourself
to us, and not the world?

Pausing on that question,
“How will you reveal yourself to us,
and not the world?”

He said the question we all ask.

What difference, Lord, is the infusion of
your Holy Spirit going to make in
this broken world? (Pause)

Why must we go through this “hard part”

when you could just make it all go away?

What is the part of you that is troubled today?

What is the part of you that
you do not want others to see?

What is the truth you're walking that
you'd wish Jesus to simply "take away?"

When we ask these questions, out loud,
and work out our own individual answers
we begin a spiritual walk.

An education that may lead us to learn that
what we don't like in ourselves,
we hate in other people.

For example, if I don't like it when
I'm lazy or when I procrastinate.

I really hate it when Frank, over there, is lazy.

He gets away with it!

Oh, and Julie!

I hate that she is so carefree!

I hate that about her because when
I'm carefree people say "I'm acting irresponsible."

You see, the way people export the things
they don't like about themselves upon others?

We all do it, but we don't *have* to do it.

Here is the reason for Jesus to teach,
"Do not judge, so that you may not be judged.

Why do you see the speck in your neighbor's eye,
but do not notice the log in your own eye?"

Or "how can you say to your neighbor,
let me take the speck out of your eye,
while the log is in my own eye?"

Jesus knew humanity, and he knew
we were meant to change and grow.

What we dislike in ourselves, we hate in others
and then we judge, blame, and
heap discriminations upon them,
if we aren't careful.

So, how do we become careful?

Jesus would say, "By being infused

with the Holy Spirit.”

That is why and how we change for the better.

I wonder if even family, friends, or community
could even exist without this
infusion of the Holy Spirit?

I don't think we could.

But when we realize this, celebrate this
“being educated” about how
we blame and judge,
it becomes laughable.

Like when we read about Adam and Eve and
the way Adam blames Eve for eating
the forbidden fruit!

We laugh! The Spirit allows us to laugh!

No Adam, no one “made” you do anything.

Own it, learn from it, and become educated
so you don't do that again mindlessly. (Pause)

We are being educated so that we can celebrate
when we're non-judgmental and mature.

Listen, spiritually mature people and
emotionally secure people don't go
around blaming and hating other people. (Pause)

I know that you know, I'm not giving you
any secret knowledge, here.

The Spirit is at work in this place and
outside of this place.

The Spirit is at work in your lives, but so often
we don't understand what God is up to.

I'm not going to claim that I know or understand
why certain events have meaning or can
result in anything good.

And I'm not going to say that everything
that happens is God's will because that
denies the truth that evil exists.

Yet, I will say that "seeing" in John's gospel
is more than just being about the eyes, right?

It is about being conscious and aware,
it's about "seeing" our own faults and
working to fix our own splinters.

To know that the kind of peace that Jesus

spoke about always exists...

even in troubled times and in times of insecurity
and times of fear and in times of death.

Jesus offers a peace that the world cannot give.

And that is the knowledge of a profound love
from God for each and every one of you.

Paul used the word, “varieties” 3
times in this little section of 1 Corinthians.

Different people with different gifts
all manifestations of the Holy Spirit
all striving for the common good.

In Exodus, we are told about family protectors.

Moses’ sister, mother, and pharaoh’s daughter
all act as protectors of the infant Moses.

This day the Holy Spirit assures us that
we are never abandoned, never orphaned,
and never unloved.

Those things are a part of this broken world.

Yet, still, we gather, sing, pray and work

for a future where hand in hand,
against all hate we stand...
“for in God we all belong.”

AMEN!