**Holy Spirit** May 25, 2025 Jn 14:15-29; Acts 16:9-15; Rev 21

* Very interesting Scripture readings for today as we follow the RCL.
* Just in case we missed their message, I will do a bit of a review of them.
* 1st reading is from Acts where we read that Paul, during the night, had a vision of a man of Macedonia standing and begging him, “***Come over to Macedonia and help us***.”
* Then we read this: “***after Paul had seen the vision, we got ready at once to leave for Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them***”.
* This was directly following another encounter where Paul and his companions were prevented from entering a place called Bithynia.(bi-THIN-i-ah)
* That is just a couple of verses before today’s assigned reading where we read that the Spirit of Jesus would not allow them to enter Bithynia.
* Then, arriving in Philippi, which is now in Macedonia, Paul was preaching to a group of women and Lydia responded to

his message.

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* We read “***The Lord opened her heart to respond to Paul’s message.***”
* Then Lydia and the members of her household were baptized after which she persuaded Paul and his group to come and stay at her place.
* I would say that this was Paul’s first church plant on this his 2nd missionary journey.
* What we read here in Acts is an incredible account of Paul not only being guided, but him trusting, that indeed this was all from God.
* In Revelation, we read where John had this incredible vision where he saw the new Jerusalem, the holy city, coming down out of heaven from God.
* In his vision he saw amazing details such as the city having no temple because the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple.
* Also, there was no need for the sun or moon to provide lighting because the brightness of the glory of God was everywhere.
* Again, an incredible account that if we

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were to do a study of the book of Daniel in the OT, we would be amazed how accurate these details of John’s vision match what is written in Daniel.

* What is in common in both the account of Paul in Acts and John’s vision in Revelation?
* Well, there is a fulfilment of Jesus’ words in today’s gospel.
* Jesus promised that he would send the HS and that the HS would be our Comforter, our Counsellor, our Guide and our Teacher.
* Obviously, Paul, Silas and whomever else was travelling with him as well as John believed this and were living this out in their lives and ministries.
* In a little while we will stand and say the creed where we say these words: “***We believe in the HS, the Lord, the Giver of life***”.
* What do we actually believe when we say, “***We believe*** ***in the HS***.”
* Is it a matter of just believing He exists

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or do we believe that He lives in us, and is active just as Jesus promised?

* For Christians, I believe the HS usually falls into one of three categories:
* The HS is either:
  1. the most mysterious aspect of the Christian faith,
  2. the most feared aspect of the Christian faith,
  3. or He is an essential and integral part of one’s life – absolutely everything they do is from the leading of the HS.
* Mysterious because many e/e don’t quite understand who the HS is.
* Feared because, while many people still don’t quite understand who He is, they have heard things about the HS that would suggest that if you have anything to do with the HS, & esp. in the church, strange & unorderly things might happen.
* Recall Alpha HS W/E that Jean and I led for a group from a Baptist church we were attending at the time. I can tell you

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that there was great resistance because of such fear.

* The Christian who considers the HS to be an Essential and an integral part of their life would suggest a Christian who takes seriously the words and promises of Jesus.
* The HS - the 3rd person of the Trinity does not have to be mysterious nor feared.
* Rather, as Christians, we should be intimately and profoundly aware of the HS both in our lives and in our church. because that is precisely God’s plan.
* The gospel we read today from the 14th chapter of John, as well as the following three chapters, (14-17) are Jesus’ final words to His disciples just before he was arrested.
* Background for these chapters is in the upper room on that 1st Maundy Thursday, at the time of the Last Supper.
* Chapters 14-17 of John’s gospel represent not only Jesus’ final words to

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His disciples, but also His final words to each one of us.

* These four chapters of John’s gospel speak of our call to love one another, our call to unity in Christ, and they are brutally honest is spelling out how we will be persecuted as followers of Jesus.
* And the all-embracing theme throughout these four chapters is the work of the HS.
* Today’s gospel reading is following the devastating announcement by Jesus, to His disciples at the beginning of ch 14, that He is going to leave them. (Just summarize this setting)
* Chapter 14 begins with the very familiar words: “***Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me. In my Father’s house are many rooms . . .I go and prepare a place for you***”
* Then Jesus said to His disciples: “***You know the way to the place where I am going***”.
* But Thomas, in his sincerity said they

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did not, &, how could they know the way.

* Followed by Jesus saying that He is the way, the truth & the life, and further that

if they really knew him, they would know the Father as well.

* Still struggling, Philip said, “***Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us***.”
* Not much different from many of us who say, “***OK God, just give us a sign –show us something as a sign, & then we will believe***.”
* Jesus answered Philip, and challenged him when He said: “***Don’t you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’?***” (Jn 14:9)
* Jesus knew how devastated His disciples were at the thought of His leaving them, & so His 1st priority was to comfort & assure them. He said:

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* “***I will not leave you as orphans***; ***I will come to you***.” (Jn 14:18)
* Likewise, Jesus wants us to know that no matter what our difficulties, He will be with us.
* The word used here for the HS is Counsellor, but in the KJV it is Comforter. Either is quite accurate.
* As the Counsellor, the HS counsels us in every aspect of our lives – *when we let Him*
* We read where He will teach us all things, & will remind us of everything Jesus had spoken.
* Now, the disciples had spend three years with Jesus as He taught them.
* We know that most of what He taught them went right over their heads while Jesus walked the earth.
* That was why they were having such a hard time dealing with Him leaving them now.
* But Jesus said that all that He had taught them would come back.

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* That was the role of the HS - to remind them of everything Jesus said.
* In looking back, they would also see how these things, such as Jesus leaving them, would make sense.
* The HS is mysterious only in the fact that He is God and we can never understand the mind of God.
* We don’t understand God, nor are we supposed to - rather we simply receive from God
* And we do that through the HS.
* Creator, Redeemer, Sustainor
* God who created us, Jesus who redeemed us and the HS who sustains us.
* Or in other words gives us life
* The HS guides that life - comforts that life – and counsels that life.
* It is the HS who allows us to grow in life – *when we allow Him*.
* The HS is active in our lives even when we don’t realize it.
* As followers of Jesus, we are on a journey. We are all at different places on

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this journey. There is no exam or pre-requisite except to believe and the HS meets us where we are at.

* Am I aware of times the HS is active in my life – sometimes yes, but mostly not.
* There are times when someone will just pop into my mind or I will dream about a particular person, and I have no idea why.
* Sometimes I will share this with my wife and the first thing she asks me is, “***Did you pray for them?”***
* I still have no idea why that person was brought to my attention, what the needs may be, and I don’t need to know, but what I have come to realize is that it is the HS who has placed them on my mind.
* As we continue to grow, the HS will also bring us tremendous freedom.
* Freedom to enjoy being ourselves and freedom in worship.
* It is an awesome thing to have the presence of God living within us.

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* The HS is not someone to be feared – He is our dearest friend – someone we should cherish spending time with.
* As we are open to the HS to comfort us, to teach us & to remind us of all that Jesus spoke & taught, we will be confronted the same way that Philip was: “***don’t you know me, even after I have been with you such a long time***?”
* When we stand & say that we believe in the HS, we are saying that we believe that He is God & that he is our very source of life.
* We are saying that He is inseparable from Jesus & the Father.
* We are acknowledging that it is only through Him that we are able to know & to grow in obedience & love for Jesus.

“***The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you***.”