

Walk in the Spirit, Pray in the Spirit

Sermon #2: You Are Not Alone

Study Text: John 16:5–15

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Bible Study Introduction:

The 53rd question of the Heidelberg Catechism asks and answers:

Q: What do you believe concerning the Holy Spirit?

A: First, that with the Father and Son, he is equally eternal God; second, that God's Spirit is also given to me, preparing me through a true faith to share in Christ and all his benefits, that the Spirit comforts me and will abide with me forever.

Because of its basic devotional tone, the Heidelberg emphasizes what many of us understand about the Holy Spirit's activity in our life: encouragement, comfort, and presence. Today's text reminds us of something additional: the ministry of Jesus goes on in us through the gift of the Holy Spirit. We are sometimes prone to thinking of the Holy Spirit as only the "softer" and "warmer" side of God. Yet, here as our advocate and helper, the Holy Spirit is promised to be with us doing some heavy lifting on our behalf.

Opening Questions:

- What experience have you had that you would explicitly understand to be the Holy Spirit's work in your life?
- Our Pentecostal and Charismatic brothers and sisters seem to emphasize and enjoy a different experience of the Holy Spirit. What about those traditions should we be open to embracing?

Read John 16:5-16

- Where is this passage within the narrative line of Jesus' life? What are the disciples feeling at this moment?
- Skip down to v.17. What are the disciples failing to understand that should comfort them? When you understand this, how much of a comfort is it to you?
- How many various roles of the Holy Spirit do you count in these passages? Which are we prone to emphasizing? To ignoring or minimizing?
- Notice that the Holy Spirit is promised to "come to you" in v.7-8. How do you understand that Christians and the Holy Spirit are to work together? Where has that succeeded so far? Where has it seemingly fallen short?
- What effect should this promise of the Holy Spirit have on the first disciples? On us?

Group or Personal Reflection

- What if we made all the concerns of the Holy Spirit in this passage our concerns? How would your personal life be different? Your group's shared life? Our congregation's life?
- What in these passages are especially encouraging to you? What situation are you facing where it is good news that the Holy Spirit is with you?
- We clearly see the Holy Spirit is given to carry on with the work of Jesus Christ. Where do you see this happening in you? Around the world?