



Sermon, August 7, 2016  
Rev. Dr. Craig S. Pesti-Strobel  
Coburg and Junction City United Methodist Churches

Sermon Series: Come Meet Jesus  
**“The Abiding Spirit of Truth and Peace”**

**Scripture: John 14:15-31**

**15** “If you love me, you will keep my commandments. **16** And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, to be with you forever. **17** This is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, because he abides with you, and he will be in you.

**18** “I will not leave you orphaned; I am coming to you. **19** In a little while the world will no longer see me, but you will see me; because I live, you also will live. **20** On that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you. **21** They who have my commandments and keep them are those who love me; and those who love me will be loved by my Father, and I will love them and reveal myself to them.”

**22** Judas (not Iscariot) said to him, “Lord, how is it that you will reveal yourself to us, and not to the world?”

**23** Jesus answered him, “Those who love me will keep my word, and my Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them. **24** Whoever does not love me does not keep my words; and the word that you hear is not mine, but is from the Father who sent me.

**25** “I have said these things to you while I am still with you. **26** But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said to you.

**27** Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid. **28** You heard me say to you, ‘I am going away, and I am coming to you.’ If you loved me, you would rejoice that I am going to the Father, because the Father is greater than I. **29** And now I have told you this before it occurs, so that when it does occur, you may believe. **30** I will no longer talk much with you, for the ruler of this world is coming. He has no power over me; **31** but I do as the Father has commanded me, so that the world may know that I love the Father. Rise, let us be on our way.

**Opening Joke**

There was a boy riding on his bike outside a church. The priest saw him and told him to come into the church and the boy said, “... But they'll steal my bike.” The priest explained how the Holy Spirit would take care of it, so they went inside. The priest showed the boy how to make the sign of the cross and told the boy to repeat it... “In the name of the Father, The Son... Amen.” The priest said, “What about the Holy Spirit?” The boy replied, “Its outside taking care of my bike!”

## **Review**

Last week, we started listening in on Jesus’ last meal with his disciples. They are gathered in an upper room someplace in Jerusalem, he has washed their feet, and they have shared an early Passover meal together. He tells them that he has supplied them with a way to the Father, and that, in fact, he is that way, and he is truth and life. If anyone has seen him, they have seen the Father. We also talked last week about how the preposition “in” is very important in John. Jesus prepares for us a realm in which we dwell with the Father and with him. He describes a formula of indwelling: “the Father who dwells in me does his works. Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me.” This week, we continue his thought: “If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, to be with you forever. This is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, because he abides with you, and he will be in you.”

## **What is Spirit, anyway?**

But let’s pause for a moment to consider what we mean by “spirit” and the “Holy Spirit.” “Spirit” comes from the Latin *spiritus*, which is the noun form of the verb *spirâre*, “to breathe.” *Spiritus* originally meant “breath,” but came to refer to that force that animated or gave life to living things. Thus, it was more than simply taking in air—it referred to the unseen forces that made life possible—forces that were under the control of the gods or God. In Christian teaching, the Holy Spirit was that aspect of the Divine that had direct contact with human beings, and which animated the physical body, taught the mind and conversed with individuals as person-to-person.

In Genesis, the Spirit is with God at creation, and hovers over the primordial waters. The psalmist says, “When you hide your face (all creatures) are dismayed; when you take away their breath they die and return to their dust. When you send forth your spirit, they are created; and you renew the face of the ground” (Psalm 104:29-30). Jesus tells his

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disciples that he will send the Comforter and Advocate, the Holy Spirit to be with them and to lead them in all truth (John 14:16-17, 26; 15:26; 16:13-15). Paul speaks of the Spirit bearing witness to our spirits (Romans 8:16) and interceding for us when we don't know how to pray (Romans 8:26-27).

Spirituality, then, has to do with how we live our lives in relation to that which is both beyond us and within us, which empowers us to life, and which teaches us about that life and how to live it.

### **Worldviews Diagram**

Let's look a little closer at this “indwelling” idea. What do we mean by something dwelling within us? How does this relate to matters of the spirit and life? In order to answer this, let's take a moment to look at a little diagram I have adapted from Walter Winks magisterial book, *Engaging the Powers*. (Separate handout on “Worldviews of Spiritual and Physical Reality.”) Historically, there has been changes and developments regarding how people view the nature of spirituality, and the nature of God, of what the divine reality is in relationship to material reality and so. This chart diagrams the basic worldviews. Let's look at it briefly:

- *Ancient Worldview*: Everything earthly has a heavenly counterpart. Spatial representation of spiritual and physical.
- *Spiritualistic Worldview*: Material world is fallen, evil, corrupt = body. Spiritual world is pure, good = soul. The basic human need is to escape from material world to spiritual world.
- *Materialistic*: Spiritual world does not exist, only material world. No God, no soul, we are products of electrochemical processes and genetics.
- *Theological*: Spiritual and material are separate realms, unknowable by the other. Spiritual untouched by material. Spiritual is a pure, rarefied realm.
- *Integral Worldview*: Spiritual reality is the inner reality of all things, and material reality is the outward physical manifestation or

phenomenon. Both are aspects of a single total reality. Inner world is coterminous with the universe, as rich and extensive as outer realm.

### **Interplay between inner and outer life**

In verse 21, Jesus says, “They who have my commandments and keep them are those who love me; and those who love me will be loved by my Father, and I will love them and reveal myself to them.” [Then] Judas (not Iscariot) says to him, “Lord, how is it that you will reveal yourself to us, and not to the world?” The word translated as “reveal” is an interesting Greek word: ἐμφανίζω. It means to manifest, exhibit to view, to indicate, disclose, declare, make known, to make visible.

What Jesus is talking about here is making the inner world and the outer world congruent with one another, of bringing the spiritual world out into the material world. He has done this his entire ministry: if we have seen him, we have seen the Divine Reality manifested in the material world.

This is what the Holy Spirit is all about. The Holy Spirit comes to reveal this Divine Reality to us in our inner life, and teaches us how to then manifest that reality in the material world around us, just as Jesus did.

Jesus works with us through the Holy Spirit’s presence to develop our character as persons according to the deeper spiritual meaning and constitution of life. The spiritual constitution of life relates to how things are meant to be, and how our meaning and purpose in life is found by living in accordance with the design of the universe.

When Jesus refers to himself as the Way, the Truth and the Life (John 14:6), he is speaking directly about how he embodied this deeper purpose-filled and significance-drenched aspect of life. Simply put, a Christian spirituality is to enter into the heart of Jesus, to explore his Way, his Life and his Truth, and to live it out in daily life in every way possible, so that the world around us can see the reality of God at work in us, showing how that reality can be at work in them.

Next week, Jesus tells us how the Spirit resides within us if we keep the gardens of our lives well-tended and cultivated. Bring garden tools for your minds!