

MESSAGE OUTLINE—WEEK OF MAY 23, 2021 THIS IS THE LIFE: THE ADVOCATE

John 15:26–27, 16:4b–15 (NIV)

²⁶ “When the Advocate comes, whom I will send to you from the Father—the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father—he will testify about me. ²⁷ And you also must testify, for you have been with me from the beginning... ⁵ but now I am going to him who sent me. None of you asks me, ‘Where are you going?’ ⁶ Rather, you are filled with grief because I have said these things. ⁷ But very truly I tell you, it is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Advocate will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. ⁸ When he comes, he will prove the world to be in the wrong about sin and righteousness and judgment: ⁹ about sin, because people do not believe in me; ¹⁰ about righteousness, because I am going to the Father, where you can see me no longer; ¹¹ and about judgment, because the prince of this world now stands condemned. ¹² “I have much more to say to you, more than you can now bear. ¹³ But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. ¹⁴ He will glorify me because it is from me that he will receive what he will make known to you. ¹⁵ All that belongs to the Father is mine. That is why I said the Spirit will receive from me what he will make known to you.”

The Holy Spirit comes to...

1. Help

When the Advocate comes...*

*Friend, Helper, Comforter, Counselor

The Holy Spirit, the breath (Genesis 2:7, Ezekiel 37:1–14) or wind (Acts 2:2–4) of God, lives in us by faith in Jesus (Luke 11:13, John 20:22, Acts 2:38, Romans 8:11, 1 Corinthians 3:16 and 6:19, 2 Corinthians 1:22 and 5:5) as God’s presence (Ephesians 2:22) and power (Romans 15:13–19, Ephesians 3:16) to comfort us (2 Corinthians 1:3–4), **convict us** (John 16:8–11), gift us (1 Corinthians 12:1–11, Romans 12:3–8), **guide us** (John 16:13, Mark 1:12, Acts 20:22, Galatians 5:18), **teach us** (Luke 12:12, 1 Corinthians 2:9–13, John 14:26), intercede for us (Romans 8:26–27), sanctify us (2 Thessalonians 2:13, 1 Peter 1:2), fill us (Acts 13:52, Ephesians 5:18), give us new life (John 3:3–8 and 6:63, Titus 3:5), freedom (2 Corinthians 3:17), wisdom and understanding (Acts 15:28, 1 Corinthians 2:12–14, Ephesians 1:17, Colossians 1:9); and help us (2 Timothy 1:14, Philippians 1:19) to bear fruit (Galatians 5:22–26), **to witness** (Mark 13:11, John 16:27), to worship (John 4:24, Colossians 3:16), to be unified (1 Corinthians 12:11–13, Ephesians 4:3, Philippians 1:27), to live by the Spirit (Romans 8:1–17, Galatians 5:16, 25), to dream (Joel 2:28–32), to know we are children of God (Romans 8:14–17, Galatians 4:6) and to pray (Romans 8:26–27, Ephesians 6:18).

In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans.

Romans 8:26 (NIV)

2. Stay

I will send him to you.

And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever—the Spirit of truth. 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. **John 14:16–17 (NIV)**

And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies because of his Spirit who lives in you. **Romans 8:11 (NIV)**

“Those in whom the Spirit comes to live are God’s new Temple. They are, individually and corporately, places where heaven and earth meet.” —**N.T. Wright, *Simply Christian: Why Christianity Makes Sense***

One evening I invited Jesus Christ into my heart.... He came into the darkness of my heart and turned on the light. He built a fire on the hearth and banished the chill. He started music where there had been stillness and He filled the emptiness with His own loving, wonderful fellowship.”

—**Robert Boyd Munger, *My Heart—Christ’s Home***

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

THIS IS THE LIFE: THE ADVOCATE

CONNECT

- When you were young, what or who brought you a sense of comfort or security?

SPIRITUAL PRACTICE: Breath Prayer

Breath Prayer is a form of contemplative prayer linked to the rhythms of breathing. With the breath prayer you create a simple one-sentence prayer expressing your desire for God, spoken as you breathe in and breathe out. A breath prayer is formed by first identifying a biblical name, characteristic, or image of God and then naming your desire. This combined phrase may be a shortened version of a longer prayer of your heart. The traditional breath prayer is from Luke 18. Today, we will use four breath prayers to open us to the Holy Spirit.

Prepare: Pause for a moment. Listen carefully to the Holy Spirit within you; write down whatever you sense God is saying to you.

Individual Reflection: Silently pray by breathing in the name and breathing out the desire.

1. **Silently Pray:** Come Holy Spirit, renew my spirit.
Reflect: What do you sense the Holy Spirit desires for you right now, that would renew your spirit?
2. **Silently Pray:** Breath of God, breathe on me.
Reflect: What guidance, truth, or comfort do you sense the Holy Spirit has for you that would stir new hope in you?
3. **Silently Pray:** Spirit of God, set me free.
Reflect: What needs to die in you to create space for the Holy Spirit to fill you (i.e. patterns, preferences, opinions, pride, arrogance, self-centeredness, anger, hatred)?
4. **Silently Pray:** Come Holy Spirit, be present in me.
Reflect: What do you think the Holy Spirit is prompting in you right now? In response, write a short breath prayer, sharing whatever is on your heart.

Group Listening: When you are ready, return to the group. Taking turns, pray aloud your breath prayer, continuing until all have prayed. As you listen, do you sense the Holy Spirit has a word of comfort, challenge, conviction, or guidance for the group?

Group Debrief: What was surprising or encouraging for you in this practice? How does it motivate you to live or think differently about your relationship with or dependence on the Holy Spirit for yourself and others?

SCRIPTURE REFLECTION: John 15:26-27; 16:4-15

- Read the passage aloud. What was helpful to you from this week's text or message?
- What do you think would be the benefit of being a disciple with Jesus "in person"? What do you think is the benefit of being a disciple now, with the Holy Spirit? If you could choose, which would you prefer? Why?
- What is the role of the Holy Spirit in the life of a believer? How does the Holy Spirit show us the heart of God? How does one become more sensitive to the Holy Spirit?
- What do you think it means for the Holy Spirit to guide you "into all the truth"? Can we trust the Holy Spirit and believe this is true in the next days, weeks, and months ahead?
- What does it mean to rely upon the Holy Spirit as "the advocate" in the course of your day? If the Holy Spirit were taken away, would you recognize the absence? Would there be any difference in your life? If so, what would be identifiably different?
- How can the Holy Spirit lead you into spiritual conversations? Share an experience when you sensed the Holy Spirit preparing, leading, and teaching you with the right words?
- How aware are you of your heart as a "home" for the indwelling Holy Spirit? When are you most aware of his presence?

PRAYER AND BENEDICTION

Prayer Requests: Considering the week ahead, how can we pray for you?

Closing Benediction: *Spirit of God guide us, Spirit of God convict us, Spirit of God comfort us, Spirit of God be within us, Spirit of God teach us, Spirit of God unite us; this day and evermore; this day and forevermore. Amen*

DAILY PRACTICE: Continue to spend time with God daily in Solitude, Scripture, and Prayer with the daily readings (see Reading Plan & Playlist). Use the breath prayer as a way to listen to the Holy Spirit speaking to you a word of conviction, comfort, or guidance.