# Congregational-Presbyterian Church

 **“The Holy Spirit is Promised”**

**John 14:16-18**

 **September 5, 2021**

Today we begin a new sermon series on the Work of the Holy Spirit, a series that will take us through the end of the year. We will explore together various biblical texts that speak to the work of the Spirit within each of us as individuals, as well as how the Spirit works among us as a congregation committed to knowing Christ, becoming like Christ, and sharing Christ. Indeed, the work of the Spirit is to continue and strengthen the work of Christ that he carried out when he was here on earth.

This morning we join Jesus and his disciples in an Upper Room somewhere in Jerusalem. Jesus has told his disciples that he will soon be going away in order to return to the Father, and he now reveals to them God’s plan to send another Person to them. That Person is the Holy Spirit. I invite you to turn with me to John 14:16-18

And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, who will never leave you. He is the Holy Spirit, who leads into all truth. The world cannot receive him, because it isn’t looking for him and doesn’t recognize him. But you know him, because he lives with you now and later will be in you. No, I will not abandon you as orphans—I will come to you.

Included in these few verses are several remarkable facts about the Holy Spirit, this gift from the Father to those who believe in his Son. Jesus says that this Spirit will be “another,” a separate but similar Person to himself. There are two words in Greek which we translate “another.” One means “another of a different kind.” If Jesus had used this word to describe the Spirit, he would have been describing someone quite different from himself. But, the word he uses means, “another of the same kind.” The Spirit will be much like Jesus. Not in human form as Jesus was, but otherwise committed to the same ministry and able to do the same work as Jesus.

The Father sent the Son into the world. Now, with the Son returning to the Father, the Father will send the Spirit who will carry on the good work that Jesus had begun in his disciples. For three years Jesus had been their Advocate, their Comforter, their Helper, their Teacher. But as he leaves he is not abandoning them as orphans – he is giving them another to be and do with them as he has been and done with them.

One way in which the Spirit is doing the ministry of Jesus in his disciples is by fulfilling Jesus’ promise that he would never leave or forsake us. For example, in Matthew 28:20, Jesus proclaims: “I am with you always, to the end of the age.” Jesus fulfills this promise through the Spirit who comes into our life and does not leave. He does not come and then go, needing to be constantly asked to return. If you have accepted Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, the Spirit lives in you and he will never leave you, which means that Christ is always with you.

Another way that the Spirit is continuing the ministry of Jesus in us is as the revealer of truth. He is, as Jesus says in John 16:13, “the Spirit of truth.” What the Spirit does and says is entirely consistent with what Jesus did and said in his ministry. The Spirit does not add his own “truth,” so to speak, to that of Jesus. The Spirit does not bring a new revelation contrary to or in addition to that which Jesus brought. Rather, what the Spirit does in us is to help us better understand Jesus, and he gives us the power to live as Jesus commanded.

The primary way in which the Spirit has given us the truth is through the Bible, the Word of God. It was the Spirit who moved the human authors of the Bible to write as they did. It is the work of human beings and the work of God come together in a text which teaches us the truth about God. Understood and interpreted through the Spirit who lives in the believer, the Bible is absolutely dependable as the revelation of God’s truth.

The Spirit of truth also reveals truth to us through the inner workings of our hearts. Can you think back to the first time you realized that you were a sinner, that Jesus had died on a cross to forgive your sins, and that you now believed in him? Not simply something you had heard and thought sounded reasonable, but something that stirred within you a deep longing. In your heart you sensed a deep desire to give your life to this Jesus. Perhaps your mind didn’t fully grasp it, perhaps it still doesn’t, but your heart has responded to the love of God as revealed by the Spirit of truth, and that Spirit has now brought you into a relationship with Jesus Christ. You have, as Jesus put it, been born again of the Spirit.

The earliest I remember having this feeling within, this sense of the love of God for me that accepted me as I was, was at the age of ten. I was at a Christian summer camp and the speaker was talking about Jesus. Now, I had grown up in the church, attended Sunday School practically since birth, and I had heard about Jesus hundreds of times. But this time it became real to me. This time it touched something deep inside me. This time the Spirit of truth made it come alive to me. I knew in a way different from any other knowing that I was a child of God.

The primary work of the Spirit is to make Jesus real to you and to me. The mark of a life filled with the Spirit is an ever-deepening awareness of Jesus Christ in us, continuing to teach us, comfort us, heal us, and to bring us closer to our heavenly Father. Jesus who declared, “I am the way, the truth, and the life,” continues, through the work of the Spirit living in us, to show us God’s way, to reveal to us God’s truth, and to give us everything we need to live God’s life. As individuals and as a congregation, it is the Spirit in us who is transforming us into people who know Christ, become like Christ, and share Christ.