

## Bible Study for Pentecost Sunday May 28, 2023

### Our texts for this Sunday are:

- 1 Corinthians 12:3-13 (MSG)
- John 14:15-23
- John 7:37-39a

**Opening question:** What does the word advocacy mean to you?

**1 Corinthians 12:3-13** What I want to talk about now is the various ways God's Spirit gets worked into our lives. This is complex and often misunderstood, but I want you to be informed and knowledgeable. Remember how you were when you didn't know God, led from one phony god to another, never knowing what you were doing, just doing it because everybody else did it? It's different in this life. God wants us to use our intelligence, to seek to understand as well as we can. For instance, by using your heads, you know perfectly well that the Spirit of God would never prompt anyone to say "Jesus be damned!" Nor would anyone be inclined to say "Jesus is Master!" without the insight of the Holy Spirit.

4-11 God's various gifts are handed out everywhere; but they all originate in God's Spirit. God's various ministries are carried out everywhere; but they all originate in God's Spirit. God's various expressions of power are in action everywhere; but God himself is behind it all. Each person is given something to do that shows who God is: Everyone gets in on it, everyone benefits. All kinds of things are handed out by the Spirit, and to all kinds of people! The variety is wonderful: wise counsel, clear understanding, simple trust, healing the sick, miraculous acts, proclamation, distinguishing between spirits, tongues, interpretation of tongues. All these gifts have a common origin, but are handed out one by one by the one Spirit of God. He decides who gets what, and when.

12-13 You can easily enough see how this kind of thing works by looking no further than your own body. Your body has many parts—limbs, organs, cells—but no matter how many parts you can name, you're still one body. It's exactly the same with Christ. By means of his one Spirit, we all said good-bye to our partial and piecemeal lives. We each used to independently call our own shots, but then we entered into a large and integrated life in which he has the final say in everything. (This is what we proclaimed in word and action when we were baptized.) Each of us is now a part of his resurrection body, refreshed and sustained at one fountain—his Spirit—where we all come to drink. The old labels we once used to identify ourselves—labels like Jew or Greek, slave or free—are no longer useful. We need something larger, more comprehensive.

Who activates the gifts in us all and for what purpose are they given?

In the usual text read on Pentecost (Acts 2:1-21) we hear about the little Holy Spirit tongues of fire that rest on the disciple's heads causing them to be bold in their faith. Many people feel that this is not their experience of the Holy Spirit's activity in their lives. What alternative experience does this Pentecost text offer us and how does this text call us to use the faith that we have been given?

**John 14:15-23** <sup>15</sup> “If you love me, you will keep my commandments. <sup>16</sup> And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, to be with you forever. <sup>17</sup> 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. <sup>18</sup> “I will not leave you orphaned; I am coming to you. <sup>19</sup> In a little while the world will no longer see me, but you will see me; because I live, you also will live. <sup>20</sup> On that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you. <sup>21</sup> 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.” <sup>22</sup> Judas (not Iscariot) said to him, ‘Lord, how is it that you will reveal yourself to us, and not to the world?’ <sup>23</sup> 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.’

The Holy Spirit is called ‘Paraklete’ in verse 16, which literally means ‘one called alongside.’ The NRSV translates the word to Advocate while the New Jerusalem Bible translation decided to leave the word (basically) untranslated. What do you think about that? What role do you think the Paraklete is meant to take in your life?

Where does Jesus say the Holy Spirit will live/reside/abide in vs 17? How do you imagine that this is supposed to shape your life? What do you think God’s hoped for outcome might be in this new Advocate roommate of yours?

We read in John 14:12: “Very truly, I tell you, the one who believes in me will also do the works that I do and, in fact, will do greater works than these, because I am going to the Father.” And we then read in vs 17 that the Spirit of Truth (the other Advocate) *abides* in us and that we (as ones that belong to Jesus) will also do the works that Jesus does...what do you think this all means? How might your Advocate roommate help you in all of this?

Back to our opening question, what does the word advocacy mean to you? How might we advocate as Jesus did? Who might need advocating? Why might we advocate for someone?

How can advocating for someone we have never met be a form of living out our faith?

**John 7:37-39a** On the last day of the festival, the great day, while Jesus was standing there, he cried out, “Let anyone who is thirsty come to me, <sup>38</sup>and let the one who believes in me drink. As the scripture has said, ‘Out of the believer’s heart shall flow rivers of living water.’” <sup>39</sup>Now he said this about the Spirit, which believers in him were to receive

How might ‘*and we were all made to drink of one Spirit*’ in our Corinthians text and ‘*out of the believer’s heart shall flow rivers of living water*’ be connected? In other words, how can we become rivers of living water by the calling of the Holy Spirit to those that have become weary in this world? Is sharing kind words enough? Could God be expecting more from us? What more could God be expecting?