



36A EASTER 6 - BIBLE STUDY RESOURCES

The Spirit beside us

Abstract

“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.

John 14:15-16 (NIV)

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The Spirit beside us

Sunday, May 17, 2020 | Easter | Sixth Sunday of Easter | Year A

<i>First Reading</i>	Acts 17:22–31
<i>Psalm</i>	Psalm 66:8–20
<i>New Testament</i>	1 Peter 3:13–22
<i>Gospel</i>	John 14:15–21 ¹

John 14.15-21

Jesus promises his disciples that God will send the Spirit of truth, who will be with them forever. He reminds them that those who love him are those who keep his commandments. These are the ones to whom he will reveal himself.

This week's resources explore: the connection between loving Jesus and keeping his commandments.

A gathering prayer

Spirit of truth come close to us.
 Unite us into the body of Christ.
 Enable us to worship God in Spirit and in truth.
 Help us to support and encourage each other.
 Help us to love as we are loved.
 Spirit of truth, come and abide in us.

Gracious God, we come before you,
 drawn by the power of your welcoming love.
 We come with our sorrows and joys.
 We come with our expectations and apprehensions.
 We come with what we have done.
 We come as who we are.
 In your love we find peace and hope.
Amen.

Reading

John 14:15-21

The Promise of the Holy Spirit

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

¹ [Revised Common Lectionary](#). (2009). Bellingham, WA: Faithlife.

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.”²

Exegesis

The theme in this speech by Jesus spirals back round to the centrality of love (see 13.34). Loving Jesus becomes evident when we obey his commandments, the central one of which is to love as he has loved us. To help us in this, Jesus will ask the Father to give us another ‘Advocate’ who will be with us forever, who is also called the Spirit. The Greek word translated ‘advocate’ literally means the one ‘called to your side’ and could equally be translated ‘intercessor’, ‘counsellor’ or ‘intermediary’ – and probably by several other words too. It is the word used in the Greek version of the Old Testament for the comforters who came to Job, so one could add a positive version of ‘comforter’ to the list. When Jerome was translating the New Testament into Latin, he felt that the term was intentionally broad and inclusive, so instead of choosing just one word and therefore one meaning, he simply turned the sounds of the Greek word into Latin, giving the term ‘Paraclete’. The Paraclete is the one who guides, counsels and consoles us, and speaks up on our behalf. Crucially, the Paraclete will never desert us in our hour of need. This speech then flows on naturally from discussing our relationship with the Paraclete to discussing our relationship with Jesus and with the Father. The kind of mutual indwelling that Jesus describes (e.g. ‘he abides with you and he will be in you’, and ‘I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you’) makes it clear that our relationship with the Paraclete is not something distinct from our relationship with Jesus and the Father, but is all bound up in that oneness with God that ensures we are not left orphans.

This reading encourages us to remember that God is always with us. God is near us and beside us, by the very fact of being the creator who longs to have a relationship with us. Jesus has passed through death, and even those who have been held by death are liberated by him. Jesus promises the indwelling Paraclete –who will come to be beside them forever – to his disciples.

A sending out prayer

Go in peace to live in love,
to show God’s love,
to receive God’s love
– everywhere, and every time.
Amen.

² [The Holy Bible: New Revised Standard Version](#). (1989). (Jn 14:15–21). Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers.