

The Holy Spirit Will Teach You Everything
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John 14:23-29

²³Jesus 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. ²⁴Whoever 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. ²⁶But 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. ²⁷Peace 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. ²⁸You 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. ²⁹And now I have told you this before it occurs, so that when it does occur, you may believe.

Though so very far from church viewing material because of pervasive language and graphic violence, the film *Pulp Fiction* includes a scene that captures the overwhelming assurance intended by Jesus’ promise of the Holy Spirit. I’ll offer you the G-rated version of the scene. Two men, Jules and Vincent, have accidentally gotten themselves into huge trouble and they call their boss, Marsellus, asking for help. In desperation, Jules tries to explain in great detail how much trouble they are in, and he tells Marsellus exactly what kind of reassurance they want to hear from him, finishing by saying “wait for the cavalry which should be coming directly.” In response, Marsellus repeats back to Jules the same details but says, instead, “wait for the Wolf who should be coming directly.” Jules responds, “You’re sending the Wolf?” and his relief is beyond obvious, for the Wolf, as urbandictionary.com defines him, is known for “solving problems at an extremely fast pace and with abnormal efficiency.”¹

Peace I leave with you; my **peace** I give to you. The Father will send the Advocate, the Holy Spirit. We’ve got you covered. You don’t have to do this alone. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid. We’ve got you covered. You do not have to do this alone. You’re sending the Holy Spirit? The disciples’ relief, the disciples’ peace, should be complete and their hearts should not be troubled. **Our** relief, **our** peace, should be complete.

This reading is meant for the post-resurrection church and will remain so until Christ comes again. Although Jesus may be gone, the Holy Spirit has come and is with us. So for what is it that we are covered? What do we need not do alone? What can we face with peace and untroubled hearts? We read that Jesus says to the disciples that the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, “will teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said to you.” Now Jesus had done a great deal of teaching up to this point.

¹ <http://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=the%20wolf>, definition #1, 4 May 2013.

Have you ever been given a list of more than seven things to remember, seven being the normal limit for our memories? For me, a bit of panic sets in because I know my memory fits that normal range – beyond seven and I struggle to remember them all. You would never find me at one of those contests where people recite as many digits of pi as they can remember – 3.14 is enough for me. The disciples are receiving word that Jesus won't be with them forever, won't be able to keep repeating lessons and teaching them new ones and, while they may not fully comprehend what he is saying about his death, they are beginning to understand that his work will be theirs to carry on. If I were in their shoes, I would need to admit to being overwhelmed, and I suspect that's exactly what they might have felt for Jesus to offer them such specific reassurances. "The Holy Spirit will teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said to you."

We cannot know if they sensed the peace left with them or if their hearts were indeed untroubled but we know that they did remember what Jesus had taught them for we have four gospels and a global church as evidence. We're not tasked with remembering the lessons which we learned in Jesus' presence but we must remember to love one another. Just as Jesus loves us, we must love one another. We can each recount times when we did not live up to that command but those times don't point to a forgetting of the command. We do remember who and how we are called to be as followers of Christ so we know the Holy Spirit is at work in our lives. The work of Christ is being carried on, maybe not in its fullest measure, but it is being carried on.

And we credit the Holy Spirit for that work being accomplished. The faith that we have comes from the Spirit, for we believe we would not have faith if the Holy Spirit had not activated it in us. We read in 1 Corinthians 12, "To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. To one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the discernment of spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues."² And in Ephesians 4: "The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ."³ We call upon the Holy Spirit to open our ears and eyes and minds as we ready ourselves to hear scripture so that we might receive understanding of God's Word through the Spirit. We speak of being compelled to do something we would otherwise consider above or beyond ourselves and we speak of the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

² 1 Corinthians 12:7-10

³ Ephesians 4:11-12

Inspiration is not far from respiration, both formed from the Latin root *spirare*, to breathe, which leads to the Hebrew word *ruach*, which means breath and wind and Spirit. It is right, then, that the Holy Spirit gives breath **and** gives new life and new vision through inspiration. When Jesus said the Father will send the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, the presence of the Holy Spirit was not the new thing, but the Holy Spirit's jobs of teaching and reminding in Christ's name were new. The Holy Spirit was present at creation in the wind, the *ruach*, from God which swept over the face of the waters. The Holy Spirit was present at Jesus' baptism in the form of the dove. The Holy Spirit was present with the disciples after Jesus' death and resurrection and ascension and the Holy Spirit is present today.

Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid. So, I say again, for what is it that we are covered? What do we need not do alone? What can we face with peace and untroubled hearts? We need not be faithful alone, nor can we. Nor can we expect the Holy Spirit to do it all. When the Wolf came to help, Jules and Vincent were the ones who did the heavy lifting under his guidance. In Paul's letter to the Philippians, he wrote, "I can do all things through him who strengthens me." We are covered for everything. There is nothing we must do alone. We can face anything with peace and untroubled hearts for the Holy Spirit is our Advocate, and is with us to strengthen, to guide, to give courage. Praise be to God!

Let us pray: O God, send us out with boldness in our spirits and peace in our hearts that we might ever be present to do your will, we pray. Amen.