

My Prayer Journal

Use this weekly prayer to help you begin your time with God each day.

Prayer of Confession: Give us courage, Lord, that we might search the deepest and darkest corners of our being for anything that offends Your Holy Name. Give us mercy that we might stand in the brilliance of Your Light. For Your own sake, give us grace that we might go from this congregation cleansed from our sin and refreshed for Your service.

My Prayers this Week:

Family Time:

Have you ever met with a counselor at your school? Have you ever needed a friend or a family member to be with you as you told your parents about something that you were afraid they might not believe, so they could know you weren't making it up? Have you ever just felt like you wanted someone to be with you when you were doing something really hard, so you could feel like you weren't in it alone? How did having those people help? Sometimes, it can feel like God is far away, up in heaven. Sometimes, it can feel like Jesus is far away, because He lived 2,000 years ago. But God promised He would send someone the Bible calls the Holy Spirit to be right here with us, all the time—a counselor for us when we need advice, an advocate for us when we need someone to be on our side, and a companion for us when we feel alone. It's God's way of being with us right here and now, and not far away in heaven!

MONDAY 10.3.22

John 1:29-34

Three weeks ago, we began our study of Jesus' promise that if we have faith, we will do even "Greater Things" than Him (John 14:12). This promise was part of Jesus' teaching at the Last Supper, and this week, we are going to read most of what Jesus taught the disciples immediately after sharing that promise with them. But because that promise is closely tied to the promise of the coming of the Holy Spirit, we begin this week by reminding ourselves that at the very beginning of John's Gospel, in today's reading from chapter 1, John the Baptist claimed that Jesus was someone who would baptize other people not in water, like John was doing, but with the Holy Spirit. As we will see, it is this immersion in the Holy Spirit that becomes the source of power Jesus is alluding to when He says that those who have faith in Him will do even greater things. By calling people to repentance and baptizing them in water, John the Baptist was preparing people to become bearers of God's Holy Spirit into the world. In John 7:37-39, prior to Jesus' arrest and crucifixion, the author says that this would happen soon for those who believed in Jesus ... but not before Jesus' final glorification in the Resurrection and Ascension.

- What do you think it means to be baptized with the Spirit?

TUESDAY 10.4.22

John 14:12-21

Today's reading comes from near the beginning of Jesus' lengthy teaching discourse during the Last Supper in John's Gospel. Jesus has just made the promise of "Greater Things" the disciples will do, and even made the astounding promise that "When you ask me for anything in my name, I will do it" (14:14), while also insisting that "if you love me, you will keep my commandments" (14:15). Knowing the great difficulty the disciples are having in comprehending how these things are possible, Jesus now reveals the source of power that will enable these things to happen: "I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Counselor to be with you forever—the Spirit of truth" (14:16-17). The word translated here "Counselor" (NIV) is sometimes translated "Companion" (CEB) or "Helper" (NASB) or "Advocate" (NRSV) because it is a difficult word to translate from Greek into English and maintain all the nuance of meaning. The English form of the Greek word is "Paraclete," and its range of meaning includes "Comforter" as well. It is a word that most typically referred to a counselor for the defense in ancient Greek trials, but Jesus uses it as a name for the Holy Spirit of Truth, who will replace Jesus as the presence of Truth, still living with them after Jesus' ascension.

- Why does Jesus say the world can't see this Spirit of Truth?

WEDNESDAY 10.5.22

John 14:22-27

Throughout His ministry, Jesus had taught the disciples many things about how to live Godly lives in a world that refuses to acknowledge God. As the source of truth that Jesus had earlier alluded to, Jesus insists that the words He has taught have not been His own, but the words of God the Father, the source of all truth, who sent Jesus to earth to speak in His name. But what would happen after Jesus' death and resurrection, when the disciples would no longer be blessed with Jesus' physical presence on earth? The answer, of course, is the Paraclete—the Counselor, Helper, Companion, Advocate, and Comforter— "the Holy Spirit whom the Father will send in my name, teaching you everything and reminding you of everything I told you" (14:26). One of the primary roles of the Holy Spirit among us is to teach and re-teach those things that Jesus taught when He was physically present. Among Jesus' first disciples, this presence of the Holy Spirit helped them to remember and record the teachings of Jesus written down in the Gospels. For us, who read those words two thousand years later, the Holy Spirit continues to guide our reading, interpretation, and application of Jesus' teachings in our daily lives today.

- What might the Holy Spirit be teaching you today?

THURSDAY 10.6.22

John 15:18-16:4

Sometimes we are surprised when the non-Christian world reacts negatively toward Christians. While we might be tempted to blame this entirely on the non-Christ-like actions taken by people who claim to be followers of Christ (and this does happen), Jesus Himself claims that even when we follow Him in complete obedience, the likely outcome is that we will be hated and harassed by the non-Christian world. We can't expect to not be hated when our Master was hated, because after all, "Servants aren't greater than their Master." But Jesus also says that even though it would be almost unbearably difficult to persevere in Christian faith in such a world, God has a solution to the problem. The Paraclete, the Holy Spirit who proceeds from God the Father, will empower us to hold firm to our faith! In fact, this is a primary reason God sends the Holy Spirit to us. Even when Christians are persecuted to the point of martyrdom, the Holy Spirit will enable disciples of Jesus to testify to the truth of Jesus Christ. When it seems like the world hates Christians more and more every day, remember Jesus' words: "I have told you this, so that when the time comes you will remember that I warned you" (16:4) ... and then, draw upon the power of the Holy Spirit to persevere.

- When have you needed the Holy Spirit to keep the faith?

