

**A Sermon for The Sixth Sunday after Easter
May 25, 2025**



**Morning Prayer Rite Two
Preacher – Scott Bridges**

Click Here for today's Readings:

[Sixth Sunday of Easter – The Episcopal Church](#)

Acts 16:9-15

Revelation 21:10, 22-22:5

John 14:23-29

Psalms 67

“May the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart be acceptable
in your sight, O Lord, my rock and my redeemer”

Good morning!

1 In the beginning GOD created the heaven and the earth.

2 And the earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the
deep. And the Spirit of GOD moved upon the face of the waters.

So begins the opening of Genesis, the prologue, the very beginning of
Creation. So, also, is the first mention of the spirit of GOD. As many know the
Hebrew word is Ruach, that originally means Breath. The image of the breath of
GOD, blowing over the deep waters of the world is a powerful one. Just imagine,
creation is on the cusp of being spoken into being.

The passage from John's gospel that we read today is from Jesus' final
instructions at the last supper, the night before his passion begins. A few
chapters later, after his resurrection, Jesus Christ, the son of GOD, the living
expression of the Creator, the incarnation of the WORD, breathes on his disciples
and says, 'Receive the Holy Spirit'. The 11, who will be lost to despair till the
resurrection, are on the cusp of their commissioning as Apostles.

In a couple of weeks, we will celebrate Pentecost, the great coming of the
holy spirit, and we'll hear more about that then. Also, before I go on, at a couple
points I will ask you a question. Later, I want to give you a moment of silent
reflection, like what Mr. Rodgers has suggested a few times before, to think

about what I am asking.

I want to dwell on John for a bit. We all know the basics of the last supper, But I want to review where we are right before today's reading. In the previous chapter, Jesus has washed the disciples' feet, has foretold of his betrayal followed by Judas Iscariot leaving the gathering, he has given the 11 the commandment to love one another, and informed Peter that he will deny his LORD.

Jesus knows that his passion and resurrection will mark the end of his earthly ministry. But he doesn't want his disciples to be orphaned and without guidance. Jesus promises them the Holy Spirit.

The spirit is described by many words. Jesus introduces 'the Spirit of Truth', and the terms Counselor, Advocate, Comforter, and others are used, depending on what translation. The Greek word in John is 'Parakletos' or Paraclete and the original meaning is 'one who is called alongside'. Think of a friend who stands beside you and gives you comfort, sound advice, a sense of peace and support, or in the case of standing before the judgment seat, your defense attorney.

Jesus has walked with his ministry for 3 years, teaching, healing, praying, speaking both in parables, and occasionally direct revelation. He continues to instruct the core disciples right up to his eventual Ascension. But these emerging Apostles, will need the guidance, the support, the teaching, and the reminders of Jesus' instructions and message, that the holy spirit will give as they start their own ministry journeys.

The spirit is important not just as Guide, Teacher, and Advocate, the Holy Spirit connects us both to Jesus and to the Creator. The guidance of the Holy Spirit directs us to the path of GOD'S Will. The spirit is the moving force, fully part of the Trinity, that is not only standing bedside you, but as believing members of the brotherhood of Christ, dwells within you.

In a neighborhood bible study some years ago led in part by a Malone college professor, our group spent a year on a concept called the Exchanged life. Dr. John David Geib, as discussion leader, talked about two Greek words for life.

Bios – the physical, biological existence of living beings, and Zoe – the deeper, spiritual, eternal life, a divine life, possessed by GOD and offered to those who believe in Christ.

The concept of the Exchanged life is that you give up your life of physical experiences for a spiritual life of GOD experiences. Zoe is not merely physical existence, but a newness of life, a transformation that affects every aspect of a believer's being. This life is characterized by communion with GOD and is a gift from GOD, made available through Jesus Christ.

Jesus said, 'I am in the Father and the Father is in me' and the Holy Spirit is part of that relationship as well. Also in today's gospel, Jesus responds to a question with this answer, '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.'

By believing and having faith and walking the path of GOD'S hopes for you, the promised Advocate will guide you towards living as a spiritual being having a human experience. Not just the spirit, though, but living in spiritual communion with the whole of the Trinity. Just as we are motivated by the spirit, so also does Jesus' dwell within us, and with him, the Creator. 'I am in the Father and the Father is in me.' And just as the curtain was torn from top to bottom before the Holy of Holies, so does GOD now live in the midst of us.

So, Question number 1.

When have you felt the presence of the Holy Spirit? Not the nudging and guiding, but the support, the peace, the comforting. Is it singing, walking, baking, is it in the garden, or seeing great art, or architecture?

Now that the guiding Spirit is working on transforming your living into a Holy existence, what's next?

Well, we are also reading from Acts, or more fully 'The Acts of the Apostles'. The story of the early church. The people of the Way. The journeys, starting after the Ascension with the coming of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost, of the founding of communities of faith throughout the known world and how the early leaders of the church had to deal with the politics of the day.

I would also subtitle this book Actions from the Holy Spirit.

Think on how much the holy spirit had a role in directing the paths and decisions in where the gospel was spread. Last week, Peter's vision of eating with the Gentiles and the fact that the holy spirit came upon them ready to receive Peter's message.

In today's selection, Paul has a vision of a man from the Greco-Roman region of Macedonia, begging him to bring them the Good News. Sailing through a couple of adjacent cities, Paul and his companions arrive in the city of Philippi, join a group of women, gathered by a nearby river, and begin to share. Among these are God-Fearers, gentiles who respect or believe in the one God of the Jewish people. Lydia, a dealer in luxury items, is moved to invite Paul's group to stay with her household and they are all baptized.

Just as the Lord works in mysterious ways, the Spirit guides us up in ways that may seem unsure and takes us out of our comfort zones. But the way is set before us. We are not asked to cold call the mission field. Where the spirit leads us, God has prepared a way and there are ears eager to hear.

Christ became like us so that we might become like him.

Question 2 a

How have you experienced the nudging of the Holy Spirit? Have you been the nudge to someone else on behalf of the spirit?

Question 2 b

Think about the people who have worn the face of Christ in your life, both giving and receiving blessings and who have shaped how your faith life has developed?

30 Seconds

While working on this I read the Forward Day by Day for this Sunday, and I have a takeaway. Many preach that because we are Christians, we can look at the world with rose color glasses, but the message was that should look at the world through the Eyes of Easter. That God will put in our path what is needed for the next thing he is asking us to do.

Amen