



'Worship at home' May 14th 2023

We continue in the season of Easter, and are reminded of the continuing presence of the risen Christ, with us always.



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Opening

We worship the God who inhabits our world and indwells our lives.

We need not look up to find God,
we need only to look around:

 within ourselves,
 beyond ourselves,
 into the eyes of another.

We need not listen for a distant thunder to find God,
we need only listen to the music of life,

 the words of children,
 the questions of the curious,
 the rhythm of a heartbeat.

We worship the God who inhabits our world
and who indwells our lives.

~ Presbyterian Church USA

https://www.pcusa.org/site_media/media/uploads/peacemaking/pdf/mlk-resources.pdf



After the events of Easter and Christ's resurrection, it seems that those first followers continued to experience Christ's presence with them, in new and sometimes unexpected ways. They report that he walked and talked and ate with them, yet could appear through locked doors. At times it was difficult to recognise him, yet he was consistently affirmed as Jesus the Christ, the Son of God. This continued for a period of around 40 days after the resurrection, and Ascension Day is marked on Thursday of this week. However, his followers were not left without an assurance of his ongoing presence, and we anticipate the celebration of Pentecost, the time when we celebrate the work of the Holy Spirit in making God known, which occurs 50 days after Easter.

John 14:15-21

"If you love me, you will obey my commandments. I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, who will stay with you forever. He is the Spirit, who reveals the truth about God. The world cannot receive him, because it cannot see him or know him. But you know him, because he remains with you and is in you. "When I go, you will not be left all alone; I will come back to you. In a little

while the world will see me no more, but you will see me; and because I live, you also will live. When that day comes, you will know that I am in my Father and that you are in me, just as I am in you. "Those who accept my commandments and obey them are the ones who love me. My Father will love those who love me; I too will love them and reveal myself to them."
Good News Bible



Here, Jesus assures his followers that although he is leaving them, they will not be orphaned, abandoned or alone. They will be given another Helper, the Spirit, who reveals the truth about God.

The Greek word used for 'Helper' is παράκλητον (*parakletos*), which can be translated as 'comforter', 'advocate', 'champion'. It is derived from a verb meaning 'call to one's side'; to 'assist', 'support' and 'encourage'. Jesus is promising that his followers will not be left alone. They will have the Spirit to console, comfort and guide, to reveal the truth about God, and to be with them, and us, always.



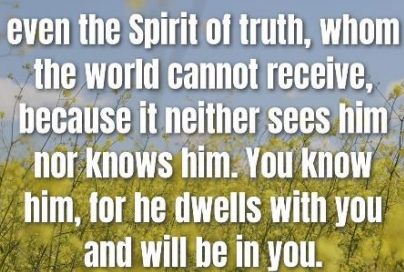
Reflect on the many ways in which you recognise the Spirit of God in your life.

When has this brought you consolation?

Comfort? Support? Encouragement? Guidance?

When have you been challenged by God's truth in your life?

In what ways might this change your actions or attitudes?

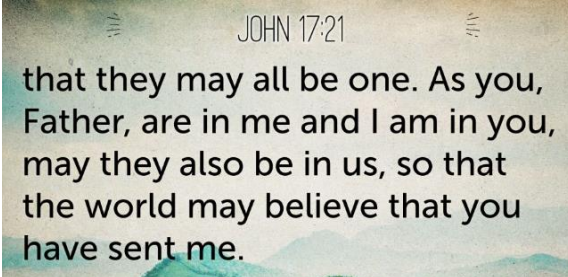


even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you.

This is the mystery of God's Spirit, who we cannot see, but our experience is that the Spirit is with us and in us: comforting, sustaining, guiding, empowering us to live in love. The gospel of John takes care to emphasise the intimacy we can experience

with God, in Christ, and through the Holy Spirit. God calls each of us into a relationship of love, which then flows out into our relationships with others.

God is not a distant, detached, objective being who watches us from above and dictates what happens to our lives. Rather, God is love, God is relationship, God is Spirit, who surrounds and encompasses us, and dwells within us. We live our lives immersed in God, and God in us. In God, we live and move and have our being.



JOHN 17:21
that they may all be one. As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me.

Acts 17:24-28

“The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples built by human hands. And he is not served by human hands, as if he needed anything. Rather, he himself gives everyone life and breath and everything else. From one man he made all the nations, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and

he marked out their appointed times in history and the boundaries of their lands. God did this so that they would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from any one of us. ‘For in him we live and move and have our being.’ As some of your own poets have said, ‘We are his offspring.’ *New International Version*

Prayer

Gracious God,
we give thanks for love and life;
we give thanks that you abide with us and in us,
that in you we live and move and have our being;
we give thanks for the gift of your Spirit,
always with us, comforting, sustaining, guiding, empowering.
Open our eyes to recognise your presence
among us and within us;
open our hearts to the depth of love
that you have for each of us;
open our minds to the truth
you would reveal to us.
Show us your ways,
that we might share your love and life and truth
with those around us.
Amen.



*I will not leave you orphaned;
I am coming to you.
I will send the Advocate,
the Spirit of Truth.
You know him,
because he abides with you,
and he will be in you.*

Closing

Listen to the promise Jesus makes:
I will never abandon you as orphans—I will come to you.
Even though the world will not be able to see me,
I will never vanish from your sight.
And since I live, you will also live.
Go from here in the knowledge
that you do not go alone:
the power and presence of God goes with you.

Praise be to God!

~ Christine Longhurst

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