

John 14:25-27

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The Holy Spirit Will Remind You

I.

It’s another glorious day—a festival day in the city. You climb the stairs of the baked-brick structure with globs of clay sticking out between the bricks. You shuffle through the door. The hem of your robe brushing against your sandals seems loud in the stillness. Everyone is quiet at the moment, lost in their own thoughts about the significance of this place.

This is the place where everything seemed to start unraveling. Or perhaps—looking back from your new-found perspective—this is the place where all the disjointed pieces of information gathered over three years began to all come together. You just didn’t know it at the time.

The festival your group is gathered for is the Feast of Weeks, or the Feast of the Harvest. It is the 50th day after the first Sabbath following Passover. The common language used the word for “fiftieth” as the name in use for the festival—Pentecost.

Is everyone who has gathered thinking back the same way you are? Just over 50 days ago you climbed these same stairs to gather for another festival—all calf-eyed and optimistic about the future. How naive you were on that day! How tumultuous the days have been since then!

Who could forget the details of that Passover celebration some 50-odd days before? And yet—you have—at least to some extent. So much happened on that night! Who could possibly remember all the things that were said and done on that night? Your mind’s eye has a vague sketch, to be sure, but it’s like a quick pencil drawing—waiting to have some detail added in and some color to make it all pop out and come to life.

If only there were some way to remember better! If you had any knowledge of the future, you would wish that there were something like a computer to help you write down all your thoughts about that day—something easier to go back and edit your thoughts than the scroll and pen and inkwell you had to use in their place. Even better would be some additions to the computer. Perhaps a digital voice recorder that could synchronize with your computer and use some software like Dragon Dictate to automatically transcribe all the words straight from the recording to the screen to be saved for posterity.

Alas, it’s about the year 30 A.D., as it would come to be counted later. Alas, you didn’t even have the scroll and pen along on that night 50 days ago to write down everything your Master said. There was so much! And it was so important! *That* much you remember, at least.

You slide quietly into the room, nodding in familiarity to all the people in the room who

are lost in their thoughts, too. *Now* you all understand what Jesus meant, but now the task seems monumental. How are you going to go about his Heavenly Father's continuing business when you didn't have a good record of everything that was said on that night your Savior was betrayed by Judas?

II.

The stillness is shattered. The curtains at the windows no longer hang vertically, but stand straight out, as if some unseen force were holding them from the ceiling. It might be an unseen force, but you can *feel* it. "Suddenly a sound like the rushing of a violent wind came from heaven, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting" (Acts 2:2, EHV).

You look at your companions. You've never seen anything like this in the whole, wide world! "They saw divided tongues that were like fire resting on each one of them" (Acts 2:3, EHV).

You're starting to see things a bit more clearly now. No, it wasn't your *eyesight* that was the problem. There was no blurry vision when you entered the room. It's your *memory* that seems to be improving. "They were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, since the Spirit was giving them the ability to speak fluently" (Acts 2:3, EHV).

Now your mind goes back with much more clarity to that evening that will come to be known in the Christian Church as Maundy Thursday. On that night, Jesus said:

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You didn't need that voice recorder and computer, after all. You didn't even need the scroll and pen and ink. Your Master, Jesus, is now fulfilling *exactly* what he told you that night. What had been forgotten because of the turmoil and tumult of the events of that night...and the next...and the next...and the morning of confusion and joy, now were being cleared up in but a moment.

So much he told you! So much that the Sundays of the Easter season in millennia to come would be filled with readings from the gospels about the events of Maundy Thursday. He had so many comforting words. So many instructions to give about what must happen to him!

Yes, all your mistakes of Maundy Thursday and Good Friday, and all the other mistakes of your life, were serious. All of those things are called sins. You can remember your condescending tone as you insisted to Jesus that *you* would not be like the betrayer. You can remember how adamantly you insisted that *you* would not be one of the disciples who would abandon Jesus, or claim not to know him. You can remember so many sins from your life.

But *those* are not the things Jesus promised to send the Holy Spirit to remind you of. Yes, you need to remember them, because you need to remember why Jesus came in the first place. But this rushing wind and these tongues of fire are the visible sign that the Holy Spirit has been sent by Jesus—just as he promised—to remind you *of everything Jesus told you!*

III.

And oh, how important were the things he told you! How wonderful the news that what happened there in those tumultuous days was done by Jesus to pay for all those sins! How wonderful the message he gave you that very night when he said, in the midst of all the chaos to follow: “Peace I leave with you. My peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Do not let your heart be troubled, and do not let it be afraid” (John 14:27, EHV).

What peace we often forfeit as we look around at the tumult and chaos of this world! What peace we forfeit when we fail to reflect on the great things *he* has done, and instead focus only on ourselves and our own failures!

But the peace is there. He has won it. He gives it. Do not be afraid. Think back to that night of Maundy Thursday and the Supper he instituted. That Supper is there to celebrate frequently—to taste and see the tangible evidence of the forgiveness he won for you on the cross—to taste and see the peace he gives you, just as he promised.

That peace is there, even for those who weren’t gathered together to have tongues of fire dancing on their heads in the wind-blown upper room. Jesus sends the Holy Spirit to his disciples of every age and generation to put his name on them in baptism.

You file out of that upper room with the rest of The Eleven to present this message to the mass of humanity that has gathered for the Feast of Weeks celebration—for Pentecost. People from everywhere are able to hear the message of salvation in Jesus Christ in their own language. You realize that you and your companions have the power of the Holy Spirit, just as Jesus promised, in a very special way. No longer are you timid fishermen and scared disciples who will run at the first sign of trouble, but men who will boldly proclaim what your Savior and Master has given you to say—come what may.

In fact, the very Peter who denied Jesus 50 days previously is the one who now speaks the most boldly. He declares that the miracle taking place is the beginning of the fulfillment of the prophecy spoken by Joel: “This is what God says will happen in the last days: I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh. Your sons and your daughters will prophesy. Your young men will see visions. Your old men will dream dreams. ¹⁸Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy” (Acts 2:17-18, EHV).

As you hear him speak you realize the impact of that prophecy. Down through the ages to the very end of time, disciples of Jesus will continue to have this outpouring of the Holy Spirit which makes them Children of God. As fellow heirs with you of the gift of eternal life in heaven, both men and women would forevermore speak the full message of the gospel—telling people what God has done for them in bringing them forgiveness full and free through Christ Jesus.

To be sure, the stillness of this day was shattered with that rushing and violent wind and with the tongues of fire, but what a wondrous breaking of the silence! How could anyone keep quiet in the face of the wonders of God’s love? He is risen! He is risen indeed. God the Holy Spirit has reminded you of everything he said about this wonder of wonders of God’s love. Amen.