

The Revealer
Message #4 in the series "Fresh Wind"

Pastor David Wolverton

Good morning, everybody. For those of you who may not know me, my name is David Wolverton, I'm one of the pastors here. And we greet you in the name of our Lord and savior, Jesus Christ. Thank you for joining us for this time as we go before the Lord for the message that He has placed on my heart. I invite you to join with me in prayer. Let's pray together.

Oh, gracious Lord, open up your word to us and open us up to your word. Teach us, Lord, what you would have us learn as you conform our lives into the disciples that you have called us to be. All of this, Lord, we pray in Jesus' name. And all God's people said. Amen.

On Friday this past week, the Supreme Court knocked our socks off. With a decision that has caused a ripple effect. Both on social media in cities all over this country and even in families and churches, dare I say it, even in this room right now, there are people on both or multiple sides of the issue of abortion. Some in this room are very angry at the decision. Some in this room are rejoicing at the decision. And some, based on statistics, some in this room and in every room that is filled with worshiping Christians throughout this nation, some, see this decision as an invasion into their personal life story. Every reaction that has occurred, and I've watched much of it as perhaps you have as well, every reaction is either illustrating the great polarization and division that exists in our nation right now or has contributed to it. What concerns me more than all of what I've seen and heard, is what do we as the Church of Jesus Christ, what do we as followers of Jesus do and response? How do we treat one another?

You see, the grand challenge for all of us is that if we believe and if we espouse the virtue and value of diversity, I know I do, but if we truly say that we value diversity, then times like this are a grand test to see if we are able to live out what we say we believe. Because the value of diversity is not a value, if in the midst of a situation where people disagree with us, we choose to push away with hatred, with animosity, those who are different from us.

So, what will we do? We are in the midst and as Pastor Matt indicated, coming to a close of a series that we're calling Fresh Wind. And today I want to draw us deeper into a passage of scripture that we have been studying in John's Gospel, John, Chapter 14 in a very specific way. The specific way is within the context of what's been going on in our nation, but also in light of what just happened on Friday. We cannot do this on our own. Back in the early 1900s, specifically more in the framework of 1940 through 1960, there was a pastor who began to write and also edit a magazine from a Christian perspective. His name was a W Tozer, and he wrote something back in those early days of the mid 1960s that I think is appropriate for us as we talk about the Holy Spirit in the midst of our journey today. This is what He said. He wrote:

"If the Holy Spirit was withdrawn from the church today, 95% of what we do would go on and no one would know the difference. If the Holy Spirit had been withdrawn from the New Testament church. 95% of what they did would have stopped and everybody would have known the difference."

When I read that the other day, I was struck with a question. And the question was: Is this true for our church? If the Holy Spirit was withdrawn from St Paul's church, would we know the difference, or would life go on as if nothing happened? And then I asked the question, Is it true for me personally? If the Holy Spirit was withdrawn from my life, would I notice or would I go on day to day the same as I always had been? And then, because I'm a preacher, I have to ask, is this true for you? Would you know the difference if the Holy Spirit were not a part of your faith experience? And would the people around you see the difference in you? More specifically stated, are you living today in the full experience of a Holy Spirit empowered life? Why is this important to me?

We as followers of Jesus, we are gifted with the Holy Spirit. That's a promise of Scripture. It has been my personal experience, over 35 years of doing ministry at the gift of the Holy Spirit is essential. In fact, it is so essential that I want to say to you that this spirit that God has given us is the Spirit that defines us in specific terms. The spirit inside you is the God who defines you. What is that spirit inside you? That's what this series has been about, looking at the powerful presence and gift of the Holy Spirit and what the Holy Spirit has to offer not only us, but the Kingdom of God movement that we are a part of lest we reveal the truth behind A.W. Tozer statement. And we live out prophetically what he has described there.

So, I want to invite you into the good news today of John Chapter 14. I want to focus in on just a few verses and just briefly describe a few things about the Holy Spirit and then I'm just giving you a fair warning. I'm going to invite you into a prayer time. We're going to ask the Holy Spirit to come into our lives. So, I invite you to look with me at John Chapter 14, starting at verse 25. I think we're going to discover some very important elements to who the Holy Spirit is and what He's to be doing in our lives, especially in the season in which we find ourselves within the global church and within what's going on in our nation today.

This is how it begins. Jesus, as you remember, is in the upper room during John 14. The back story is in the upper room, celebrating the last meal with his disciples. It's one of the most intimate experiences that we have recorded in the Gospels of what Jesus is doing with his closest friends just hours before he will be arrested, thrown in front of a mock trial, convicted and then tortured all the way to the point of being nailed on a cross. All unfairly and unjustly and done very willingly on his part, because his perspective is larger than our perspective. And his view of justice is larger than our view of justice. So, in the midst of that intimate moment. This is what he says in verse 25. He says to them:

*"These things I have spoken to you while I am still with you. But the **helper**, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance of all that I have said to you."* [John 14:25 ESV]

I want to pause there and just highlight a few things. In fact, on your screen I have highlighted a few words. The first word is the word helper. Some of your translations, if you're using your Bible or the Bible app, some of your translations may use the word advocate or comforter. All of those are appropriate I'm using the ESV translation that chooses the word 'helper' for a very particular reason. I believe that when you look at the specific Greek word that's used in the original language of the New Testament, it is the word paracletos. Paracletos is actually a very interesting word. I'm a lover of words, as you know. It's the combination of two words. It's actually a prefix, the word 'para' in Greek, which means alongside and

'Cletus', which is from the verb kaletō, which means to call out or called out. And so, a para cleat, para cletus is one who is called to walk alongside.

So, what it's basically describing for us about the Holy Spirit is that the Holy Spirit is what I'm calling our 'alongsider'. It is God himself; this is a very unique gift that God himself is giving in Jesus' name to remind the believers that they are never alone on the journey, that even though Jesus is now leaving them, He's going to die. He's going to disappear for three days, come back, He's going to reveal himself, and then He's going to disappear again. And so, in this season of His physical absence, He wants to leave His presence with those who are His followers. To let them know that they are never alone. I'm calling that the alongsider. The Holy Spirit is the alongsider and the alongsider has a very unique role. The focus that we're leaning into today is found in the next verse, the end of chapter, verse 26. It says: He will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you. And so, the alongsider, the Holy Spirit, is meant to equip us to remember Jesus and to remember what He has taught us. It's a very important element. In fact, so much so that I want to call the Holy Spirit the Revealer. In fact, the Holy Spirit has a very unique role to play in revealing the truth of God. Jump down with me to verse 30. Verse 30 says, this is still Jesus talking.

"I will no longer talk much with you for the ruler of this world is coming. He has no claim on me. But I do as the Father has commanded me so that the world may know that I love the Father." [John 15:26 ESV]

All right. This verse I could probably preach for weeks and still only begin to get through the surface elements of truth here. But look at this, **"I will no longer talk much with you."** Jesus is saying in very practical terms, I'm going to be leaving. I'm going to be dying. And He has let his disciples know that in advance, even though in this moment, in the upper room, they still don't get the power behind that statement. And Jesus is saying in anticipation of that, I'm not going to be with you much. Why? Because the ruler of this world, that's a phrase in the New Testament that Jesus uses that we now know is a reference to Satan or the enemy of love. He's saying the ruler of this world is coming. What does that mean? In that context, He's talking about the enemy, Satan is coming to undermine the work of God. That ultimately will put Jesus on the cross. But the next statement that Jesus makes is really critical for the disciples and for us to hear, especially in John's gospel. Jesus says: **"this ruler of the world, Satan, has no claim on me. But I do as the father commanded me."**

What John is writing here and what Jesus is saying is that at no point does the cross of Christ as the crucifixion of Jesus be the instrument of the enemy. It is actually the instrument of God. Jesus is not doing the bidding of the enemy. He is never under Satan's control. That God is doing something that is bigger than what everybody else is seeing. Jesus is tuning in to that, and He's giving that word of encouragement to His disciples in a moment when they need it the most. We too, in our culture today could say the same thing. It feels like the enemy of love, the ruler of this world is at work. And what Jesus wants to remind us, that at no point does Jesus ever leave the sovereign throne. He's never out of control. He's not looking down on the plight of what's happening in America and in our globe and go, 'oh, I didn't see that coming.' At no point is this a surprise! But according to what Scripture says, there are times when in the history of humanity, when humanity has basically thumbed their nose at God and said, 'We want to do things our way. And our sovereign Lord says, okay, have at it. Let me know how that goes. What's going on in our country. This our own fault. What's going on in our church? The capital 'C' church. It is our own fault. The good news is that the invitation to invite the alongsider to come alongside of us is still very real. The invitation is to connect

us with the source of life and power that can see us through whatever the devil wants to throw our way, because the devil has no claim on us.

Now, you can't be sitting there and not respond to that. Right? Can I at least get an Amen? Or do you believe that the enemy of love has a claim on you? Because if the enemy of love has claim on you and on me then the church has lost its sense of power and purpose. We're going to talk about that next week. But Jesus had a very important mission. And it was to show the world that He's living out the love of God by living out the command of God to go to the cross. Justice is bigger than what we think it is. So, the role of the Holy Spirit as Revealer, I could probably give you a list of dozens of things, some choosing just a few for our purposes today. As we engage this Holy Spirit within our present context, I want you to see the Holy Spirit first as the revealer of the truth about Jesus. Look at John 15, verse 26. It says, Jesus says,

"but when the helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness about me." [John 15:26]

So, this alongsider is first and foremost about bearing witness to Jesus, both to us as well as to the world. One chapter later, John 16. We read

"When the spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth. For he will not speak on his own authority. But whatever he hears, he will speak. And he will declare to you the things that are to come." [John 16:13 ESV]

So really important. What this is saying is the Holy Spirit is not working independently from Jesus and God is the Grand Trinity inter connectedness like when God speaks the Holy Spirit acts it out and walks alongside us to reveal the heart of God. One more, from John 14. Jesus says,

"If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father and he will give you another helper to be with you forever, 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." [John 14:15-17 ESV]

So, the Holy Spirit's job is to shine a light on Jesus. Jesus is God's agent of redemption, reconciliation, restoration, creation and re-creation. The Holy Spirit's job in us and within the world is to put the light on Jesus and what God is doing in and through Jesus. That's the job of the Holy Spirit. Remember, the spirit inside you is the God who defines you.

Second, the Holy Spirit reveals and convicts us of sin. John 16, verse eight, we read: "And when the Holy Spirit, comes, he will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment. Very important role that the Holy Spirit has. He is the Revealer and the convicter. Paul picks up on that theme in Romans Chapter 8 versus 1 and 2, where he writes,

"There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ, Jesus for the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death." [Romans 8:1-2]

The Holy Spirit is God's agent of transformation. Look, the only one who can change a heart is God. God is the only one. And he does that through the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the

one who convicts us, who leads us to a point of repentance, and who transforms us into new creations of Christ.

Without the Holy Spirit, we could preach numerous messages. We could have wonderful conversations that bear no fruit. It is the Holy Spirit that is the active agent of revealing to a person's heart their need for a savior and exposes whatever needs to be exposed to the light of God's healing love. And ultimately, the conviction of sin is to set people free to experience the thriving relationship with the God who created them and the God who defines them. Always. Spirit inside you is the God who defines you.

Third and finally, the Holy Spirit reveals our new identity in Christ. This is so important in our day today. The Spirit inside of us reveals our new identity in Christ. Paul writes in Galatians 4, versus 4 through 7:

"But when the fullness of time had come, God sent his son. Born of a woman. Born under the law. In order to redeem those who are under the law so that we might receive adoption as children. And because you are children, God has sent the Spirit of His son into our hearts, crying Abba! Father! So, you are no longer a slave but a child. And if a child then also an heir through God". [Galatians 4:4-7 NRSV]

You know, when we forget who we are in Christ and why we're here, we begin to wander aimlessly, allowing every voice, every influence. That sounds good to define who we are.

The Holy Spirit is God's agent of Revelation to help us remember who we are and why we're here and whose we are. And who God is. And then guides us to align ourselves to God's great plan and purpose. The spirit inside you is the God who defines you. A.W. Tozer again, "If the Holy Spirit was withdrawn from the church today, 95% of what we do would go on and no one would know the difference." I don't know about you, but that disturbs me. Because I see the evidence of that truth way too often in the Church of Jesus Christ today, nationally and globally, we are being consumed by what we think is important and missing, what God's mission and purpose is all about. And that tells me symptomatically that we have disconnected ourselves from the source, the revealer of truth. The one who defines who we are. We're forgetting who we are and why we're here. And we're wandering aimlessly waiting for somebody to tell us. And then when they do, we push that aside.

Only God can bring healing. We need a helper. We need our alongsider and to that end, I want to invite you, to appeal to that alongsider. We're going to put up on to the screens both at home and here in the room. Some phrases I'm going to drop them before you invite you to visually see what it says. Those of you who are visual learners. And then I'm going to invite you, those who feel you would like to join me in praying them, to pray them out loud. Or to yourself. And by doing so, I want to invite you to open yourself up to the alongsider, God's gift of love to you. Let's be in the spirit of prayer. "Holy Spirit, you are welcome in my life." Reflect on that for a brief moment and then I'll invite you to pray it if you are so inclined. Would you pray this with me? *"Holy Spirit, you are welcome in my life. Holy Spirit. You are welcome in this church."* Pause and reflect on that for a moment. Would you pray out loud if you are inclined, *"Holy Spirit. You are welcome in this church. Holy Spirit, I invite you to convict me of my sin so that I might be won over by your love."* Reflect on that potent one, if you dare. Will you pray out loud with me? *"Holy Spirit, I invite you to convict me of my sin so that I might be won over by your love. Holy Spirit, I ask you to give me assurance of your presence in my life. And of my presence in your love and Grace."* Reflect on that. Will you

pray out loud with me? *"Holy Spirit, I ask you to give me assurance of your presence in my life. And of my presence in your love and grace."* And now a long one, *"Holy Spirit remind me of who I am in Christ. That I am a child of the most high God. Adopted into the family of God. And that my identity in Christ is more important than any other identity markers that I may have in this world."* Reflect on that one. Will you pray out loud with me? *"Holy Spirit. You remind me of who I am in Christ. That I am a child of the most high God. Adopted into the family of God. And that my identity in Christ is more important than any other identity markers that I may have in this world."* And finally. *"Holy Spirit. You are welcome here."* Reflect on that based on all of what we just prayed. Would you pray out loud with me? *"Holy Spirit. You are welcome here."* One more time. *"Holy Spirit. You are welcome here."*

Holy Spirit, indeed, you are welcome here. Lord, we pray for fresh wind. Fresh wind within us and within your church, not just here at St Paul's, but your church globally. Lord, raise up your church for such a time as this. We need our Alongsider. To help us navigate through all of the chaos that we ourselves have wrought. Lord, reveal the heart of God to us, to your people. That we may be ambassadors, agents of love, forgiveness, grace, mercy, hope and restoration. All for the sake of connecting the heart of those who are disconnected from you back to your heart. Thank you, Holy Spirit, for what you have done, what you are doing, and what you will do. In Jesus name. Amen.

If you have prayed that prayer or you are here and you have not really placed your heart into the hands of the Lord, and you are feeling the nudge to do so after worship. Today, I would be honored to pray with you. Feel free to come forward. I will be up front, and we will trust that the Holy Spirit who has nudged you is doing something new to recreate you.