

**Message: “I Have Much More to Say to You”<sup>1</sup>****Jesus said, “The Spirit of Truth ... will guide you in all truth”**

(John 16:13b).

**Do you feel like life surprises you?** That you’re caught out from time to time? How many of us had these past few years in our long-range plans? Maybe we just haven’t been in tune with the Holy Spirit. Maybe we haven’t prayed enough or listened enough. Maybe the gift of knowing was right there, and we just didn’t open ourselves to it and were therefore doomed to stumble around in the darkness, so we’re constantly being surprised by the turn of events in our lives.

**But is that really what Jesus is saying?** We can hear this:

“I’m sending your own personal oracle to let you in on the secrets of life. Just pay attention, and there will be no more surprises.”

Really? I don’t think so. Let’s look again.

**The passages we’ve been reading for the last few weeks are part of Jesus’ farewell.** John recorded the final instructions Jesus gave to his chosen followers. Some have called it cramming for the final exam. But I’m not sure that’s it. It’s more like a parent passing on instructions to the teenager going off on a date. Or to go a little further back, this speech in John sounds like parents giving instructions to the babysitter before leaving their precious treasures with some near-stranger and wanting to make sure the sitter has the information to cover whatever situation might arise.

**Only in this case, the worried parent is Jesus.** The precious treasure is the world God so loved. And the sitters are this motley crew of incompetent bumbler. It brings to mind those guys from the *Hangover* movies or someone like that. No wonder Jesus seems nervous. No wonder he goes on for three chapters. No wonder Jesus tries to leave and then launches into even more instruction (look at the end of chapter 14, for example). But before we smirk too much at the incompetent bumbler of the gospels, keep this in mind. It isn’t too long until they morph into the incompetent bumbler we lovingly call the church -

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<sup>1</sup> Material drawn from *General Board of Discipleship, gbod.org*

charged with the same task of caring for the baby, the world sorely in need of changing!

**In these verses, Jesus seems to shift a little bit, from instruction to promise.** Oh, yes, more instruction is needed. Witness verse twelve - there's more I need to tell you, but your eyes are already starting to glaze over. So, instead of giving them more things to put on the list (you know "when he cries, try this" or "her favorite toys are over here" or "give them this to eat, but not too much, as it gives them gas" - that kind of stuff), Jesus says, "Here's how you can reach me."

**"Uh, wait," you're saying, "that isn't what it says, is it?"** Well, no. But cell phones won't come on the scene for a millennium or two. So, Jesus does the next best thing, he offers a spokesperson. A spokesperson, maybe, spokes-spirit. When the Spirit of Truth comes . . . Truth, and a little earlier, Jesus said, "I Am the Truth." The Spirit that is me, that is of me, speaks for me and speaks what I have spoken and would speak or will speak in the future.

**"Here's how you can reach me," Jesus says. "I am in touch. I am within reach."**

**You know the expression: "Can you hear me now?"** That's the question of the era, the question to the church today: "Can you hear Jesus, hear the truth, hear his voice, and know we aren't alone?"

**More than just a comforting presence, this Spirit, this connection, this Christ within reach is a Spirit of Truth.** Tell us what is and what will be. "Declare to you the things that are to come." Wow, does it mean we can make our lottery picks based on hints from this Spirit? Can we make our Super Bowl choices? Or, more realistically, can we avoid those potholes on the road of life? Well . . . no.

**This isn't a promise of prophetic powers or a glimpse into the details of a worldly future.** The truth shared is the truth about the kingdom of God. It's the truth about living in community. It's the truth about reconciliation and forgiveness, about grace, pardon and healing. This is far more important than lottery numbers or Super Bowl winners. And while it may not give advance warning of potholes on your road of life, it can give you tools for climbing out of whatever holes you might find

yourselves in. It can give you guidance for helping you to stop sabotaging yourself and those you love.

**The Spirit tells you the truth about yourself in such a way that you can, if you so choose, correct your course and reduce the chances you'll lose control.** In other words, it's about wisdom. Someone said, "wisdom is knowledge applied" or something like that.

**But we discover something else when we read Proverbs.** Wisdom becomes an entity. There is some debate as to the nature of this entity - an aspect of God, an independent being, a creative force, a supportive presence; sounds a lot like the discussions of the nature of the Holy Spirit. The Wisdom of Proverbs may be a reference to the Holy Spirit of John's Gospel. There's certainly seems to be a correlation. Maybe that's why those who prepare the Bible study plan put these texts together. Even if we see wisdom here as common sense or learned knowledge, the passage suggests there is help available.

**Wisdom calls and she offers a way to life, the life God intends for all of us, a life of community and connection on one level.** Trinity Sunday, which is also Peace with Justice Sunday, is a time when we celebrate the mystery of the nature of God. The God we believe in and praise is one and yet is experienced and approached in three aspects. These aspects have been given a variety of names. Some correlate to human experience, though God is not human. Others correlate to function, though none encompass the full power of God. Still others correlate to relationship, to each of the aspects and to us, those who worship and approach this ultimate Essence.

**Jesus and the Wisdom of Proverbs describe a God who seeks us, who connects with us, who guides and calls and shapes us.** Jesus reveals God when he offers the disciples continuing contact, even once he's no longer present with them in the flesh. Wisdom cries out with the presence of God, she asks if we have ears to hear. God desires contact with us. God reaches toward us. God speaks. As the song says, "In the rustling grass, I hear God pass, God speaks to me everywhere."

**We sing. We believe. We are sustained - by wisdom's cry.**

*Let us pray ...*

*Lord, renew and refresh our spirits each day with the delight you feel in us, your creation. Fill us with the spiritual power and energy we need to live as your children. Help us to be changed by your love so we are filled with joy and we can't wait to share the reason why with others. Help us to give ourselves to others in faith so they will know your love and find hope. Give us boldness to extend the invitation with love. Thank you for the divine appointments you set for us this week in the name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.*

**John 16:12-15 (CEB)**

“I have much more to say to you, but you can't handle it now. However, when the Spirit of Truth comes, he will guide you in all truth. He won't speak on his own, but will say whatever he hears and will proclaim to you what is to come. He will glorify me, because he will take what is mine and proclaim it to you. Everything that the Father has is mine. That's why I said that the Spirit takes what is mine and will proclaim it to you.”

**Proverbs 8:1-4, 22-31 (CEB)**

Doesn't Wisdom cry out

and Understanding shout?

Atop the heights along the path,

at the crossroads she takes her stand.

By the gate before the city,

at the entrances she shouts:

I cry out to you, people;

my voice goes out to all of humanity.

The LORD created me at the beginning of his way,

before his deeds long in the past.

I was formed in ancient times,

at the beginning, before the earth was.

When there were no watery depths, I was brought forth,

when there were no springs flowing with water.

Before the mountains were settled,

before the hills, I was brought forth;

before God made the earth and the fields

or the first of the dry land.

I was there when he established the heavens,  
when he marked out the horizon on the deep sea,  
when he thickened the clouds above,  
when he secured the fountains of the deep,  
when he set a limit for the sea,  
so the water couldn't go beyond his command,  
when he marked out the earth's foundations.

I was beside him as a master of crafts.

I was having fun,  
smiling before him all the time,  
frolicking with his inhabited earth  
and delighting in the human race.