

<https://youtu.be/ySCUMtZ5whY?si=0BYf1aeH1kW06enB> (Start with this video!)

I'm sure you are all wondering. What could watching people winning zonk prizes from Let's Make a Deal possibly lead to a fulfilling Pentecost Sunday message. I'm up to the challenge!

In the gospel of John, Jesus was wrapping up his last conversation with his disciples. We call this Jesus final discourse. He gets to today's part. The one where he talks about this great gift they are going to receive. Treasure beyond compare. There is one condition. Jesus must leave them first. As far as the disciples were concerned, Jesus seemed to be offering them the ultimate **zonk** prize.

Think about what they have in Jesus. It's the sure thing. The tangible thing. Jesus was real flesh and blood. They walked with him. Talked with him. Ate with him. Maybe even burped with him. Physically!

They saw all the miracles he performed. Healings, feeding thousands, walking on water. Even raising Lazarus from the dead.

They don't want to lose this. They don't want to lose Jesus. How could anything ever replace Jesus? And it certainly couldn't be better. If it looks like, sounds like, walks like, and acts like it. It's a **zonk** proposal.

What was Jesus was offering them that was so much better? He was offering the Holy Spirit, the Advocate, the Paraclete. Paraclete is the Greek word Jesus chooses here. Para means "alongside" and kletos means "to call". Paraclete refers to the divine being "called in aid". To come alongside Jesus' followers. No English translation of this word fully captures it's meaning. But let's try a few terms. Comforter, Counselor, Helper, Supporter, Adviser, Advocate, Ally.

And while we're at it. Let's look at the word Spirit for a moment. The church has been guilty of making this a vague and colorless word. Mostly associated with human mood or attitude.

But the Spirit, like all biblical terms that refer to God, is truly a picture-word with vivid, precise, and colorful meaning. From the beginning, when God breathed life into man, it wasn't colorless. It was God's breath, breathed or panted out. Think about how you blow out the candles on your birthday cake. Or think about the big bad wolf telling the little pigs. "I'll huff, and I'll puff, and I'll blow your house down." This is air moving vigorously, maybe even violently. God's energy let loose, forcefully invading, powerful in exercise, life demonstrated by activity.

Now the idea of the Spirit of God should not have been new to the disciples. They would have learned about Ruach in their synagogues.

It was Ruach in Ezekial that brought the dry bones back to life. Ezekial 37: 9 & 10. Then God said to Ezekial "Prophesy to the breath (the Ruach), prophesy, mortal, and say to the breath: Thus says the Lord God: Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live. "I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived and stood on their feet, a vast multitude.

Ruach, the Hebrew word for spirit. And in Greek it is Pneuma. Both refer to a divine Spirit that is personal, purposeful, invisible, irresistible. Both refer to an individual human consciousness. Both refer to a wind that when aroused whirls leaves, uproots trees, and blows buildings over.

It was Pneuma that Jesus was speaking of in his conversation with Nicodemus in John chapter 3:8. The wind (the Pneuma) blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So, it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.

The Spirit wasn't just an invention of the New Testament. The Spirit and the work of the spirit can be found all throughout the Old Testament.

It was the Spirit that helped mold creation into shape and animate created beings.

It was the Spirit that controlled the course of nature and history.

It was the Spirit that revealed God's truth and will to his messengers by both direct communication and/or distilled insight. Like the dumb ass speaking to the prophet Naaman.

It was the Spirit that taught God's people through these revelations the way of faithfulness and fruitfulness.

It was the Spirit that elicited from individuals a personal response to God. Responses that included faith, repentance, obedience, righteousness, openness to God's instruction and fellowship with him through praise and prayer.

It was the Spirit that equipped individuals for leadership. Who was there to inspire Moses, Joshua, Gideon, Samson, David, Elijah and Elisha.

Creator, Controller, Revealer, Quickener, and Enabler. This was the Holy Spirit of the Old Testament.

What about the New Testament? That's where we find ourselves today in the final discourse of the Gospel of John. To the disciples, perhaps it sounded like a **zonk**. They had the physical presence of Jesus. Jesus says, no friends you have it all wrong. You need me to leave. I can't send the Paraclete unless I leave and you need the Paraclete.

The Holy Spirit will be the one to continue Jesus' ministry. The New Testament will be all about showing how what Jesus says here in John is fulfilled. All throughout the New Testament we will see the followers of Jesus speaking, witnessing, convincing, glorifying Christ, leading,

teaching, commanding, forbidding, desiring, giving speech, giving help, interceding for Christians, articulating groans. All because of the Paraclete. The Holy Spirit would even be found crying to God through the prayers of the disciples.

It is the Paraclete that even today seeks to drawing us as followers of Jesus to faith, hope, love, obedience, adoration, and dedication. These are the qualities we are asked to measure any movement against. Ecumenical movement, do we find in you, faith, hope, love, obedience, adoration, and dedication? How about you, liturgical movement, and you small-group movement.

I truly believe that John Wesley, the founder of Methodism met the Holy Spirit first-hand. As an Anglican priest, he had access to the most contemporary theological and philosophical knowledge of the day. And yet...he knew he still felt a hole in his heart. A hole that was only satisfied by realizing that head knowledge and heart knowledge are not the same. Heart knowledge only comes by letting go of what we think should be the tangible Christ and by embracing what Christ can do through the Paraclete. Listen for the work of the Spirit in John Wesley's account of his Aldersgate experience on May 24, 1738.

“In the evening I went very unwillingly to a society in Aldersgate Street, where one was reading [Martin] Luther's preface to the Epistle to the Romans. About a quarter before nine, while he was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone, for salvation; and an assurance was given me that He had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death.”

When John Wesley's heart felt strangely warmed, how could it not be the convincing work of the Holy Spirit?

So what is behind Door number 3? Friends, it is not a **zonk**.

It is the Holy Spirit called by God to come “alongside” Jesus’s disciples. That includes us. It is the bringer of truth. God’s truth disclosed in and through Jesus Christ. It is the mission that insures that it is with us, his disciples, that the Spirit will “abide forever”. That church family was to prove that the truth brought by our departed Jesus was not momentary.

Church family, only Jesus’ followers will know the Spirit because the world is unable to receive him. The world. It neither sees or knows the Spirit.

Finally, the Spirit is our community teacher. Guiding us in the learning of God’s truth in a perpetual world of conflict.

So, church family, what is behind door number 3 may seem like a **zonk** to the world. But we know better. What is behind door number 3 is the Spirit of truth. It is that Spirit that will guide us into all the truth.