

## Holy Spirit in You

The Holy Spirit is incredibly old. By human standards, he is eternally old. In fact, he has been around forever. For example, the Holy Spirit was present at the beginning, at the time of creation. We see this in the first 2 verses of the Bible:

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.

I love this verse. When it says the Holy Spirit is hovering over the face of the waters, it sounds like the Holy Spirit was just hanging out, chilling, before He created anything. I think he was probably mulling over everything He was about to make.

Well, He made a lot! The Holy Spirit, along with the Father and the Son, created a whole universe, including Earth, with all its valleys and mountains, rivers and oceans, trees and plants, birds and fish, animals and people, and so forth.

This is the same Holy Spirit, who Jesus talks about in our Gospel reading. The same Spirit who made the universe and who made us, is also our Advocate, our helper, forever. As our advocate, the Spirit comes right alongside us in order to help us.

I remember being aware of the Spirit's presence as young child, even before I knew exactly who He was. But even though I did not know who He was, I was never afraid of Him. Instead, the Spirit comforted me, and He made me feel close to God.

One Christmas Eve, I was 6 or 7, I was sitting in worship, listening to Pastor Hyllengren, sensing something, a presence, that was not only with me, but in me. I was afraid to ask about it because it seemed weird. But truthfully, I believed it was God.

Maybe that sounds a little crazy to you. But I believe the same Spirit who was hanging out before creation itself, was hanging out with me as young child, and is still hanging out with me as an adult man. This grace sustains my faith and gives me peace.

You should believe this too. In fact, I proclaim to you today that Jesus has done exactly what he said he would do in John 14. He asked the Father to send you the Holy Spirit, the Advocate, to come alongside you and to be with you, today and forever.

And because Jesus asked him to do so, God, the Father, has sent you this Holy Spirit. This eternally old, Holy Spirit, who made the world, has again come into the world, sent by God, to hang out with you, to live inside your life, to help and save you.

Now, you are never alone. As our reading says, you are never orphaned. Jesus sends the very presence of God, the Holy Spirit, to live as part of your life. This is not crazy. It's not a lie. You live with the holy presence of God, the Holy Spirit, in you.

I have never been an orphan. I have two wonderful parents who loved me, who raised me with great care, who brought me up to be a productive person in the world, and who passed on faith to me, faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. I am blessed.

Having said this, after spending time with dozens of orphans in Ecuador in 2014, 2016, and 2019, I must say that they are blessed too. They may not have parents like I had, but all of them have been rescued from horrible circumstances.

And now, they find themselves in a good place. The caregivers (the Tias) in those orphanages love them, raise them with great care, teach them to be productive people in the world, and they pass on faith to them, faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Last July, in Latacunga, I watched a Tia help the children Margo and I sponsor, Justin and Alan, say their bedtime prayers. Justin spoke a long prayer, using Spanish words I didn't know. But I could tell from the Tia's reaction, his prayer was faithful.

Jesus has not left these children orphaned. He has sent people to care for them, and through these people, and through people like us who support them, these children are living with and alongside the very holy presence of God, the Holy Spirit.

Jesus has sent the Holy Spirit to be with these children too, to be with them and help them forever. The Spirit is hanging out with them, living in them, and helping them. So really, they are not orphans, because the Holy Spirit lives within their lives.

In First Corinthians 3:16, Paul writes: Do you not know you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells with you? And again, in First Corinthians 6:20, Paul writes: Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you?

These two verses mean we are not orphans either. They remind us as Christian people, that the Spirit who was hanging out before creation itself, chooses to hang out with us, to make our lives and our bodies, His home. We are never alone.

Indeed, God's Holy Spirit has come alongside us to be with us, to comfort, console, and help us. This is true, when we struggle with anything in life, like illness, addiction, abuse, personal or marriage problems, this coronavirus pandemic, even grief.

The Holy Spirit will lead us through all such times. Furthermore, He will lead us whenever we need help with some important decision, or great challenge, or even on the day we face death. The Holy Spirit will be with us to help us there, too.

This doesn't mean we won't have troubles. But it does mean when anything is troubling us, challenging us, or causing us harm, we are not alone. We are not orphans. We have the Holy Spirit of God living with us, to help us through those times.

Jesus words for you today:

If you love me ... I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, to be with you forever. This is the Spirit of truth ... You know him, because he lives with you, and he will be in you. I will not leave you orphaned.

In other words, the same Holy Spirit who made the universe lives in you. He is there to comfort you, help you, and love you. He is there to strengthen you, and to give you all the faith and peace you need to get through this whole crazy coronavirus time.

Amen.