

Advent 3

The Holy Spirit Who Sends Us

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ADVENT

...is a season of remembering that Jesus came, while **actively waiting** for his return.

This year during Advent, we look forward to Christmas and we remember Jesus's life: all the things he did in looking forward to his birth. We also look forward to his return: our waiting is an active waiting full of things Jesus commanded us to do. We are not alone in this: the Holy Spirit is with us.



A Holy Spirit Waffle House story from my life: In 2004-6 while I was in high school, I helped out with the worship team and the youth group and spent a lot of time with the pastor. He would often take me home: one time he told me I should be a pastor. This was not something I really wanted to do. Later in 2010, I was in the Navs at UA even though I wasn't a student and I was floundering a bit. A 23 yr old friend in Michigan called me and asked me to join him in his move to Texas to be a pastor at a church he had never been to.

The first week the church superintendent met me at Waffle House and assigned me to be an assistant pastor at my friend's church. This seemed foolish....later, I will come back to this.

ADVENT

The work of the Holy Spirit is to draw us in, clothe us, and send us out.

Today, we are talking about the Holy Spirit who sends us. The Spirit clothes us and gifts us with what we need so he can send us out. But...**what are we sent out to do?**

The Holy Spirit Who Sends Us

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my **witnesses** in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.

Acts 1:8

We are witnesses to....**what?** We are called to witness to the **Kingdom of God:** Jesus came, died, was resurrected and is now enthroned on high in glory. We are to proclaim his kingdom here on earth. But....**who are we to witnesses to?**

The Holy Spirit Who Sends Us

Jerusalem – Your neighborhood

Judea – Tucson

Samaria – Phoenix

Ends of the earth

The places you go regularly: your Jerusalem is the parks, the coffee shop, the people you interact with in your neighborhood. Tucson is like Judea, Phoenix is like Samaria, and then to the ends of the earth. Michael Cousineau told us this in a sermon: The book of Acts is laid out like this, organized from Jerusalem and then outward.

The Holy Spirit Who Sends Us

Family and Friends

Acquaintances

Strangers

You can start with your family and friends here and branch out to your acquaintances about the power and witness of Jesus. We do this by living in the kingdom: we have Jesus's compassion and grace for the people around us. When I worked at Starbucks, I didn't directly talk to my co-workers about Jesus but I tried to live like Jesus would live. It took a couple of years but I began to see the Holy Spirit bring people to me. Once a guy named Brian

asked me to read the Bible with him because he was dating a girl who was a Christian. In exchange he wanted to change my oil. Another lady asked me if I was a Christian and could she talk about which college her daughter should attend. Another woman came back later and told me she was going to church with her daughter now. This is what happens when you live in the kingdom of God.

We can even talk to strangers! The Holy Spirit took Philip to a desert road and told him to talk to a stranger. After he explained the gospel to and baptized him, the Holy Spirit took him somewhere else. Ask the Holy Spirit for the places you can enter into prayer.

This doesn't always go well: One time my brother Stephen was reading the story about Philip and eunuch at Starbucks. Next to him was a guy reading a comic: he felt the Holy Spirit asked him to talk to the guy about Jesus. He asked him if he understood what he was reading: the guy said "Yes." He noticed the guy was reading the "Wine Bible." Even if the guy asked him to "go away," my brother was faithful.

The Holy Spirit Who Sends Us

Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you." And with that he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit.

John 20:21-22

But...**How do we go out?** We are sent with peace. We step into places with family, friends, acquaintances, and strangers with peace: light goes forth into a dark world. The lives of these people in your family and your friends: you bring peace into all these places. It's Jesus's breath on us.

The Holy Spirit Who Sends Us

Sent with peace

In Jesus' priestly line

Offering forgiveness

As the father sends Jesus, so we are sent. We bring the same compassion and grace that he brought. We walk in Jesus's priestly line to bring forgiveness and grace to others.

The Holy Spirit Who Sends Us

Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.

Galatians 5:25

We are not going to be sent outside the character of Jesus. It's in step with Jesus and his Spirit.

The Holy Spirit Who Sends Us

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. *Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.*

Galatians 5:22-25

We know we are in step by the fruit the Holy Spirit produces. This is how we go out into this world where our actions matter in the chaos around us. We wander outside his character and the Spirit invites us back in to be sent in the fruit of the Spirit.

The Holy Spirit Who Sends Us

We are witnesses to the good news of the kingdom of God, sent by Jesus in the Spirit, and living in step with the Spirit.

We are witnesses and walk in step with Jesus in the world around us in the power of the Holy Spirit. We are drawn in and dressed and sent out. This can feel overwhelming!



Let's finish the Waffle House story about sending a 22- and 23-year-old into a church where they've never been was a terrible idea. It didn't go well and I have lots of stories to prove this. Why?

1. I needed to learn to re-narrate my story in light of the Holy Spirit and those around me.
2. In the midst of all things that happened in TX, the Holy Spirit (who had said YES to my going there) was with me. The Holy Spirit spoke to me that this was what he wanted me to do. He

affirmed the words of Carlos, my pastor in Nogales.

The Holy Spirit Who Sustains Us

Matthew 3:13-4:11

Bread

Testing

Worship

As I was looking at the temptations of Jesus in the desert, I want to go back and start with John 3 with Jesus's baptism. He is drawn into the water and is close to the father and clothed in the Holy Spirit. The Father says he is well pleased with him and THEN he goes to the desert. First, he is clothed and sent by the father. Then he is tempted by the enemy: tell these stones to become bread. Jesus responds with Scripture: When the Holy

Spirit sends us, we go in life with the Holy Spirit. When we feel we can not go on, the question is "Where are you finding life?" Life is in the Holy Spirit; we often seek bread in other places and other empty places that cannot give us life. Jesus is with us in the places where he sends us: he sends us with the Spirit.

A warning: The enemy said, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down." Jesus answered that we are not to put the Lord our God to the test. Sometimes, we ask the Holy Spirit where he is and he answers with an affirmation. But there is a difference between asking and demanding.

The sustaining work of the Spirit is to bring people alongside you and bring life. When we demand that God catch us before we fall, this is putting the Lord to the test.

An encouragement: The devil said he would give everything to God but Jesus said we are to serve God only. Then the devil left and angels ministered to Jesus. We are invited to worship and the Spirit will sustain in life. The invitation is to worship and seek God and not find life in other places and to follow after him

Who am I sent to? Who is the one person in my family and friends and acquaintances (people I see regularly) that comes to mind? Where can I offer grace and compassion and peace into the chaos? Begin asking who you can be praying for? Be willing to have the Spirit move us into new places to offer prayer and encouragement. Where am I seeking life apart from Jesus and where is the Spirit inviting me to turn back and worship God alone?

Questions/Comments:

- We are also called to our enemies.
- When I am aware of the grace poured out on me, the more eager I am to share.
- I may be at the doctor's office for an appointment, but I'm really there to be an ambassador for Jesus.