

## **John 16:12-15**

12“I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. 13When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth; for he will not speak on his own, but will speak whatever he hears, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. 14He will glorify me, because he will take what is mine and declare it to you. 15All that the Father has is mine. For this reason I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you.

*Introduction for the day-* We’re usually too busy living in relationship with people we love to analyze and then write treatises about them. Yet...we need words, stories, and ideas as we tend and nurture those same relationships. The same can be said on the day the Church calls Trinity Sunday. How might our language and our inherited teachings ignite our imaginations and ultimately draw us to greater love for God and our neighbour?

Sermon-“God still speaks”

A few years back Sharon and I drove past a church in Minnesota that displayed a multi-coloured banner reading, “*God still speaks*”. The banner’s message itself might have been God’s way of speaking at the moment. How has God spoken to you this week. How might God have spoken *through* you this week?

Last Sunday we celebrated Pentecost, and heard about the Holy Spirit whooshing in and speaking and revealing God to everyone in their own language. One bit from that story can be brought forward this week when we consider how God might speak. The people who gathered in Jerusalem were there for an annual harvest festival with traditions dating back hundreds of years. Maybe everyone knew the drill and expected things to go on as usual. That day, God shook things up and wanted to communicate and to be made known. How might the Spirit show up in our day to day lives?

Most of the time, God is more subtle, I think. Imagine God speaking in the way the 13th century Meister Eckhart does: “God is like the person who clears his throat while hiding to give himself away. God lies in wait for us with nothing so much as love” (Meister Eckhart, circa 1260-1328).

We might be more inclined to attribute the nudges and throat clearings to God's Spirit than we are to imagine God speaks in an audible voice with a detailed message. Some in our congregation have shared stories about feeling prompted to call someone or send a note and the person you contacted said they really needed someone to talk with. My post-modern, western educated mind is willing to accept that the Spirit might be at work there.

Once I woke in the middle of the night saying out loud, "I wonder how Derek is doing". I prayed for him and went back to sleep. The next day at school I asked him how his night was. He said he'd been sick the day before and in the wee hours of the morning his fever broke and he was feeling much better. Looking back, I'd say that might have been the Spirit nudging.

Our Gospel reading invites us to think even bigger than the possibility of individual feel-good experiences of the Holy or of Spirit stirring.

We've shuttled back and forth in a few chapters of John's Gospel, a section where Jesus speaks an enduring relationship even after he has gone away—and five times now Jesus promises that God's Spirit would come alongside...and the words we heard today include seven times in four verses saying that the Holy Spirit will speak so that God might be made known.

Jesus speaks about relationships that are experienced in the living—his disciples are invited to live with him so they'd know what he was all about. Jesus would tell them that God's heart's desire was a relationship—an abiding, to use a favourite word of John's. This relationship is far beyond BFF with Jesus...it's about God's passionate and compassionate engagement with the world.

One of the strong messages we hear in the ELCIC is that God's Spirit speaks to us through those we've often ignored or actively discriminated against. Having been privileged to attend national assemblies, the Spirit speaks—often in ways that challenge and kindle our imaginations.

At the opening ELCIC national assembly in Edmonton indigenous elder said we made the place beautiful and sacred by being there. At that assembly the church repented...It was time to scrap our belief that

Europeans brought God with them to Turtle Island where nothing was happening before our arrival. Delegates voted decisively to repudiate this so-called Doctrine of Discovery. The church continues to learn the same lesson Jesus learns from a woman living in Canaan who schools him by saying, yes even the dogs eat from the masters table—yes, God’s love is for everyone.

A few years later in Regina, the church gathered to explore the theme “Journeying together”. We heard from the LGBTQ community about how we could journey together—how we could build on resolutions from 2011 to celebrate weddings and ordain pastors and bishops who are LGBTQ. We prayerfully sought ways to love the world that God loves by sharing dialogue with people of other faiths, with our indigenous relatives, the assembly considered initiatives to take better care of the planet and creation here.

Do we dare hope God’s Spirit speaks to a world that deals in famine, war, pandemic, and growing incivility? Jesus says there is plenty to say...and we can never say too often that God so loves the world...nor can we ignore the Spirit’s call to ‘go and do likewise’.