

## Sermon Title: Do not be afraid - Honour and welcome the Holy Spirit

- **Jesus Prepares His Disciples for His Departure:**
  - Just before His crucifixion, Jesus seeks to comfort His disciples.
  - He acknowledges the pain of grief and loss but promises they will not be left as orphans.
- **Jesus Finds Joy in What the Cross Will Accomplish:**
  - Referencing Hebrews: “For the joy set before him, he endured the cross.”
  - Through His death, believers will gain a new and deeper experience of God.
- **Rublev’s Icon and the Invitation into the Trinity:**
  - The icon shows the mutual love of the Father, Son, and Spirit.
  - The open space at the table symbolises God’s invitation for us to share in this divine fellowship.
- **The Indwelling Presence of God:**
  - Jesus promises that He and the Father will make their home in those who love Him.
  - The Holy Spirit—God’s very love—is given as Teacher, Advocate, and Comforter.
- **The Mystery and Accessibility of God:**
  - God is both **transcendent** (beyond us) and **immanent** (intimately close).
  - Despite the mystery, God wants to be known and experienced personally.
- **Why Some Believe and Some Don’t:**
  - A disciple’s question prompts reflection on why Jesus reveals Himself to some but not to all.
  - Faith comes from hearing, and it’s the Church’s responsibility to share the message.
  - Society often mocks dependence on God and has little space for mystery.
- **Living with the Holy Spirit:**
  - The Spirit’s role is active and relational—not just for big decisions, but for everyday life.
  - The Spirit leads, comforts, teaches, reminds, and guides.
  - Christians are encouraged to develop a constant dialogue with the Spirit.
- **Examples of the Spirit’s Guidance:**
  - The preacher shares personal stories of being led by the Spirit through others, scripture, nature, and daily life.
  - Encouragement to expect and invite the Spirit into every aspect of life.
- **Lydia’s Story as an Example of Divine Orchestration:**
  - Lydia, a worshipper and businesswoman, is led to faith through Paul.
  - The Spirit blocks Paul’s route, gives him a dream, and leads him to Lydia.
  - God orchestrates events to reach open hearts—one person at a time.
- **The Spirit at Work Quietly and Powerfully:**
  - Like John Wesley’s “strangely warmed” heart, God often works gently.
  - One life changed by the Spirit—like Lydia—can have a profound impact.
- **Final Reflections and Questions:**
  - Are you aware of God’s presence in you?
  - Are you listening for the Spirit’s guidance?
  - Are you receiving Christ’s peace, even amid uncertainty?
  - Trust that God is arranging things in your life to draw you closer to Him.
- **Closing Encouragement:**
  - Honour and welcome the Holy Spirit.
  - Do not be afraid.
  - God is with you—nearer than you may realise.

Questions:

**1. What does it mean that Jesus and the Father will “make their home” with those who love him?**

*John 14:23 says, “We will come to them and make our home with them.”*

- How do you interpret this “indwelling”?
- In what ways have you (or others you know) experienced this kind of intimacy with God?

**2. How do we discern the voice and guidance of the Holy Spirit in everyday life?**

*Jesus promises that the Holy Spirit will teach and remind (John 14:26); Acts 16 shows the Spirit guiding Paul’s route.*

- How might we learn to recognise and respond to the Spirit’s prompting, as Paul did?
- What helps or hinders this discernment in practice?

**3. Why do some people respond to the gospel while others don’t — even when both have “heard”?**

*John 14:22 asks: “Lord, why do you intend to show yourself to us and not to the world?”*

- What does this passage suggest about revelation, faith, and human choice?
- How does Lydia’s story in Acts 16 relate to this question?

**4. What role did the Holy Spirit play in the conversion of Lydia — and what might that tell us about how God works today?**

*Acts 16:14 – “The Lord opened her heart to respond to Paul’s message.”*

- What might it mean for God to “open someone’s heart”?
- How can we participate in what God is doing in others’ lives?

**5. Jesus says, “Do not let your hearts be troubled... my peace I give you.” What is the nature of this peace?**

*John 14:27 – “Not as the world gives do I give to you.”*

- How is Christ’s peace different from worldly comfort or calm?
- Have you ever experienced that peace in a difficult time?

**6. What does the Trinity mean in practical terms for Christian life and prayer?**

*The sermon reflects on Rublev’s Icon and the invitation to “join the table.”*

- How might understanding the relationship between Father, Son, and Spirit shape how we relate to God?
- How can we “join the communion” of the Trinity in our daily walk with Christ?