

May 17, Easter 6 (John 14:15-21; Psalm 66:8-20)

The Spirit is present. The Spirit is working.

by [Andre E. Johnson](#) in the [May 6, 2020](#) issue

Sometimes I can have a good time all by myself. I can get away from everything and everybody and enjoy the peace and quiet that only being alone can bring. I meditate or pray or read scripture or read a book. It is a time of renewal and refreshment as I relax in the Lord and enjoy God's presence in the stillness and quiet of the day.

There is a difference, however, between being alone and being lonely.

My wife, Lisa, was watching the nightly news and saw a feature story that highlighted children seeking adoption. One child said that he would like to find a home because he was tired of telling people that the other kids he lived with were only "my foster brother or my foster sister." Having been in the foster care system practically all his life, he knew that any foster family's relationship could end at any time. He wanted to be with a family, to feel as if he was a part of something. He was around people all the time, but he lonely—and he was tired of it.

We want the same things this boy did. We want to be part of something. We want to be in relationship with people we know will be there for us. We want to be around people who love us.

Like the little boy, we don't want to be lonely. We want to be loved, cared for, supported, uplifted, embraced, and strengthened. No one truly wants to be lonely.

Jesus has already told his disciples that he must leave to go and prepare a place for them. He knows this will not sit too well with them. He knows that they will be hurt and will wrestle with feeling alone. They will have to battle bouts of feeling lonely and depressed. This isn't going to be easy for them.

So Jesus gives them a promise. Jesus says that God will leave with them an Advocate—another person to stand up and speak on their behalf. Another person to care for them and watch out for them. Another person to move mountains and obstacles out of their way. Another person who will speak the truth—and one whom they will know, because he will abide in them.

Jesus is saying, *I am not leaving you alone. I am not leaving you to fend for yourselves. I am asking God to send the Advocate—the counselor, the helper—to be with you and to guide you. To move in you and to work in you, to sustain you and to free you to be all that God has called you to be.*

This passage reminds us that we are not alone. The Spirit is with us. The Spirit is moving us, abiding in us. We are being led and guided by the Spirit, and we are not alone.

Yet sometimes we may feel like we are all alone. Sometimes, like that little boy on the news, we may believe that there is no one out there for us, that nobody seems to care.

There have been days when I have wondered about such things. But I don't wonder about them too long, because it's then I hear the Lord saying, *You are not alone. I have left the Advocate to defend you, to help and to strengthen you.*

I am quickly reminded that the Spirit is working. And when the Spirit is working, God will have you doing things that you thought you would never do—worshipping in places you never thought you would worship in, saying things you never thought you would say, going places you thought you would never go.

Because when we allow the Spirit to work, loneliness and despair disappear. Relationships are renewed, and hearts become healthy. When we allow the Spirit to work, assurance abounds, and blessings bloom. Faith is formulated, and love is lifted.

And we can sing with the psalmist, “but truly God has listened; he has given heed to my prayer. Blessed be God because he has not rejected my prayer or removed his steadfast love from me.” God works through us. God goes before us and with us. We will never be alone, because we will be with Jesus, and Jesus will be with us.