Holy Spirit Series #4: The Holy Spirit is Our Guide and Teacher

SERIES INTRO + RECAP

- ➔ Today, we are wrapping up our four-part series on the HOLY SPIRIT. Identified in scripture as **ruakh** in Hebrew or **pneuma** in Greek (**breath** and **wind)**, the Holy Spirit is the invisible, personal presence of God sustaining life and empowering creation.

- ➔ We have so far grown more in understanding how the Spirit works in our day-to-day lives as **Comforter**, **Empower**, and **Promise-Keeper**. In today's passage, we will learn about the Holy Spirit as **GUIDE + TEACHER**

CONTEXT

- ➔ We will read the words of the apostle Paul to the early churches in Galatia. Paul wrote this letter to address the ways the church was teaching a false version of the Gospel -- one that emphasized achieving salvation through works, not faith in God.

- ➔ Much of Paul's letter is about the freedom available to Christ-followers. True belief in God, Paul writes, allows us freedom from the sins that entangle and the shame that puts us down. Freedom is found in knowing we do not need to, and could never, earn our way to God. In love, he has already called us back to himself through the life of Jesus.

- ➔ Later in his letter, Paul speaks of the ways Spirit guides us in living a life of freedom and the "fruits" it produces within us. Before we get to those verses, let's talk about a literal fruit -- pumpkins.

ILLUSTRATION

- ➔ Morton is a town of 16,000 people and more than 100,000 tons of pumpkins near Peoria, Illinois. Morton is home to generations of pumpkin farmers and Libby's Pumpkin, the company behind 90% of the world's canned pumpkins.

- ➔ Morton hosts an annual Pumpkin Festival with a "Pumpkin Princess" contest, pumpkin decorating competition, recipe challenge, weigh off, pie eating contest, and more.

- ➔ Pumpkins grow on vines. On the outside, it doesn't look like pumpkins are working hard to grow. In fact, they look like they are just chilling on the ground. But on the inside, life flows through the vines over the course of months and produces fruit. This process is so delicate farmers avoid walking amongst pumpkin vines before harvest time in October.

- ➔ ***Application:*** *Like the pumpkins, we are tied to a life-giving vine. The Spirit works gently in the interior, unseen parts of our hearts making way for life to grow. On the outside, this doesn't look like constant striving to be the best, most idealized version of ourselves. Instead, it looks like staying tied to the vine, taking in the sun's light, practicing patience, and having faith that the Spirit is growing fruit within us and from us.*

BIBLE PASSAGE: GALATIANS 5:16-17, 19-23

- ➔ **BIG IDEA: WE GROW FROM THE INSIDE OUT. THE SPIRIT GUIDES + TEACHES.**

- ➔ See, true change is made from the inside out. It all starts with the Spirit living inside of us, changing our desires to more and more mirror Christ. As the Spirit works within us or actions change externally, influencing how we relate to the people and world around us.

- ➔ Trying harder and harder or beating ourselves up over how we could be doing more are not how the Spirit transforms. The Spirit's guidance and teaching, like breath and wind, is gentle, felt, and heard in a whisper. It requires active attention and participation.

- ➔ In these verses, Paul makes distinctions between the desires of humanity's sinful nature and the fruits the Spirit does the work of growing in each of us. These verses teach us two things about how the Spirit both guides and teaches us.

1.THE SPIRIT GUIDES US IN IDENTIFYING WHERE WE NEED TO GROW.

- ➔ Every person is born with a nature that moves us toward sin. What is sin? Sin is any failure to love God and others by not treating them with the honor they deserve.

- ➔ In verses 19-21, Paul lists out "results" of this sinful nature including: sexual immorality, idolatry, quarreling, jealousy, outbursts of anger, selfish ambition, division, envy, and drunkenness.

- ➔ The Spirit guides us toward naming the "results" of our own sinful nature. The Spirit helps us to see more clearly how our own actions or thought-patterns are leading us to wrongly view God or wrongly treat others.

➔ ***Question:*** *Are there any habits listed in verses 19 to 21 that you feel like you wrestle with the most? Have you felt the Spirit ever direct you toward a repeated action that could use change?*

➔ ***Application****: The Spirit inside each of us tenderly points out our own sin -- our jealousy, rage, our tendencies to sow division, seek relief in substances, or put our own agenda above anyone else. It is up to us to have an open and reflective heart, to not push away the Spirit's guidance but to acknowledge the areas of life where our own sin nature has resulted in harm to our relationship with God, ourselves, and others.*

2. THE SPIRIT TEACHES US TO MAKE DAILY CHOICES TOWARD GROWTH.

➔ Unlike our sin nature, the Holy Spirit produces this fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

➔ These traits are not "results" or consequences like those of our sin nature, these positive attributes are all together one single, unmistakable FRUIT.

➔ Fruit is the visible indication of healthy life in a tree, or in the case of pumpkins, vines. The fruit of the Spirit, produced by only the Spirit's power, is a life like Christ. A life that radiates love, joy, goodness, and gentleness not just in our interior worlds but out in all the spaces we walk too.

➔ The Spirit teaches and points us toward growing more and more like Christ with each decision we make. When connected to the vine, life is bound to bloom. It may take time and a gentle approach, but time spent with God, in his presence and sensitive to the Spirit's guidance, will result in a changed heart for God and people.

➔ ***Question:*** *What from the things listed in verses 22-23 do you think your family, your school, and the world could use more of?*

➔ ***Application:*** *The Spirit inside of us connects us each to the ultimate source of life and transformation. Like we are called to listen attentively to its direction toward identifying our own sin, we are also called to listen closely to its leading toward positive change in ourselves and in our relationships with others around us.*

BIG IDEA: WE GROW FROM THE INSIDE OUT. THE SPIRIT GUIDES + TEACHES.

- **Galatians 5:25** closes this passage with this important instruction: "Since we are living by the Spirit, let us follow the Spirit's leading in every part of our lives."

- That is our parting word as we complete our Holy Spirit series but move forward seeking the Spirit's guidance in all we do. Remember the Spirit as **Comforter**, **Empower**, **Promise-Keeper**, and **Teacher.**

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- ➔ *Who, or what, is the Holy Spirit? How would you describe the Spirit to a friend who just started attending our youth group?*

- ➔ *What about the Holy Spirit is still confusing? What isn't making sense or adding up?*

- ➔ *How can you make time in your day to spend time in God's presence, soaking in the goodness of his Spirit?*