SUPERnatural: Got a Light? Memory Verse:

May 12th, 2014 Scripture Reading: 2 Timothy 3:14-17

 Good morning fellow Holy Spiritans! Hopefully by now, that phrase is not sounding too weird. Holy Spiritian simply implies someone who follows Christ by the empowering of the Holy Spirit. In other words, a Christian. But, it may be of some use for us to shift our focus, not off of Jesus, who is fully God, but onto the person and work of the Holy Spirit, who is also fully God. So it is a difference without distinction, but be that as it may, in this series, we have been talking about how the life of a Holy Spritian is a supernatural life because the very presence of God dwells within us. He is the Spirit of Adoption who makes us into sons and daughters of our Heavenly Father. He is the Spirit who gives us a voice and empowers us to speak up when we do not have our own words. And last week we spoke about the Holy Spirit’s supernatural power to mortify our flesh, that is, to sanctify us, to put sin to death so that we may be purified in our relationship with God.

 All of these affects are supernatural. They are beyond our ability and beyond the confines of this natural, observable realm. They come to us via the power of the Holy Spirit. So today, as we think about the next supernatural benefit of the Holy Spirit in our lives, I want you to think about the last time you were shrouded in darkness.

 Darkness is not something we actually experience all that often. Even in the dead of night in my own room there are various hints of light…our TV has a little night light on it, the small light from the other room actually sneaks in under the door. Of course, we have our phones on hand for access to instant light if need be. Generally, there are street lights and headlights and safety lights, and all kinds of radiance that happens in the dark of night. But when is the last time you have been truly in the dark? Maybe it was a power outage, maybe you were exploring a cave somewhere. I will never forget an experience I had at the age of seven or eight. I went to the Minnesota State Fair with my aunt and some older cousins. At some point in our time there, my cousin, who in my mind was much older, but in reality, it was only by a few years, and we ended up in the line that led to the haunted house. My cousin had been before. She said it was fun and since she was a girl, I knew I could handle it and was excited to give it a try. I did not know what to expect, but I knew it would be fun.

 Inside was a terrifying experience and the screams of the patrons up ahead of us did not help matters. Live monsters would lunge at you and strobe lights flashed all around. It was disorienting and uncomfortable...exactly what we paid for. I remember there was one section of the haunted house that seemed like a longer corridor but it was hard to tell since everything was completely pitch black. You could not see the step in front of you. And since no one had a cell phone, we were at the mercy of the house. I remember feeling very paranoid. It seemed like it had been too long since a twisted creature had made an appearance. In my agitated state, I could not help but cling tightly to my cousin’s arm as we hesitatingly stepped through the darkness.

 Eventually, the exit signs appeared, and we stumbled into the daylight. I quickly let my cousin know that that was so much fun and how I wasn’t scared a bit. And she asked me, “Why were you up with the people in front of us the whole time?” ‘What do you mean? I was with you, wasn’t I?” Then it dawned on me…I was not in fact holding on to my cousin in a stressful haunted house…In my terror, I was infringing on the personal space of a complete stranger, and I had no idea. But I guess that’s one of the reasons why they call the fair the Great Minnesota Get-Together.

 But you see what happened? Because I was rattled and because there was no light, I strayed from my family. I was caught up in the surrounding crowd. I became disconnected. Thankfully, I was not injured or kidnapped. No damage was done, but the results could have gone the other way.

 I share this story to underscore the fact that light is crucial. It’s one thing to try and navigate your own home in the dark, but something else entirely when you find yourself in an unknown environment that is out to terrify you.

 But as Holy Spiritan’s, we need not live in the dark. We are blessed with the presence of the Holy Spirit dwelling inside of us, and he is the Spirit of illumination. In the beginning of the letter to the church in Ephesus, Paul writes this: “I pray that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, will give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation that makes God known to you.” So there is an implication here that God cannot be known to us, he is hidden, or we might say, we are in the dark when it comes to knowing God and his ways. But with assistance of some wisdom and revelation, we are able to know God, at least in some capacity. So Paul’s prayer is for these Christians to receive from Jesus, this spirit of wisdom and revelation. He goes on: “I pray that the eyes of your heart will have enough light to see what is the hope of God’s call , what is the richness of God’s glorious inheritance among believers, and what is the overwhelming greatness of God’s power that is working among us believers.” Paul packs a lot in this this one verse, but notice how he begins…he talks about the eyes of our heart. Did you know your heart had eyes? We might not state it in this same way, but we do acknowledge that humans have heart eyes. How many of us have seen something on the news or watched a villain in a movie and said something along the lines if, “He is so heartless!” “How could someone do that, they must have no heart.” Clearly, we acknowledge the person in question has a literal heart in their body pumping blood, but what we mean is that this person is functioning as though they don’t care. Their actions show they have no live…they are not seeing with the eyes of their heart. So we have a basic understanding of this heart vision that Paul talks about here. Paul says, he prays that our hearts would have enough light to see the hope of God’s call.” We are to see hope. But hope, we know is not the actual things itself. If I hope for a new car and come home to one sitting there in my driveway, well that then is the end of my hope. The thing is right there before me, I would no longer hope for a thing I already have. But to see hope is to not see the thing. However hope keeps us looking. So in this case we are looking for the appearance of God’s call. Now God’s call might look a little different for each of us, but overall we are all called to represent Christ in this world. To live as he lived and love as he loved. We are all called to die to our old selves, so the Christ, via the Holy Spirit, can live in and through us.

 I hope for God’s call in the lives of my own children. I want them to live their lives in love with Jesus. I want them to lead other people to Jesus. Now, I don’t know what that looks like specifically in the future of my children’s lives, but I do know, since I’m a Holy SPiritian, the hope of seeing my children live and grow into a life of faith in Christ. The Holy Spirit give me light enough to keep looking upon that hope, to not loose sight of it. Paul restates this future when he says, “the richness of God’s glorious inheritance among believers.” Glorious inheritance is our future, so let’s keep the eyes of our heart on that hope!

 Secondly, Paul wants our heart eyes to see the “overwhelming greatness of God’s power that is working among us believers.” When is the last time you were overwhelmed by God’s power? A comedian once concluded, after observing the world, that everything is amazing and no one is happy. He referenced our human tendency to complain about amazing things, like a trip on an airline. We are apt to recall how aggravating TSA is or how we were delayed on the tarmac or how the food was sub-par all the while missing the fact that we are sitting in a chair in the sky! We can fly across the country in a matter of hours, but we are not happy. We get frustrated with slow internet service without thinking about the fact that our handheld device is communicating with a satellite in space. Maybe we could give it a minute!

 Amazing things surround us every moment, but we fail to really see them, because our hearts are blind. But as Holy Spiritans, this vision can be restored! We can be overwhelmed by God’s greatness as we witness the setting sun, as we partake of a lovely meal, as we obverse a toddler learning how to walk, as we contemplate the way in which a human body functions, as we dig into God’s word, as we hear of successful surgeries and cancer going to remission or even of believers who have bid this life farewell…Even that is an occasion in which we can be overwhelmed. We can be overwhelmed by the greatness of God’s power in the miracle of conversion. The lost do get found! The sinner can be redeemed! You and I are a testimony to the power of God because that is our story…let us not take that lightly. Everything is amazing and everyone could be happy, if they only had the eyes to see.

Oh, Holy Spirit, come and open the eyes of our hearts! Give us a light!

Light is something we especially need when it comes to God’s word, the Bible. There is a lot of content in this book, and like all powerful things, it can be the greatest blessing or a ruinous disaster depending on how we use this book. This book is a dangerous book for it is the word of the Almighty God. We must approach this book in humility, knowing that it is going to present us with a challenge. We are not going to get it right away. We must read it in the light and what I mean by that is that we must read the Bible with a teacher, and mentor, the Holy Spirit. Theologian Stanlty Grenz puts it well. He says, “Scripture is authoritative in that it is the vehicle through which the Spirit chooses to speak.” So God is capable of doing anything. The Holy Spirit certainly could speak to us in a dream or a fantastic vision. The clouds could spell out exactly what God wants to say to us. The very rocks of the ground could be given voice and tell us God’s word. But the fact is, God doen’t do that, because he has already spoken in his word. And it not like it this is a thing of the past. This Word is still good today. It still applies. And so instead of staring into the sky trying to read clouds, instead of waiting for a heavenly vision, we open this book and we read it. We read it with our minds, with our intellect, but we also read it prayerfully. We read with eyes our our heart as much as with our physical eyes. We read with our ears open to the voice of the Holy Spirit as he illuminates the words on the page. Paul made up a new word when he reminded Timothy that all scripture is God-breathed, and because it is God-breathed, it is good for us. It teaches us, it corrects us, trains us and equips us to do everything that is good. It is God’s primary mode of communication, the vehicle in which the Spirit chooses to speak. I want to be there to hear all that he says. I don’t want to miss out! There are too many Christians going through their lives ignoring this book. These Christians might even read other Christian books about the Bible, maybe they read devotionals about the bible or studies about the bible, but let me say, when you read a book about the bible by an author, you are hearing the author’s voice! And that’s all good and fine IF you are also attending to your own consumption of this book. I want to hear the voice of the Holy Spirit not the voice of another writer. I can read another author and hear their understanding and learn from their knowledge but only if I am also taking the time to immerse myself in God’s Word. Open the eyes of your heart and read it for yourself. As Holy Spiritans, we are people of the book. We believe he inspired its original writers, and he continues to illuminate its present readers. What a wonderful gift! What a glorious inheritance! What a way to be overwhelmed by the greatness of God’s power. Don’t miss out in the equipping of the Spirit through God’s word. Don’t be like I was in that haunted house: Don’t panic in the dark and hang on to the arm of some stranger. Let the Holy Spirit who lives within you be your light. Open the eyes of your heart, read the word by the light of the Holy Spirit.

 Let’s sing Psalm 119 verse 105 together:

“Thy word is lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path.” Amen.