



**First and Center
Pastor's Blog
March 27, 2019**

A couple of years ago, a group called “Walk the Moon” came out with a song that became, for me, an utterly perfect description of encountering the Holy Spirit. It is amazing how much popular music has theological meaning if you listen carefully, and it doesn't matter if the writers intended that or not!

This song is sung by a male voice, and the chorus goes like this:

[She says] “Now don't you dare look back/Just keep your eyes on me.”

[He says] “I said, ‘you're holding back.’”

“She said, ‘shut up and dance with me.’”

[He says] This woman is my destiny

“She said ‘Oo, oo, oo, shut up and dance with me.’”

In Greek, the word for Holy Spirit has female gender. Now, granted, in gendered languages, the gender assigned to any word usually has very little to do with the character of the word itself; it's fairly random. But let's say, for fun, that this one is not. Actually, in early Christian art, it is not unusual for the third person of the Trinity, the Spirit, to be portrayed as female.

If we imagine, then, that in this song, the “she” is the Spirit, and the singer is us, look at it again. The Spirit calls us not to look back to the past, but to keep our eyes on what God is doing *now*. We want to know everything that's going to happen so we're not afraid (we want God to tell us the end of whatever story we are living), and we get irritated that God is “holding back.” But the Spirit tells us to stop talking so much and be willing to dance as the Spirit leads us. The movement into the future does not need to be alone or trudging and struggle, but a dance with God. Sometimes, we just need to shut up and move forward, trying to match our steps to God's, even when we can't quite see where this dance is going. Because, “this woman is my destiny.” We can't always see what that destiny is, but if we are with the Spirit, we can enter the dance, trusting we are not left alone.

Good advice for our personal lives. Good advice for our church, as we explore some big ideas and some challenging decisions. Good advice, period. *“Don't you dare look back; just keep your eyes on me...shut up and dance with me.”*

~ Rev. Shelly Stackhouse
Transitional Minister