

SERMON FOR JUNE 9, 2019

TEXT: JOHN 14: 26

THEME: THE ONGOING RECEPTION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.

In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen

On this Day of Pentecost, we celebrate the Third Person of the Trinity, namely the Holy Spirit. Fifty days after Jesus rose from the grave, the Holy Spirit came down from heaven and the Spirit of God was poured out from heaven upon the followers of Jesus. Many passages in Scripture foretold of this event, in the Old Testament the prophet Joel wrote of Pentecost that: “And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, ²⁹ Even on the male and female servants in those days I will pour out my Spirit.” On that first Pentecost the Church received the Third Person of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit. This is something that Jesus predicted in the Gospel lesson for today, that “the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.”

But where is the Holy Spirit today? Where can we find Him, and most importantly, how can we receive Him as the disciples did of old?

Jesus speaks to this in our text where He tells us who the Holy Spirit is and what His job is in our lives, and where we can find Him in order to be blessed by Him.

It's like the story of the shark and the whale. Both were swimming in the sea when the shark swam up to the whale to engage in conversation. As they swam along, the shark said to the whale, "You are so much older than I, and wiser too. Could you tell me where the ocean is?" The whale responded, "The Ocean is what you are in now." The shark would not believe it. "Come on, tell me where the ocean is so I may find it!" The whale repeated, "The ocean is here, now; you are in it." Unbelieving, the shark swam away searching for the ocean.

You see, the moral of the story, I think, is that we spend so much time looking for God and seeking the Spirit that we forget who the Holy Spirit is, what His job is, and where we can find the Holy Spirit. Jesus says that the Holy Spirit is the Helper. He is sent from God the Father, through His Son Jesus Christ. This is why we confess that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son. The Father sent Jesus Christ into the world to save the world from sin, Satan, and death. God so loved the world that He sent Jesus not to condemn the world but to save the world through Him and in Him. Jesus suffered, was crucified,

died, and rose again from the grave, ascending to His rightful throne in heaven, to over His Kingdom. So that we might not be left alone as orphans, Jesus promised to send The Helper, the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit's task is not to teach us about Himself, it is not even to proclaim Himself, but His task is to proclaim and testify about Jesus, for there is no other name under heaven whereby we can be saved but by the name and power of Jesus.

Jesus explained the work and role of the Holy Spirit in these terms: "I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you. ⁸ And when he comes, he will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment: ⁹ concerning sin, because they do not believe in me; ¹⁰ concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father, and you will see me no longer; ¹¹ concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged."

The work of the Holy Spirit is to first of all, convict the world concerning sin, righteousness, and judgment. The Holy Spirit will convict the world, not in a legal sense, but in the sense that He will work to expose humanity of their sinfulness and hopelessness before God. The Holy Spirit shows us what is wrong with the world that we live in.

Grief fills the hearts of people today. We truly live in the valley of the shadow of death, as the world we live in is a valley of sorrow and tears, anxieties and despair. Mankind tries to act happy, but is not really all that happy. We can put on a smiley face on the outside but inside our hearts are full of pain. And so the Holy Spirit points us to not only the reality of our situations, but also to the cause. And the cause is sin. The Holy Spirit comes to convict us of sin, to show us our sins, and the brokenness of the world we live in. The Bible says that not only have all sinned, but not everyone has believed in Jesus and what Jesus did for sinners. The Lord will not be mocked; the Lord says in the Bible that My Spirit will not strive with man forever. That is why now is the day of salvation. Now is the time to believe in Jesus.

That is why the Holy Spirit works to show people their sins, so that they might know that they need a Savior from sin and come to faith in Jesus. And God has done everything that needs to be done. In love The Father sent His Son into the world; that by His life, suffering, and death the price for sins will be paid for in full. And so the Holy Spirit gives us faith in Christ, and we know that because of Jesus we have the certainty that the ruler of the world, namely Satan, has been judged. Jesus has said that through His work on the cross and rising from the

dead on Easter, that the ruler of this world has been thrown out. Satan is no longer the strong man, a Stronger One, Jesus, has come to cast him into the darkness. Jesus said of Satan that He saw Satan fall from heaven like lightning. Just as Luther penned in that great hymn called A Mighty Fortress, Satan is judged, the deed is done and one little word can fell him. Satan cannot accuse you of sin, because your sins are forgiven. He has now no power over you, for you belong to Jesus. He cannot scare you with death, for when you die you will be in heaven with Jesus. And on the Last Day Christ all who believe in Him will be resurrected to live with Him, body and soul together, forever.

So where is the Holy Spirit? Where can you find Him? He is here today. He speaks to you in the Word. He washes away your sins in the waters of Baptism. He comes to you in the Lord's Supper, bringing the gifts of God for and to the people of God. You find the Holy Spirit where you would expect to find Him, in the Church, in God's House, in the place where God dwells.

And if you want the Holy Spirit poured out into our life, He will pour Himself into you, when you come to church to hear God's Word, when you read the Bible, when you remember your Baptism, and when you come to the Lord's Supper. If you absent yourself from where the

Holy Spirit is, you will not be blessed by nor will you have the gifts of the Holy Spirit in your life. But if you remain faithful in your worship, in Bible study, and in the reception of the Lord's Supper, you can be certain that the Holy Spirit works faith and His blessings in your life, for God does not lie and the Holy Spirit can not and will not go back on the promise of Jesus and the Father.

It is important to remain plugged into the Holy Spirit, so that the Spirit can work faith in our hearts and keep us in the faith. Many of us have smart phones, and to use them they must be fully charged. When you begin to use a smart phone, you will need to plug the phone into a charger so that the phone can get power to be operational. To keep it operational, you need to continue to recharge the phone. The phone will lose its power if it only relies on the initial charge. So too, we must be fully plugged into the means by which the Holy Spirit works to receive the blessings of the Spirit. If we absent ourselves from worship, do not read and meditate on the Scripture, and do not receive the Lord's Supper, we are like the smart phone that loses its power over time. But when we make use of the Word and Sacraments, then we are plugged into the Spirit and are able to receive His gifts of faith, life, and salvation.

One of the hallmarks of those who believed in Jesus in the Early Church is that they were faithful. Listen to how the Book of Acts describes the believers in Jesus in how they lived their lives: “And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.” And note what happened: The Lord continued to increase the number of people who believed in Jesus, and the Church grew and flourished. The people of God were connected to God by the power of the Spirit, in using the Word of God and faithfully receiving the Lord’s Supper, and they kept on faithfully receiving the Holy Spirit to their own blessing and the blessings of others.

That is how we can have the ongoing reception of the Holy Spirit. We receive the Holy Spirit as a Gift, through Baptism, Word, Supper, and the ongoing reception is when we continue in the Word, faithful in worship and the reception of Communion, for then the Spirit works, faith in Christ grows, love is magnified, God is glorified. For then the rivers of eternal life are flowing from the mouths and lives of Christians throughout the world. And the Holy Spirit is glorifying Jesus, giving us faith, whereby we share our faith, to the glory of God. May we be found so faithful in receiving the Holy Spirit, and telling others about Jesus!

Amen