

SERMON FOR MAY 21, 2021

TEXT: JOHN 14: 26

THEME: HOW TO RECEIVE 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

Luann and I had to purchase a new riding mower a few weeks ago. Our old mower went the way of all human flesh, it broke down and was in need of costly repair. So we decided it was time to buy a new zero turn lawn mower.

I had never ridden a zero turn before. Jim Snyder says that they are a lot of fun to drive, that I would enjoy it. And so far I have, but that isn't to say that I haven't had my difficult moments.

Each mower has its own personality, its own way of operating. This new one is no different. Once I get the mower going, I usually have no issues, except for the two pine seedlings that I took out on our property line.

But the greatest difficulty I have had with this thing is starting it. The first time I used it I finally got it started in about five minutes. I had to read and re read the manual, but off I went. The second time though, I had a dickens of a time trying to start it. I followed the directions to the letter, but to no avail. I made certain that the knobs and levels were all in their proper places. I jiggled and wiggled everything I could. And then.... I opened the gas

cap. You guessed it, no gas. Now I had started with some gas in the tank, as the dealer made certain to put some in so that I could run the mower. What I didn't realize was that I only had enough for one run through the yard.

If you have bought a new or used car at a dealer, you have had the same experience, they will fill the tank with only so much gas, but then you are on your own. You do not have a limitless supply of gas, you have to continually fill up the tank in order to run the machine.

The human body is no different. The other day I was giving Eleri a bottle of milk. She drank it all down. But then she got hungry and I had to feed her again. One feeding does not last a life time. It is true for babies, it is true for you and me. Each of us had breakfast today, and I would imagine that as soon as church is over, you will have lunch. We have an ongoing routine of making certain of filling our stomachs because one filling is not enough.

So on this Festival of Pentecost that we celebrate today, we recognize the outpouring of 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.

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? Very simply, the Holy Spirit is wherever you hear about Jesus.

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. 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 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 to their sinfulness and hopelessness before God. The Holy Spirit shows us that we need a Savior. 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 us our sins, so that we might know that we need a Savior from sin and come to faith in Jesus. And God has done everything that needs to be done. The Father not only sent Jesus to die and rise again for our salvation, He sent the Holy Spirit through Jesus to point us to Jesus and to give us faith in Jesus.

So where is the Holy Spirit? Where can you find Him? On Pentecost He was poured out, His coming sounding like the rush of a great wind with tongues of fire on the heads of those assembled to listen to Peter. Now, 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.

Just as it is essential to keep the gas tank filled, and just as it is important that we continue to receive nourishment for our physical bodies, so too it is vitally important that we continue to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. And this is done when we come to worship, listen to the Word, and receive the Lord's Supper. But if we absent ourselves from worship, do not read and meditate on the Scripture, and do not receive the Lord's Supper, we lose the power of the Spirit 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