

MINISTRY BY MAIL
Lutheran Conference of Confessional Fellowship
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Pentecost Sunday, May 23, 2021

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(Hymns found in The Lutheran Hymnal, CPH, 1941)

Hymns: 224, (236:4), 235, 233:1-6, 233:7.

Lessons: Psalm 146, Ephesians 2:19-22, Acts 2:1-13.

Sermon Text: John 14:26 (NKJV)

Sermon by Pastor M. H. Eibs

“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 things that I said to you.” John 14:26 (New King James Version)

Fellow Redeemed in Christ Jesus:

The Festival of Pentecost, which we celebrate today, is a festival of great joy just like Christmas and Easter. It is such because of the nature of the work of the Holy Spirit, for He enlightens, guides, teaches, comforts, assures and strengthens us. All the comfort and joy we have in our hearts as a result of our faith in Christ is due to the Holy Spirit’s work in our hearts.

The first Pentecost Day was 50 days after Jesus’ resurrection over 2,000 years ago. The work of the Holy Spirit continues today, and is of very great importance to us. Let us today, therefore, with joyous hearts thank and praise our Savior because of

THE PROMISE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

- 1. Who He is;**
- 2. When He was sent to Christ’s followers;**
- 3. What He does for Christ’s followers**

The words of our text are a part of Jesus’ farewell sermon to His followers which He spoke before He suffered and died for our sins. Since Jesus was about to leave His followers and return to His heavenly Father, it was of particular comfort to them to have Jesus’ promise of the Holy Spirit. They would not be left alone. Jesus promised to send ***“the Helper, the Holy Spirit.”***

Who is the Holy Spirit? His very name, Spirit, tells us that He is a spirit being. He has no flesh and blood, no physical body. He is, therefore, also invisible to our eyes. Because of this, many people do not believe that the Holy Spirit is a real personal being. They speak of Him as some kind of force or power. Rationalists and modernists believe only what appeals to their reason. They reject everything in the Bible that cannot be understood with their human reason.

But, let us learn what the Bible says about the Holy Spirit. The Bible teaches that He is true God. We are told how Peter spoke to Ananias about lying to the Holy Spirit. He told him, ***“You have not lied to men but to God,”*** Acts 5:4. The Bible teaches that He is true God together with the Father and the Son. There is only one true God, the Triune God, one God in three persons. All three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are equal in power, in majesty, and glory. All three persons of the Godhead are eternal, always have been and always will be. All three persons are of one divine essence. So the Holy Spirit is true God. He is known by various names. In the Apostles’ Creed and the Nicene Creed we call him the Holy Ghost. The Bible also speaks of Him as the Spirit of God, the Spirit of the Lord. Our text speaks of him as ***“the Helper.”*** He can comfort, aid and help us in all our spiritual needs.

We ought to be filled with amazement at the great love of God for us poor sinners. Not only did God the Father send His one and only Son to this world, but Jesus suffered, died and rose again from the dead for our salvation. When the Son was received up into heaven again at His ascension, the Holy Spirit was promised to the followers of Christ. **We now want to learn how the Holy Spirit was sent to Christ's followers.**

2.

The promise of the Holy Ghost made by Jesus was fulfilled. He had spoken of him as *“the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name.”* We learn of it in detail in the book of Acts: *“When the day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. Then there appeared to them divided tongues as of fire and one sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance,”* Acts 2:1-4. (NKJV)

What Joel and Ezekiel, prophets in the Old Testament, had foretold and what Jesus the Savior had often promised, took place on the 50th day after Jesus' resurrection. Just before Jesus ascended into heaven on the 40th day after His resurrection, He told His followers to remain in Jerusalem to await the gift of the Holy Spirit. And this they did. Ten days later, on Pentecost Sunday, the heavenly Father sent His Holy Spirit. Since He is a spirit, the Father had to manifest His presence to the disciples by means of visible and audible signs, the sound of a mighty wind and the little tongues of fire. That they had received the gift of the Holy Spirit was immediately evident, for they were able to preach the Gospel in several foreign languages that they had never learned to speak before. The people asked: *“How is it that we hear, each in our own language in which we were born?”* Acts 2:8 (NKJV) and the foreigners said: *“We hear them speaking in our own tongues the wonderful works of God.”* Acts 2:11. (NKJV) With the preaching of the Gospel of Christ on that first Pentecost Day and the resulting conversion of 3,000 people, the Holy Spirit established, the New Testament Holy Christian Church.

Jesus specifically promised that the heavenly Father would send the Holy Spirit in His name. Jesus shows the intimate relationship between Himself and the Father when He promised that the Holy Spirit would be sent in His name. He could make this promise and speak on behalf of His heavenly Father because He is the one and only Son of God and is of one essence with the Father. The Holy Spirit would be sent in Jesus' name because Jesus is the One who has by His work of atonement reconciled sinners to God. It is on the basis of Jesus' work of redemption that the Holy Spirit is able to do His work of sanctification in the hearts of men.

There is a great deal that we might say about the Holy Spirit's work in the hearts of men, but **our text speaks only of a specific work of the Holy Spirit for the followers of Christ.**

3.

Jesus promised, *“He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.”* The first specific promise of Jesus to His followers was that the Holy Spirit would teach them all things. They needed to be taught. Of themselves they did not understand many things that Jesus had taught them. They did not understand what was happening and why it was happening when Jesus was betrayed and suffered and died. They needed to be enlightened. Jesus had promised, *“When He, the Spirit of truth has come, He will guide you into all truth.”* John 16:13. (NKJV) This promise was fulfilled beginning on Pentecost. They were ignorant no longer. Their understanding was enlightened and they knew everything that they should preach to the people.

The second specific promise of Jesus to His followers was this: The Holy Spirit will *“bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.”* If we were to hear an instructor for three years, it would be humanly impossible for us to remember all his words and exact teachings, even if we understood them at the time. So the followers of Christ could not of themselves remember Jesus' instruction and His exact words. But after receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit. Jesus promised that they would remember all things Jesus taught them. They would have Jesus' exact words brought to mind so they could teach them to others.

Do we not have to marvel at how great and precious the gift of the Holy Spirit was for the first followers of Christ? They had a perfect understanding of everything Jesus had taught them, a perfect understanding of the full truth of God. For what Jesus had taught them was not the mere opinion of a man such as a great educator or learned professor would teach. We read in the book of Hebrews, ***“God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son,”*** Hebrews 1:1-2 (NKJV) Note that it says God has spoken to us by His Son. What Jesus taught His disciples was God’s Word. The Holy Spirit gave them a full understanding of God’s Word. They could with the Holy Spirit’s gift recall the exact teachings of God’s Word that Jesus had spoken. What a precious gift the Father gave when He sent the Holy Spirit in Jesus’ name!

Do we not wish that we had such a precious blessing today? The fact is that we do have this blessing. We are not claiming that the Holy Spirit comes to us as He came on Pentecost to the followers of Christ. We are not claiming that we can preach and teach as the apostles did. But we have the full truth of God’s Word as it was written by the holy men of God who spoke by the Holy Spirit. ***“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work,”*** 2 Timothy 3:16-17. (NKJV) What the holy men of God wrote by inspiration of the Holy Spirit has been preserved by God these hundreds of years since they first wrote it. It is all there in the Bible.

Think of what this means for us today! We have the full truth of God recorded for us in the Bible. The words we read in the Bible are not the human opinions of the men who wrote. They are not the words the holy men of God thought they should use in expressing Jesus’ teaching, but the exact words and thoughts that the Holy Spirit moved them to write down. We call this Verbal Inspiration.

In our day people are so confused. They hear so many varied teachings in different churches. Some, like in the Roman Catholic Church, are told that they should believe whatever the church teaches and let the church decide what is right. Others, like in the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, are told that they should accept what sounds reasonable and reject miraculous and supernatural things. From year to year the opinions of men change and for this reason also people are confused. But we need not be confused. God tells us that everything in the Bible is His Holy Word. It is the full truth, the whole truth. What we have in the Bible is, therefore, reliable and an altogether adequate source of religious teaching. And it will never change because God does not change. The psalmist writes, ***“All your words are true; all your righteous laws are eternal,”*** Psalm 119:160 NIV. ***“You are the same, and Your years will have no end,”*** Psalm 102:27. (NKJV) Besides all this, Jesus has promised, ***“If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free,”*** John 8:31-32. (NKJV)

John writes, ***“Therefore let that abide in you which you heard from the beginning. If what you heard from the beginning abides in you, you also will abide in the Son and in the Father. And this is the promise that He has promised us – eternal life,”*** 1 John 2:24-25. (NKJV)

Let us therefore on this Pentecost Festival thank and praise God for the work of the Holy Spirit in our hearts through His Holy Word. We have the full truth of God and it has by God’s grace been preserved for us. The Holy Spirit through the Gospel Word enlightens our hearts so that we have the right understanding of what is written in the Bible. Only let us stick to the Bible and not depart from it. Then we shall not be confused by the changing opinions of false teachers, but we may be absolutely confident that we have the truth, and through it the sure hope of everlasting salvation in Christ our Savior. Amen.

(From a Ministry By Mail sermon for Pentecost, May 27, 2007)