

TEXT: ²⁵ “All this I have spoken while still with you. ²⁶ But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you. ²⁷ Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.

Dear Friends in Christ,

Jesus, the God-man, has ascended to heaven where he once again makes full use of all his divine attributes. All power and authority in heaven and on earth has been given to him and he uses it for the church and for us, the believers in the church. Before Jesus left his disciples he said to them, “**I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.**” (John 14:18) Jesus says that he is not going to abandon us even though he has withdrawn his physical presence from us. He says that he will be with us. He told his disciples, “**And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.**” (Matthew 28:20b) Even though we don’t see him, he is with us because as God he is omnipresent. He is with us this morning as we hear his Word. For he said, “**Where two or three are gathered in my name there am I in the midst of them.**” (Matthew 18:20) He is here in the sacrament of Holy Communion. For he said, “**This is my body,**” and “**This is my blood.**” (Matthew 26:26, 28) We are not alone. Jesus is with us.

This morning in our text, Jesus tells his disciples another way that they will not be orphaned children after he leaves them. He tell them that the Father will send them the Holy Spirit. Jesus’ words were fulfilled on Pentecost Sunday. God the Father sent the Holy Spirit to Jesus’ disciples gathered there in that room in Jerusalem to give them the gifts they needed to fulfill the mission of “**making disciples of all nations.**” In our text, the Holy Spirit is called, **the Paraclete**, from the Greek word, *o` para,klhtoj*, literally, the one called and sent to stand alongside of someone. Let’s use that thought this morning to talk about the work of the Holy Spirit. Let’s make our theme, **The Holy Spirit Stands Alongside of Us to Help Us in Our Mission.** **1. He stands alongside of us to teach us and reminds us of Jesus teachings. 2) He stands alongside of us to give us peace and protect us so that we will not be afraid.** Let’s see how the Holy Spirit carried these purposes out on Pentecost Sunday and what we can expect from this Paraclete also today.

1. He stands alongside of us to teach us and reminds us of Jesus teachings.

Jesus said, “**All this I have spoken while still with you. ²⁶ But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.**” The “**this**” that Jesus is referring to may refer to everything he had just talked to them about in the upper room the night he was betrayed, but more than likely it’s an all-inclusive word referring to everything that Jesus taught them while they followed him during his ministry. Wow! That was a lot. How could they possibly remember everything after Jesus left them.

If the disciples were worried about that, they didn’t have to be. Jesus tells them that he will send the Paraclete to help them. The Holy Spirit will stand alongside of them and 1) teach them all things, and 2) remind them of everything Jesus said to them during his ministry. There would be some new things down the road that the Holy Spirit would teach them. For example, the Holy Spirit would reveal to Peter that God wanted the Gospel message to be preached to the Gentiles as well as the Jews. (Acts 10: esp. v. 19). In that same story it is quite

evident that the Holy Spirit was reminding Peter of everything that Jesus had taught him (note esp. Acts 10:34-44).

We see the results of the presence of the Holy Spirit on the disciples on Pentecost Sunday. Not only were they able to speak **“the wonders of God”** in other languages that they had not learned before, but they were able to preach the content of Jesus’ teaching. The Holy Spirit reminded them of what Jesus taught them before personally and through the Old Testament prophets so that they could be his witnesses to the world. The Holy Spirit gave them this gift not only for the benefit of the people of their day, but also for the benefit of future generations, including ours. The Holy Spirit taught all things and reminded them of all things in order that they could write them down so that future generations could also hear and see what the eyewitnesses of Jesus’ ministry heard and saw. The Holy Spirit gave us the Holy Scriptures through these men that he stood alongside of to counsel and guide. Yes, **“Prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.”** (2 Peter 1:21) **“All Scripture is God-breathed!”** (2 Timothy 3:16) All the words of the Bible are God’s Word because the Holy Spirit taught the human writers not only the thoughts but even the words they wrote. We call this teaching *“verbal inspiration.”*

What does this mean for us today? Some today say that the Bible *“includes”* God’s Word. They deny that the Bible *“is”* God’s Word. What they are really saying with the word, *“include”* is that not every Word of the Bible *“is”* God’s Word. Some of it is. Some of it isn’t. They want to believe this because they want a way to eliminate parts of the Bible that they don’t want to believe or they find impossible to believe, for example, supernatural events like miracles, etc.

What does the Paraclete’s work assure us of? It assures us that every word of the Scriptures is the truth, God’s Word. For everything the apostles told us were words **“taught by the Spirit.”** (1 Corinthians 2:13) Because every word is **“taught by the Spirit”** we can be absolutely sure that there are no errors in the Bible. Everything it says is true! We can also be sure that all of its promises to us are trustworthy. We know this because God is faithful. He always keeps what he promises. Therefore **the Word of God is a lamp to our feet. A guide for our path.** (Ps. 119:105)

But that is not the only way the Paraclete works among us still today. He is also with us as he was with the disciples on Pentecost. He guides us to opportunities to speak the gospel and also reminds us of what Jesus taught and gives us the words to speak when we seize those opportunities. *“We are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works.”* (Ephesians 2:10) The Holy Spirit guides us to eagerly carry out what God has prepared in advance for us to do. It is God, especially in the person of the Holy Spirit, who works in us to will and to act according to his good purpose. We see this every week in our Sunday School teachers and others who serve the congregation. We see it every time a believer answers the question of a non-believer concerning his or her faith. The Holy Spirit is guiding us, counseling us, even giving us the words to say at the time we need them.

2) He stands alongside of us to give us peace and protect us so that we will not be afraid.

The Holy Spirit doesn’t just give us the content of our message, he also gives us the strength and courage to witness the message. He stands alongside of us to give us peace and protect us so that we will not be afraid. Jesus said, *“²⁷ Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.”* What is the peace Jesus leaves with us? How is it different from the peace the world gives? The peace that Jesus leaves us with, gives us, is the peace he has established

between us and our heavenly Father. Paul explained it this way, **“God reconciled us to himself in Christ.”** (2 Cor. 5:18) How did he do that? Paul answers, **“God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.”** (2 cor. 5:21) God demands a payment for sin. But we imperfect sinners could never pay the price demanded for our sins. In his mercy God provided a substitute to make a perfect payment, His Son, Jesus. His shed blood on the cross purifies us of every sin. Because of what Jesus did, God no longer counts our sins against us. We have peace with God. Through faith in Jesus this peace, this forgiveness of sins becomes ours. Faith is a gift of the Holy Spirit. The peace which Jesus gives us through a Spirit-worked faith in him is a completely different peace than the world gives. It’s different in this that it is not an earthly peace although it can lead to peace on earth. It is peace with God. When people have peace with God they will strive to live a life of love in thankfulness to God. That life of love will have an effect on relationships here on earth. Jesus’ peace is eternal. God will not change his mind concerning Jesus sacrifice being a complete payment for sins.

But God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, hasn’t just made us reconciled sinners, He has also made us ambassadors in the world. Through us God makes his appeal to the world. He has given us the ministry of reconciliation. In other words, God wants us to go into the world and tell people what he has done, not just for us, but also for them. God wants us to lead people to repentance. This might seem like pretty scary work if it were not for the fact that the Holy Spirit has been called to stand alongside of us to protect us. We do not have to be afraid because if God is for us who can be against us.

Fifty days earlier they crucified their Lord, but on this day which started out with Jesus’ disciples hiding in a room for fear of the Jews, the Holy Spirit’s presence moved them to courageously walk out of the room in order to fearlessly preach the law and unashamedly proclaim Christ crucified to the crowds. They did this because the Holy Spirit was with them, strengthening them, protecting them. And when they were persecuted the Holy Spirit was still in control turning that persecution into a blessing for the church and seeing to it that the persecution did not go any further than what his flock could bear. Often he used that persecution to strengthen, not destroy faith; sometimes to bring his beloved home, but never to destroy body and soul in hell.

The idea of witnessing our faith is still a scary thought. We shrink from doing it even when we are just inviting. Is that why no one has signed up to help deliver invitations for the Branches Band concert? Are we afraid of peoples’ reactions, etc. **“Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned, the flames will not set you ablaze. For I am the Lord, your God; the Holy One of Israel, your Savior.”** (Isaiah 43:1ff) This is our Heavenly Father’s promise, the One who desired reconciliation with us from the beginning, the One who sent his Son to reconcile us, the One who sends us His Holy Spirit to stand beside us and help us in our ministry of reconciliation. With God’s promise and the Holy Spirit’s help we have nothing to be afraid of. With the peace we have from Christ with God and with the Holy Spirit’s counsel and guidance and direction we can go forward in Christ confident of our message, courageous in our work and hopeful of His blessing. May every day with the Paraclete at our side be a day like Pentecost where the Holy Spirit’s gifts are evident. Amen.