

John 14:25-27

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.

Prayer of the Day: Holy Spirit, God and Lord, come to us this joyful day with your sevenfold gifts of grace. Rekindle in our hearts the holy fire of your love that in a true and living faith we may tell abroad the glory of our Savior, Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Father, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Verse of the Day: Alleluia. Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful people, and kindle in them the fire of your love. Alleluia. (From the antiphon: *Come, Holy Spirit*)

Sermon:

What are you afraid of? It turns out people are afraid of everything. While we may not all fear everything all at once, the list of fears in our world is extraordinary. From fears of things that are absolutely harmless like colors or numbers to things that can cause us terrible harm like spiders and the sudden stop after a fall, rational or irrational someone probably fears it.

We all learned in the last year that we are absolutely terrified of being trapped in our homes without toilet paper. Of course, scarier still is the thought of being alone. Even though we are painfully aware these days the human beings, no matter how introverted we may be, require human contact, perhaps the most frightening thing about being alone is coming to terms with dealing with the consequences of our sin, while all alone. A ton of thought, time, and typing has been done recently about the fear of dying alone as unseen illness drove us into solitude.

In our lesson today, Jesus is preparing the disciples for a time when He will no longer be with them visibly. In their loneliness they will have to face the world around them which will seek to drive their faith far away. They will have to face Satan himself who will seek to drive them to despair and into the depths of hell. They will even come face to face with death, tortured for the very beliefs they hold dear. But before He leaves, Jesus speaks to them and all of us. In our lesson He urges them and all of us, **FEAR NOT! GOD AND ALL HIS BLESSINGS ARE WITH YOU! THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL TEACH YOU ALL THINGS!**

Just before Jesus disappeared in the clouds overhead, He had promised, “*I will not leave you as orphans* (John 15:18).” He has kept His promise. He sends the Holy Spirit to His people to instill and strengthen faith in their hearts. Today, we see it and celebrate it in dramatic fashion. Tongues of fire dance upon the heads of His disciples in our lesson from the book of Acts. Pentecost is proof positive that God’s people are never alone.

Of course, the Holy Spirit does so much more than simply stand beside us offering moral support in life’s troubles. Because of the faith which the Holy Spirit works in our hearts through the Means of Grace, the Gospel in Word and Sacraments, Jesus can tell us, *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.*

Peace is the opposite of fear. Peace is the absence of fear. A heart at peace is not consumed with the worries and troubles of life. This peace is not fleeting either. Unlike the passing fancies of the world around us, this peace is eternal, lasting, constant. Consider the things that the world tells us lend security: wealth, weapons, whatever. How many of them have actually passed the test of time? Solomon laments their ineffectiveness in Ecclesiastes as they all pass away and turn to dust, “*Meaningless, meaningless*”, he laments, “*utterly meaningless, everything is meaningless.* (Ecclesiastes 1:2)” devoid of God they lack meaning, they do not provide security or peace.

The opposite is true when God stands with His people. Then even what the world sees as meaningless, faith, love, hope are of greatest value for God’s people. Why? Because they no longer

disappear in the onslaught of time. They endure into eternity in the hearts and minds, the souls of the elect. Earlier in our worship, we confessed that so often we lack the fruits, the blessings of the Spirit. We call them the fruits of the Spirit because He is the one that brings them to us.

In the gift of faith, the Holy Spirit provides what we need the most. Forgiveness for our sinful lack of faith in life's trials and tribulations which leave us feeling like the blessings of God are trivial against their attacks. In that forgiveness, we see the life that truly is ours. Free to live every moment whether in work or worship, play or prayer in the confidence that God is alive and well, working in it all to bring us and others closer to Him. In forgiveness, we understand the salvation that belongs to us not because of our effort, birth, or wealth but in the hope of everlasting life purchased and won by the birth, effort, and perfection of our Savior Jesus. These gifts, these blessings are ours in spite of the fears of the world around us, in spite of the snares of Satan which seek to overpower us, in spite of our sins with the wretched guilt that plagues us and threatens us with the fires of hell. We will confess, *I believe that I cannot by my own thinking or choosing believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, or come to him. But the Holy Spirit has called me by the gospel, enlightened me with his gifts, sanctified and kept me in the true faith.* The Holy Spirit, through His manifold blessings, provides us with peace in life, peace in death which cannot be taken away like the treasures of the world around us. It will last into all eternity.

Ah but Jesus speaks these words to the disciples, to men who regularly struggled to remember all that Jesus had come to do for them. Peter will deny Jesus, James and John seek power and glory at Jesus' side, Thomas will doubt His clear words in the resurrection, all of them will flee when worldly power flexes its muscles and seizes their Lord. We are no different. In our sinfulness, we struggle to live and apply all that Jesus has spoke to us. Jesus will not leave us to rot in our wickedness. *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 Spirit will come to center our attention where it belongs. He comes to teach us everything Jesus has spoken of and achieved for us. He comes to direct us back to the powerful gospel of God. He will teach us all things.

Note the patience of our God in these words He speaks to us. the work of the Holy Spirit is not to focus us on anything new. Jesus has already revealed and lived it all for us. But He knows we will sin. He knows we will struggle, He knows we will doubt. So the Father and the Son will send forth the great teacher of faith.

As I was studying this week, I came across a comment on the sound of the violent wind which roared through that room in which the disciples were gathered. The author commented that the law roars in the life of the Christian to expose our sinful failure to listen to and conform to God's holy will. It exposes our failure and fear in the face of the turmoil of life. But those tongues of fire enlighten us to the truth of God's Word. The disciples preached it so powerfully as the Spirit twisted their tongues to speak in the languages of the multitudes gathered around. The final words of the sermon we heard there announced the end result of the Spirit's work in the hearts of God's people. *Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved* (Acts 2:21).

Faith clings to Christ. As the Spirit drives us back to the word and work of Jesus, we crumble at the foot of the Cross and where we see our salvation so vivid and clear. We have not been orphaned. Jesus never left us. *Wherever two or three gather together in His name there He is with us* (Matthew 18:20). It's nothing new, but the Spirit teaches it to us as if it were. Driving away our guilt and sin, giving His blessings, living within us in the very Word He proclaims.

Turns out there is no reason to fear. Not with the Holy Spirit by our side. You need not be afraid of your sin or it's guilt, Satan or the shame He tries to bludgeon us with, not the dread defeat of death, not even a sudden and unexplainable lack of toilet paper. Why? It's all been conquered in Christ, and it has all been made yours by grace and through faith as the Holy Spirit goes to work through His Word. Brothers and sisters, it's Pentecost! So **FEAR NOT! GOD AND ALL HIS BLESSINGS ARE WITH YOU! THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL TEACH YOU ALL THINGS!** Amen.