

Easter 6 Sermon, May 17, 2020

The Holy Spirit, John 14:15-21

Let me hear you say, "Amen!" Let me hear you say, "Hallelujah! Praise the Lord!" What's up with this? What is it about the Holy Spirit that makes us squirm in our seats? I mean we all believe in God right? And I probably preach about Jesus 90% of the time, and we like hearing those messages, right? But when it comes to the third person of the Trinity, people from the Lutheran tradition aren't quite certain how to react. We might get uptight, worried, confused, even concerned.

Do we really believe what we recite in the Apostle's and Nicene Creed where we say, "We believe in the Holy Spirit?" Do we believe the Holy Spirit is intended for us or is it something that resides in those 'other churches?' Do we believe the Holy Spirit is the third person of the Trinity—actually God's himself? You see, the Holy Spirit can be so much more than we often allow it to be. We believe, but our disbelief is also present.

In today's passage of John we read that Jesus promises an Advocate, a Helper, a Comforter—the Spirit of truth, whom the world has such a difficult time in receiving. The text goes on to say, "But you know him, because he lives with you, and he will be in you." Once again Jesus comes to us in our darkest places and says, "I will not leave you orphaned. I will not leave you alone."

Jesus also tells us that although he would be leaving, those who love him and follow his commandments will never die. How's that for a promise! Because I live, you shall live also.

Jesus also tells us that the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, will teach all things and help us remember all things that have been taught. This is the Spirit of Truth.

Martin Luther says, "I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength 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, even as He calls, gathers, enlightens, and sanctifies the whole Christian Church on earth."

Everyone who claims to believe and hopes they have found forgiveness in Christ Jesus has been called to do so by the Spirit! You did not come to this conclusion on your own. This is what the Spirit does. God the Spirit is with us causing you to do what you are meant to do. God is actually with us!

It is the Spirit that does the calling, not you! But the Spirit does more than call. The Holy Spirit gathers us into this community. We are not only created to be in a relationship with God, we are created to be in relationships to others.

We are in fellowship when we study the Holy Word of God. It is in fellowship we share the elements. It is in fellowship we feel our sorrows and celebrate our joys together. It is in fellowship we are lifted up when we are beaten down, and given the opportunity for forgiveness when we go astray. Jesus says, "I will not leave you orphans, I will come to you."

The Holy Spirit calls! The Holy Spirit gathers us into fellowship. And the Holy Spirit enlightens us. Enlightens us not only with knowledge of God, and the Love of Christ, but enlightens us with gifts to make miracles in the community happen.

Every single one of you has important role to play with the gifts the Spirit has given you. Yes, we are enlightened with gifts so that the body of Christ, the community of all Christians may be built up until that day when we see Christ face-to-face.

So you see, even though God created the heavens and the earth in a mystical fashion, even though Jesus, God incarnate came and lived among us some 2000 years ago, and ascended into heaven, God through His only Son has not left us alone! We have the Holy Spirit, the Advocate, the Helper, the Comforter any time we call upon the name of Jesus.

Yes, we believe in the Holy Spirit! Praise the Lord! Amen!