

June 4, 2006
Pentecost

"You Have the Holy Spirit as Your Comforter"

JOHN 14:25-27

All this I have spoken while still with you. ²⁶ But the Counselor (Comforter), 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.

Did you notice something different when you came to worship this morning? The cloths on the altar and the pulpit, and the stole I am wearing are red. If you look more closely you can see a dove, the symbol of the Holy Spirit and tongues of fire. The Holy Spirit came on Pentecost with the sound of a rushing wind and tongues of fire on the heads of the apostles.

Pentecost is the Greek word for 50. 50 days after Passover the Jewish people celebrated Pentecost or the Harvest Festival. Jerusalem filled with out of towners. It was the perfect time for Jesus to keep his promise to send the Holy Spirit and fill the disciples with the power to witness boldly to the resurrection. The risen Lord Jesus, the Lord of the harvest, swung his sickle into the ripe grain. 3000 people were led to faith and baptized.

I don't see anyone here this morning with tongues of fire on their heads. I don't hear the sound of the mighty rushing wind. I don't hear anyone speaking in tongues. We don't see people coming to faith in large numbers from one sermon. That does not mean the Holy Spirit is not among us in a very powerful way that alters and shapes every day of our lives. Jesus told us in John 14 that he would not leave us as orphans. Jesus promised the Holy Spirit who is our comforter, who will teach us all things and bring us to the peace that only he can give. What a great name for the Holy Spirit! Comforter. The Comforter walks alongside of you and encourages you. How blessed you are to have the Holy Spirit as your comforter.

He teaches you and helps you remember

The Holy Spirit is your comforter because he is a very good teacher. Think of the best teacher you ever had in college or high school. That teacher cannot begin to hold a candle to the Holy Spirit. Jesus said, "All this I have spoken while still with you. But the Counselor (Comforter), 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." Can you imagine what it must have been like to live with Jesus and have him as your teacher for three years? How good was Jesus at teaching? Read earlier in this chapter and hear disciples say, "Let not your hearts be troubled, you believe in God, believe also in me." Read in John 15, "I am the vine and you are the branches" Read in John 10, "I am the Good Shepherd, I give my life for the sheep." There were no tape recorders to tape the messages. Jesus promised something better. He promised the Holy Spirit who would take these words he spoke, preserve them on the pages of the Bible and then teach them to people of every generation.

I am holding in my hand a slate, a very old slate that was used perhaps a hundred years ago in a small one-room school in Nebraska. The kids wrote down words and numbers, erased them and then wrote them down again. They learned the basics. The Holy Spirit is so good at teaching us the basics of God's Word and writing them down in our hearts. 1 Corinthians 2 says this about the teaching work of the Holy Spirit: "However, it is written: 'No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived, what God has prepared for those who love him:' but God has revealed it to us by his Spirit." The Holy Spirit reveals the mind of God to us and places these revelations into a book we call the Bible.

The disciples did not have to sit down after Jesus ascended into heaven to determine among themselves what Jesus said and what he did not say. It was the Holy Spirit who taught and helped them remember exactly what Jesus said so future generations did not have to guess at what Jesus actually said. 2 Peter 1 says, "Holy men of God spoke as they were being carried along by the Holy Spirit." Have you ever gone to the grocery store and tried to remember what was needed? How easily three simple items become fugitive information! No so with the words of Jesus. The Holy Spirit helped them remember and helped them record the Word of God. That means we don't have to be taken in by false teachers who claim there were other gospels written that say Jesus was not truly God, did not come in the flesh or even married Mary Magdalene.

Because the Holy Spirit has revealed God's Word to you, and led you to believe in that Word, these words become precious to you. They bring you great comfort in your life. That is why you don't want a day to go by in this life without spending sometime with the Lord, and letting him speak to you and comfort you. Jesus said, "My sheep hear my voice and they follow me and I give them eternal life." The Holy Spirit teaches you and helps you remember. You are able to recognize the voice of Jesus calling to you.

Did you here about the 8 year old boy who was lost in Colorado for four days last week? Over 100 rescue people searched a remote canyon, calling out his name, "Evan, Evan." The boy heard their calls but did not come out from hiding because he was afraid of the strange voices. One of the rescue workers thought he heard a boy's voice crying. They brought the boy's father and he called out, "Evan, Evan." They knew if the boy recognized his father's voice he would respond. The Holy Spirit takes the words of Jesus and the words of the Bible and his voice comes to us and soothes and comforts us and draws us closer to him. "Jesus loves me. This I know. For my feelings tell me so? That is not the way I learned it. "For the Bible tells me so." The Holy Spirit gave us a reliable source of God's Word for our lives.

One of my favorite prayers in the Bible is found in Ephesians 3. It asks the Holy Spirit to help us see the depth of the love that Jesus has for us. "I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge-- that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God." Even when your mind begins to fail and you start slipping, the Holy Spirit will help you remember what Jesus has spoken to you in his Word.

The dove is a symbol of the Holy Spirit. The dove is also a symbol of something else. Do

you know what that might be? You are right. It is often used as a symbol of peace. But the world's view of peace is so different from the peace in Jesus that the Holy Spirit wants to bring into your life.

He brings you peace in Jesus

Jesus said, "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." The peace Jesus gives us through the work of the Holy Spirit is different from the peace that this world offers. You and I were born into this world with a worldly view of peace. Beating inside of us from the day we were born is the thought that the method we develop for living in peace with people can also be used to pursue peace with God.

It is good to learn to live in peace with other people but we cannot use the same method for gaining peace with God. I can still remember having fights with my brother or sister, and hearing my dad say, "Who will be the peace maker?" I learned that getting along with my brother and sisters while playing together was much better than having fights and arguments. The Bible encourages us to live at peace with other Christians. "Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace." You know and I know that when Christians work at living in harmony with each other, praying for each other, and not having bad thoughts, there is so much more joy and peace in our lives. If you ever listen to Dr. Laura, you will notice that much of her radio program is devoted to helping people getting along better with each other. Even when we drive down the freeway, our trip will go much more smoothly if we learn to drive without having outbursts of anger towards others who may be following us too closely or driving too fast or cutting in front of us.

We cannot apply what we learn in life about living at peace with people to making peace with God. That's the peace this world tries to encourage us to pursue. Satan offers the same false hope. This false hope is engrained in our sinful flesh. The world's view of peace with God says that you can patch up your relationship with God by simply doing things to please God such as trying to be a better person, or trying to get along better with other people. Remember how the son who went away from home and foolishly spent his family inheritance wanted to restore peace with his father by being a faithful hired servant.

Here is where we need the Holy Spirit. In the same talk that Jesus had with his disciples that night before he died, he had this to say about the Holy Spirit. "But I tell you the truth, it is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. When he comes he will convict the world of sin." Without the Holy Spirit I will draw my own conclusions and my own convictions on how I can make my life right with God and have peace with God. I may even draw the conclusion that I can find temporary peace in the material blessings of this life, ignoring completely the fact that this world is coming to an end and I will have to stand before God in the final judgment. Jesus said, "I will send him to you." You have the Holy Spirit in your life, convicting you and convincing you that even your best efforts to be a better person do not improve your standing with God.

The night of his resurrection Jesus appeared to his disciples and said, "Peace be to you." Then he showed them his hands and side. Then it says they were overjoyed when they

saw the Lord. Why were they so happy? Jesus was not only alive, he even had the wounds on his body that gave them the assurance full payment was made for all sin. Every day of your life the Holy Spirit comforts you by speaking to you and saying, "Look at what Jesus has done for you. Look at the nail marks in his hands. Look at the peace you have with your God." Because the Holy Spirit has changed your life and opened your eyes to see this peace in Jesus, you can say with Paul, "Therefore being justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."

An elderly man was dying. He told his pastor, "I just want to hear about Jesus." I just want to hear about Jesus. Isn't that the story of your life, a story that was written because you have the Holy Spirit as your Comforter. Amen.