

June 12, 2011  
Pentecost

*"We Still Have the Holy Spirit with Us"*

### **JOHN 16:5-11**

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**N**ow I am going to him who sent me, yet none of you asks me, 'Where are you going?' <sup>6</sup> Because I have said these things, you are filled with grief. <sup>7</sup> 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. <sup>8</sup> When he comes, he will convict the world of guilt {<sup>8</sup> Or will expose the guilt of the world} in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment: <sup>9</sup> in regard to sin, because men do not believe in me; <sup>10</sup> in regard to righteousness, because I am going to the Father, where you can see me no longer; <sup>11</sup> and in regard to judgment, because the prince of this world now stands condemned.

The disciples were filled with grief because Jesus told them he was returning to his heavenly Father. That was the sad news. Then there was the good news. Jesus promised to give them the Holy Spirit to comfort them and help them meet the huge challenges that were facing them after he ascended into heaven.

These words about the Holy Spirit were not just meant for the disciples. They are meant for us who have tough jobs facing us once again this week. Jesus tells us we are his witnesses. The words he spoke to his disciples apply to us. "And you also must testify, for you have been with me from the beginning." You have been with Jesus from the beginning. You know the blessings you have in him. You get close to people. You love them. You want the blessings you have in Jesus to be there in their lives. On this Pentecost Sunday we want to celebrate how the Holy Spirit is with us to strengthen us in our faith and to help us testify to others about the blessings we have in Jesus our Lord and Savior.

### **The Holy Spirit is with us to comfort us**

The Holy Spirit is not in some far off distant cloud, remote and removed from us. The Holy Spirit is right here with us in every aspect of our lives to comfort us and strengthen us in our faith, especially when we are experiencing tough times and low moments in our lives. The disciples had a hard time grasping where Jesus was going. That is why Jesus said to them, "Now I am going to him who sent me, yet none of you asks me, 'Where are you going?'" The disciples heard Jesus tell them how he was going to the Father but they did not fully realize what a huge blessing that would be for them. Jesus told them, "It is for you 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 Jesus allows something to be taken away from us, he always provides another blessing equal or even greater to what was taken away. The disciples were grieving that Jesus would leave them. Jesus promises that his leaving them will be a blessing, because the Holy Spirit would come to them and help them. Have you ever had something very precious taken away from you? Maybe it was a pet you loved, or a job you lost, or your

health, or a loved one in your family. Think of that day you said goodbye to your son or daughter when they went off to college or went off to serve in the military. The disciples have this empty feeling in the pit of their stomach because Jesus is leaving them. In one of hymns, "Be Still My Soul" it says, "My Jesus can repay from all his fullness he takes away."

Jesus promises the Holy Spirit. "Unless I go away, the Counselor will not come to you, but if I go, I will send him to you." The Holy Spirit is our Counselor or Comforter. The Greek word for Counselor has the thought of someone coming up to you and talking to you and encouraging you. In John 14 Jesus said, "All this I have spoken while still with you. 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 that I said to you." The Holy Spirit uses God's Word to teach us about Jesus and then helps us remember what we have learned. A Christian man had the awful experience of seeing his wife leave him for another man. The pain was overwhelming for him. How did he make it through the crisis? He kept saying to himself over and over again, "The Lord is my Shepherd." Think of all those moments in your life when the Holy Spirit has come to you and lifted you up by recalling some word from Scripture or some words from a hymn that you love or words from a sermon you heard on Sunday.

Will you make it through this life without experiencing low moments? I don't think so as long as Satan is around to tempt us, discourage us and accuse us. Some of these low moments come to us because of how we have lived our lives by not trusting in the Lord as we should. We open our lives to sin and then we have to suffer the consequences. We experience low moments because this world is not our real home. We have this homesickness and aching and longing for the way things God intended them to be in the Garden of Eden. We get tired of struggling to live for Jesus and carry a cross for him. Listen to the words of Psalm 42: "Why are you downcast, O my soul? Why so disturbed within me?" Then it goes on to say, "Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Savior and my God."

It is the Holy Spirit who renews our hope in the Lord. It is the Holy Spirit who restores the joy of salvation to us as we sang in Psalm 51, "Restore unto me the joy of my salvation. Romans 8 tells us, "The Spirit bears witness with our spirit that we are the sons of God." Martin Luther wrote in his hymn about the Holy Spirit, "We now implore God, the Holy Ghost, for the true faith which we need the most. That in our last moments he may befriend us and as homeward we journey attend us. Lord, have mercy."

When the Holy Spirit fills you with the love that Jesus has for you, he also opens your mouth to speak. Psalm 51 says, "Restore to me the joy of my salvation and grant me a willing spirit to sustain me. Then I will teach transgressors your ways and sinners will turn back to you."

### **We have the Holy Spirit to help us witness to Jesus**

The Holy Spirit is going to get involved in the word of God that we bring to people. He will convict them. "When he comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment; in regard to sin, because men do not believe in me." People

do not believe in Jesus because they see no need for him. The Holy Spirit convicts or convinces people that what they do wrong is deserving of eternal death and punishment. He shows them that they cannot save themselves.

You don't need the Holy Spirit to be convinced that there are lots of bad things people do in this life. Even the world looks with disgust on the former governor of our state of California and his adulterous affairs or the congressman from New York who has been in the news ad nausea. I am holding in my hand a cartoon from the editorial page that shows a candle with moths being drawn to the light and dying. One moth still flying has the label of "politicians." People are drawn to sin the way moths are drawn to the light. Jeremiah 17:6 says "The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it?" Have you ever seen a bug zapper? In the parts of our country where it gets very humid during the summers, they will use bug zappers to kill the bugs. The light attracts the bugs to electric wires that zap the bugs. There were little zaps for small bugs and loud zaps for large bugs. Eventually the ground is full of dead bugs. The Holy Spirit convicts people of sin. He shows them what sin is and then shows the consequences of that sin. "The wages of sin is death." That means eternal death and punishment in hell. The Holy Spirit leads people to cry out "What must I do to be saved?"

The Holy Spirit also convicts the world of sin in regard to righteousness. Jesus said, "in regard to righteousness, because I am going to the Father where you can see me no more." When Jesus was here on this earth he taught people that their righteousness was totally inadequate to make themselves acceptable to God. You remember the story of the two men who went up to pray. One man prayed, "Father, I thank you that I am not like other people." He bragged about how he fasted and gave a tenth of his money to the Lord. The other man was a tax collector who had nothing to offer God except a life of cheating people in their taxes. He prayed, "God have mercy on me a sinner." Jesus said that this man went home justified, that means declared righteousness.

The Holy Spirit has opened your eyes to see what the Bible says about your own home grown righteousness. It is toxic. Romans 3 says, "Therefore no one will be declared righteous in his sight by observing the law; rather through the law we become conscious of sin." I may appear to be a righteous and good in the eyes of the community if I try to live a decent life. I may offer my neighbor tomatoes from garden or even help him catch the gopher in his front yard. I am nothing in God's eyes. My righteousness is unacceptable to God.

In these last days in which we are living the Holy Spirit is opening the eyes of people to see that they have a righteousness that does not come from their poor and failed attempts to keep the law. The Holy Spirit helps us see that Jesus blood and Jesus' righteousness were totally acceptable to God. That is why Jesus was able to return to the Father. I think of the words from a hymn that we sung last week. "Behold him there! The risen Lamb! My perfect spotless, righteousness, the great unchangeable I AM, the King of glory and of grace!" As the Holy Spirit leads you to believe that you are covered by Jesus'

righteousness you are able to say with the words of the prophet Isaiah, "I delight greatly in the Lord; my soul rejoices in my God. For he has clothed me with garments of salvation and arrayed me in a robe of righteousness."

And finally Jesus assures us that our Comforter, the Holy Spirit, will help us see with eyes of faith the final destruction of Satan. "and in regard to judgment because the prince of this world stands condemned." We know what will happen to Satan when Jesus returns for the final judgment. The Revelation tells us he will be thrown into the lake of fire. The Revelation also pictures Satan being chained in these last days. This happens whenever the Holy Spirit brings people to the blood of Jesus and leads them to confess boldly and confidently, "The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanses us from all sin." The Holy Spirit opens our eyes to see and hearts to believe the words of Revelation 12 that tell us "The accuser of our brothers, who accuses them day and night has been hurled down. They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony."

Over and over and over again that Holy Spirit remind us that nothing in all creation will ever separate us from the love of God that exists in Christ Jesus our Lord. What a huge blessing it is to know that the Holy Spirit is still with us. Amen.