

**June 4, 2017**  
**Pentecost**

*"The Powerful Holy Spirit Is Still with Us"*

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## **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 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.

Saying goodbye to people we love is never easy. I think of the touching Norman Rockwell painting that shows a father sitting down with his son as he prepares to go off to college. Or the family and friends who gather together and say their goodbyes to their loved one lost on the field of battle. Goodbyes are never easy especially when it involves people we dearly love.

It is hard to imagine how hard it was for Jesus' disciples the night before he died. As they gather together to celebrate the Passover for the last time and the Lord's Supper for the first time, Jesus tells them again and again that he will be leaving them and going to his Father. They were so close to Jesus after spending three years with him.

In the words we just read Jesus says that it was good for them that he was leaving because this would allow him to send his beloved disciples the Holy Spirit who would be their Counselor or Comforter. The Holy Spirit would constantly be there at their side to bring them close to their Savior even after Jesus ascended into heaven and sat at the right hand of the heavenly Father.

This past week you and I were so blessed to have the Holy Spirit, the powerful Holy Spirit as our constant companion and counselor. We cannot even begin to count how many times this amazing Counselor helped us see the love we have in Jesus our Savior more clearly. This Counselor has been there for us many times in the past and he will be there for us many times in the future.

### **Our Counselor has been sent to us by Jesus**

Jesus wanted his disciples to see clearly that it was really for their benefit that he was returning to the Father. He says, "Now I am going to him who sent me, yet none of you asks me, 'Where are you going?'" There was a reason why the disciples did not want to hear Jesus talk about going to the Father. It made them sad. As Jesus says, "Because I have said these things, you are filled with grief."

If you read through these chapters in John where Jesus is talking to his disciples the night

before he died, he is constantly talking about his heavenly Father and returning to his Father. He told them in chapter fourteen that they should be glad he was going back to the Father. They heard him pray, "O Father, give me the glory I had with you before the world began." They are afraid to ask Jesus why he was going to the Father. They do not grasp just how important this was for their lives. And yes it is also important for our lives as well.

Why was it so good for the disciples and for us that Jesus returned to his heavenly Father? By going back to the Father, Jesus is making it clear to us that everything he did to save us and rescue us was completed perfectly. In John 17 Jesus prayed these words to his Father, "I have brought you glory by completing the work you gave me to do."

The disciples had the joy of being with Jesus for three years but they could not see clearly how important it was for him to complete the work the Father had called him to do. All they can think about on this night are amazing moments they had with Jesus. They experienced his perfect love. They listened to his Word. They saw his miracles. They felt comfortable talking to Jesus and asking him questions. As much as they would miss Jesus when he ascended up into heaven, they were privileged to have Jesus tell them it was much better for them if he returned to the Father rather than staying here on earth with them.

How important is it for us here this morning to know that Jesus returned to his heavenly Father? This is extremely important because it is our assurance that Jesus did the job of saving us perfectly. If the work was not done correctly Jesus would not have returned to his heavenly Father. He could not have said to his Father, "I have brought you glory by completing the work you gave me to do."

Any time you have someone do some work for you, you always have the risk the work will not be done correctly. That was not the case with Jesus. To illustrate this important point. This past week I was talking with a man who remodeled an older home, taking it down to the studs. For the plumbing he specified only the highest grade of copper pipe. However, when the plumbers did the new plumbing they installed the plastic pipe. He called the contractor and told him what the specifications were. The contractor pulled out plastic pipe and put in the copper pipe according to specifications.

You and I know that our heavenly Father from all eternity had precise specifications on exactly what his Son had to do rescue us and save us. Jesus was required to live the perfect life we could never live. He was required to be crushed for our sins. He was required to crush the devil's head. All of the specifications were completed perfectly. When Jesus died he could say, "It is finished!" By telling his disciples and us that he is going to the Father he is not filling us with grief, but with great joy, because the work has been done perfectly for us in our place. Jesus came into our world to be the Christ, the one both anointed and appointed to get the job done and do it right.

Well, pastor, here it is Pentecost Sunday. Aren't you going to talk to us about the Holy Spirit? Sure I am. But really the best way to talk about the Holy Spirit is to talk about Jesus first. Because the Holy Spirit is the one who always wants to walk alongside of us and remind us what Jesus has done for us. Jesus told the disciples, "Unless I go away,

the Counselor will not come to you, if I go, I will send him to you." He told them in John 14:26, "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." In John 15:26 Jesus said, "When the Counselor comes, whom I will send from the Father, he will testify about me." Or later in this chapter Jesus said of the Holy Spirit, "But when he the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you in all truth."

Just how does the Holy Spirit help us as we walk down the path of life? How does the Holy Spirit counsel us? Well first, the Holy Spirit has a way of opening our eyes to see just how badly our lives have been infected by this toxic problem of sin. The word of God becomes real to us. We see that we fall far short of loving the Lord our God with our whole heart, soul and mind. Because of the Holy Spirit we begin to see that we never measure up to loving our neighbor as much as we love ourselves. The Holy Spirit walks alongside of us and shows us day by day and hour by hour just how much we need Jesus.

The Holy Spirit does not leave us without hope and comfort. Romans 8 has this amazing verse about the Holy Spirit. "The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children." The Holy Spirit does not tell us we are God's children because of our great performance. He assures us of this position because of what Jesus has done for us. With the eyes of faith given by the Holy Spirit we see Jesus returning to his heavenly Father, sitting at the right hand of his Father, completing the work he has done to rescue us, interceding for us, and taking care of our lives.

The Holy Spirit who is so active in your life and mine is also active in the Word of God that is being proclaimed throughout the world. When you plant the seed of God's word in the lives of people it has great power. On the day of Pentecost 3000 people came to faith through the preaching of Peter and the other apostles, and also through the power of the Holy Spirit

### **The Counselor has been sent to the world by Jesus**

What does the Counselor do for people who don't believe in Jesus? Jesus tells us. "When he comes, he will convict the world of guilt, in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment." There are lots of people in the world and in our community and even among our circle of friends who see no real need for Jesus to save them and rescue them. They are convinced by their sinful human flesh that they have the ability to outweigh the bad things in life by their feeble efforts to improve their lives. As one man said, "I will try and do my best and hope in luck for all the rest." The little engine that could said, "I think I can, I think I can, I think I can." The Holy Spirit convicts the world of guilt. Through God's Word that is planted in the lives of people the Holy Spirit says, "No you can't. No you can't. No you can't."

The Holy Spirit is not being nasty when he convicts the world of sin. He does this as Jesus says, "Because men do not believe in me." A grandmother recently said her little granddaughter's favorite words were, "I can do it by myself." She even jumped into swimming pool because she was convinced she could swim when she hadn't even begun to swim. People are swimming around in this life thinking what they do will have no problem paying off the huge debt of sin they have accumulated in this life. Someone needs to

convince them how wrong they are. Someone needs to show them how much they need Jesus. When Peter preached to the crowd on Pentecost it says, "When the people heard this they were cut to the heart and said to Peter, 'Brothers, what shall we do?'" Peter then turned them to Jesus. That's the work of the Holy Spirit. This is happening all over the world.

This wonderful Holy Spirit also convicts people regarding righteousness. Jesus says the Holy Spirit does this because he is going to the Father. Someday Jesus will return and judge the world in which we live on the basis of his righteousness. That's just the way it will be. There is no other standard. That's why it is critically important for people to believe in a righteousness outside of themselves by which they can be saved. That righteousness, that alien righteousness, is found in Jesus and given to us a free gift so we can stand righteous before him when he returns. The Holy Spirit convicts people or convinces people they need this righteousness in Jesus more than anything else in life.

According to Jesus the Holy Spirit will also convict people in regard to judgment because the prince of this world now stands condemned. How horrible judgment day would be for us if Satan still had the power to accuse us of our sin. The Holy Spirit helps us see that Satan has been overcome by the blood of Jesus that washes us clean. He has nothing to bring against us.

My dear Christians, brothers and sister in Christ today we celebrate how powerful the Holy Spirit has been in our lives, and how powerful the Holy Spirit is when the Word of God is brought into the lives of people who don't believe. Amen.