

*The Coming of the Holy Spirit - The Day of Pentecost*

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Amazing Grace Lutheran Church - Pastor Chip Wilke

John 16:5-11

*"Now I am going to him who sent me, yet none of you asks me, 'Where are you going?' Because I have said these things, you are filled with grief. 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 guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment: in regard to sin, because men do not believe in me; in regard to righteousness, because I am going to the Father, where you can see me no longer; and in regard to judgment, because the prince of this world now stands condemned. (NIV)*

*"Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit"* (Acts 1). Before Jesus ascended these were His instructions for the disciples. From the day of His resurrection Jesus had been pointing His disciples to this day of Pentecost saying: *"I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high"* (Luke 24). So there were the disciples of Jesus in the city ten days after Jesus had ascended, waiting, watching, wondering when and where and how these things would happen. Jesus promised a great gift, the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit was going to be poured out on this day in a very special way. They were promised power from on high. Jesus had comforted them again and again with this news.

But I can't help wondering about what these disciples really thought would happen. They knew the Holy Spirit was coming, but what did they expect from Him? What work did they think the Holy Spirit would do or enable them to do? Why does the Father and Jesus, the Son, send to them and to us the gift of the Holy Spirit? If we listen carefully this morning Jesus is telling us. He is telling us not only that He will send the Holy Spirit, but what the Holy Spirit would do and still does. It is my prayer this morning, as we hear this word of God, that we get our answer to the question: **What do we expect from the Holy Spirit?**

These words of comfort come from the discourse in the upper room on Maundy Thursday evening. Jesus says, *"Now I am going to him who sent me, yet none of you asks me, 'Where are you going?' Because I have said these things, you are filled with grief."* The disciples do not get it yet. Peter and Thomas both asked where Jesus was going, but they asked because they were troubled at the thought of Jesus leaving. They asked out of confusion and grief. Jesus wants them to understand the full implications of His going back to the Father. He wants them to see why His leaving is not a bad thing at all, but a wonderful thing for them. *"But I tell you the truth: It is for your good that I am going away."* The fact that Jesus is able to return to the Father means that God the Father accepts everything that His Son came to earth to do. It means that Jesus accomplished everything. His suffering, His death, His payment for sin was all accepted

by God. Jesus paid for sin, defeated the devil, and won salvation for all people. Jesus is able to return to glory and prepare for us a place of glory.

Since Jesus' work is completed, all that is left for us is to believe and live. All that is left for us is to tell others. Listen closely as to why Jesus returning to the Father is for our good. ***“Unless I go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you.”*** Jesus needed to go - to the cross - to the grave - out of the grave and back to heaven again in order to send to us God the Holy Spirit. Jesus needed to go to send the Holy Spirit to do His work - work that is only possible because of what Jesus had done. Jesus calls the Holy Spirit here the Greek work *paraclete*. A *paraclete* is most commonly defined as a person called in to help, summoned to give assistance. It came to refer to a helper in court, someone who gave legal assistance in court, perhaps even to the point of pleading the case. This word has been translated as *“Counselor, Comforter, or Helper.”* Don't all these words fit the Holy Spirit well? They certainly do if we have right expectations about the Holy Spirit's work.

For some reason when it comes to what people expect from the Holy Spirit people go to opposite and far extremes of the spectrum. There are some that expect the Spirit to come on them with power and enable them to do things God never specifically promises them in His Word. They confuse the work of the Holy Spirit with mysticism, emotionalism, and spiritual signs. They expect the Spirit will allow them to do miracles, have gifts of healing, or speak in tongues. But if this is what I expect from the Holy Spirit, then Jesus' words and promise of the coming Holy Spirit would not be of much comfort to me. I've never had a flame of fire on my head, never been able to speak in tongues, never been bitten by a poisonous snake to tell about it, and I've never worked any miracles of healing. So if I expect this, I guess I would be disappointed.

Then you have another side where the Holy Spirit is almost ignored. In fact, people claim to do things that is only the work of the Holy Spirit. When people say to is up to you to make a decision for Christ and accept Jesus into your heart, they are ignoring God's truth that ***“no one can say, “Jesus is Lord,” except by the Holy Spirit”*** (1 Corinthians 12). When we start to ignore the Holy Spirit, even in little ways, then we also miss out on Jesus' promise here. If I change the Holy Spirit's work into things I can do, into human effort and works, then in the end I will again be disappointed and discouraged. We then will also lose out on the great comfort of the coming Holy Spirit.

This is why dear friends we want to listen to God's Word and learn exactly what to expect from the Holy Spirit. Why does God send us the Spirit and what does God the Holy Spirit do for us? Jesus explains: ***“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; in regard to righteousness, because I am going to the Father, where you can see me no longer; and in regard to judgment, because the prince of this world now stands condemned.”*** The Holy Spirit works through the Word. He works through the law/gospel message of the Bible to *convict* or as it could be translated *convince* the world. He does so in regard to sin, as Jesus explains, ***“because men do not believe in me.”*** Only the Holy Spirit can convince a world of sinners - to see sin as sin. Only the Spirit can turn unbelievers into believers, the guilty into the guiltless, in Christ.

The Holy Spirit also works in convicting the world in regard to righteousness, as Jesus says, ***“because I am going to the Father, where you can see me no longer.”*** The

Holy Spirit alone, working through the Word, reveals a righteousness apart from the law. The Holy Spirit convinces unbelievers that Jesus by His life, by His suffering and dying on the cross, and by His glorious resurrection and ascension, has gained all people a perfect righteousness. This is the righteousness we by faith now have before God. And finally through this law/gospel message of God's Word the Holy Spirit convinces the world in regard to judgment, as Jesus explains, "***because the prince of this world now stands condemned.***" It is finished. The devil is defeated. Only the Holy Spirit convinces unbelievers that the victorious Christ is the one to be obeyed and worshipped, not the devil who poses as the prince of the world. The devil is now condemned as all will be who stand with him.

On Pentecost Jesus fulfills His promise to send the *Paraclete* - the Counselor, the Comforter, the Helper. What the disciples were to expect on Pentecost is exactly what Jesus said the Holy Spirit would do. Yes, the Spirit came in a special way with power from on high. But if we get all caught up in the violent wind which blew through the house, and the flames of fire of the disciple's heads, and the sudden gift they had to speak in all different languages, we might miss out on the really important work of the Holy Spirit that great day. We might miss out on the work which Jesus promises the Holy Spirit will always be doing.

The Holy Spirit was at work changing hearts. He was at work creating, strengthening, and sustaining faith in Christ Jesus. Those miracles were all about the Word and the Holy Spirit working through that Word. An audience was gathered and the disciples were even able to share God's Word with people in their own native tongues. And the Holy Spirit began to work. He was at work as Peter proclaimed God's law and as the people saw their sin as sin and were cut to the heart saying: "*What shall we do?*" The Holy Spirit was at work as Peter proclaimed the life-giving gospel. As Peter proclaimed forgiveness of sins and righteousness given in a crucified and risen Jesus, the Holy Spirit was at work opening eyes to see and hearts to believe. The Holy Spirit was poured out on Pentecost as around three thousand people received the gift of the Holy Spirit in baptism and were rescued from the devil's grasp. The Holy Spirit did a lot of convincing that day. It was not because of the wisdom of John or the preaching of Peter, but every single person who came to faith in Jesus as Savior on Pentecost was because of the working of the Holy Spirit.

How awesome to know the same is true for us! How comforting this truth that when we speak or hear God's Word our *Paraclete* is at work. What a Counselor and Helper we have been given! It is good that Jesus finished the work of salvation and returned to the Father, because now He sends the Holy Spirit to do His work. We know that work continues as the Holy Spirit still **calls, gathers, enlightens, and sanctifies the whole Christian church on earth, and keeps it with Jesus Christ in the one true faith. In this Christian church he daily and fully forgives all sins to me and all believers.** (Luther's explanation to 3<sup>rd</sup> article) What else would we expect from the Holy Spirit? Amen.

