

The Day of Pentecost—May 28, 2023

In the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Exordium

Jesus answered him, “If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. Whoever does not love me does not keep my words. And the word that you hear is not mine but the Father's who sent me.

“These things I have spoken to you while I am still with you. But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you. Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.

The Lord Jesus has ascended in Triumph and now he pours out the Holy Spirit upon his church just as he has promised. This is the day the Lord has made and given to you, his people. Let us sing,

230 Holy Spirit, God of Love



Ho - ly Spir - it, God of Love, Who our night dost bright - en,



Poured on us from heav'n a - bove, Now our faith en - light - en.



In Thy light we gath - er here; Show us that Christ's prom - ise clear



Is A - men for - ev - er. Je - sus, our as - cend - ed Lord,



Oh, ful - fil Thy gra - cious Word: Bless us with Thy fa - vor!

The Holy Spirit is a Person. Well, yeah, you know that, or at least you should. You rightly have been taught from the Scriptures that the Holy Spirit is fully God. He is the Third Person of the Holy Trinity as there is one God in three Persons. And like the other Persons of the Trinity, the Father and the Son, He is due your worship and reverence. The Hymn of the Day today, is a Prayer to the Holy Spirit as you call upon him to hear and answer you as only God can do and does. So, the Holy Spirit is a Person; he is God.

So why bring this up? Well even though you know who the Holy Spirit is you don't always confess him as such in your lives. Yet when you listen to these words of Jesus here in the Gospel reading, you see the great comfort you have because the Holy Spirit is at work in your midst, and you are his people.

## The Day of Pentecost—May 28, 2023

Sundays like this one in the Church Year, then, lend themselves well for you to learn so that we may be comforted and confess this faith we have before the world around us. All too often we are influenced by other things rather than hearing God's word and confessing what he teaches us. So, with that in mind, if someone were to ask you the question, then, "What do you mean when you confess 'I believe in the Holy Spirit'?" The answer that you give is simple, "I believe the Holy Spirit makes me holy." That's what he does and by his work you are truly holy indeed. First and foremost, if it weren't for the Holy Spirit, you would not know Christ and have salvation given to you. Salvation has been accomplished by Jesus. It is finished as he proclaimed on the cross.

In 1 Corinthians 2 God teaches you, "The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned." On your own you can't know and understand the things of God. Sin has caused this as after the Fall no human being can accept the things of God rather, they are folly to him, that is, they are foolishness in your sight. Sin has brought about your lacking a right fear, knowledge, and trust of God. You've replaced those things with hostility and unbelief. This is why we make such a big deal, too about rejecting false teaching like decision theology where one "accepts Jesus into his heart." It can't happen, if you say one can do this you don't take sin seriously and if you don't take sin seriously, we don't take Jesus and his work seriously. You rob the Holy Spirit of his work. He is the Comforter and the Spirit of Truth. He comforts you and leads you into the Truth. He does this all through the word of God.

The Holy Spirit is a preacher. This is how he works; it's how he's always worked. God, the Holy Spirit, preaches. You have neither a spiritless word nor a wordless Spirit. The Holy Scriptures are his voice for they are his very breath. The Holy Spirit is attached to the word of God and through this word of God he preaches. The content of this preaching is what you've been hearing about the past few Sundays in the Gospel readings. He preaches repentance and the forgiveness of sins, law and gospel. Not only that but this is how he works it through this same word. He works repentance. He forgives as he delivers the salvation accomplished by Jesus. The Holy Spirit preaches, and you have Christ and his benefits.

It's really that simple when it comes to knowing and understanding the Holy Spirit and really the whole of the Christian faith. The Holy Spirit preaches, that's what he does and how he does it is through the word of God. When you forget this or deny this then you run into all kinds of problems in the church and your lives in Christ. The Holy Spirit isn't some power, force, or motivation. He isn't arrogant or self-promoting either, rather he is the Paraclete who calls you to himself and gives you Christ. He's the one who says, don't look at me look to the one who is crucified and risen for you; look to Jesus and have what he has done for you.

The Holy Spirit makes you holy by revealing to you the things of God and giving you faith in Christ believing God's word. He saves us making holy by giving us Jesus and the salvation he has accomplished for us. Jesus said in the Gospel reading, "These things I have spoken to you while I am still with you. But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you." So we see in this that the Holy Spirit is not some power rather he is God himself, a Person who is sent to do this work in your midst, to make you holy and hand over the things of God to you.

Now if someone were to ask you "How does the Holy Spirit make you holy?" your reply is what you confess in the Creeds, "by the Christian church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting." This is where the Creeds, which confess what the Scriptures teach help us as we confess the Christian faith in this world. They can be a go to for you to form your thoughts as you confess the faith in this world. Don't be afraid of giving answer to people when they ask you questions of reciting the Creed and unpacking what those words say, really it becomes less intimidating, and you stand with the whole church in this confession. You are not alone when you confess the faith, the whole faithful cloud of witnesses stands with you who have gone before you and are here now. The Christian faith is a corporate thing, you are part of the Body of Christ; it's not just you yourself. The Holy Spirit has called you and gives you through the word of God the answer to speak confession of who you are in Christ.

## The Day of Pentecost—May 28, 2023

Think about that, then, right now, you are receiving the work of the Holy Spirit. In this way talking about the Holy Spirit not only goes together with the word of God but it's connected and intertwined with the Christian Church which is formed, created, and sustained by the Holy Spirit. In the Large Catechism Luther sums this up well when he writes, "Everything, therefore, in the Christian Church is ordered toward this goal: we shall daily receive in the Church nothing but the forgiveness of sin through the Word and sacraments, to comfort and encourage our consciences as long as we live here. So even though we have sins, the <grace of the> Holy Spirit does not allow them to harm us. For we are in the Christian Church, where there is nothing but <continuous, uninterrupted> forgiveness of sin. This is because God forgives us and because we forgive, bear with, and help one another. But outside of this Christian Church, where the Gospel is not found, there is no forgiveness, as also there can be no holiness. Therefore, all who seek and wish to earn holiness not through the Gospel and forgiveness of sin, but by their works, have expelled and severed themselves from this Church."

In this world you walk through it as those who are made holy by God, yet your old flesh still tries to tear you away from the Lord. The new life you have in Christ is a holy one and you are called to walk in it instead in all that is true, good, and beautiful. Jesus said in the Gospel reading, "If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. Whoever does not love me does not keep my words. And the word that you hear is not mine but the Father's who sent me." Called to faith in Christ by the Holy Spirit through the word and sacraments this is a thing for you to hear and take seriously just as Jesus says in this reading. Believing in Jesus and loving him goes hand in hand with keeping his words. There's not to be a disconnect that says on the one hand, "I love Jesus" and then on the other lives a life contrary to the Scriptures, what Jesus teaches. The Holy Spirit creates in you a new and right spirit that desires to hear and keep the words of Jesus and live this new holy life that has been given to you. He works in you to repent of your sin and then produces a new holy life as a fruit of the gospel. The Holy Spirit makes you holy.

In this life you are also heading toward the grave as flesh grows weary, decays, and gets one step closer to death. But you are holy people and as such the Holy Spirit points you to what is to come. The Holy Spirit is pointing you to the day when you will rise from the dead. So, as you are in this world you cling to those promises that your Lord has redeemed you and you have eternal life. Your body is going to rise from its grave; that's your future. The Holy Spirit makes you holy and you are holy people in this life and into eternal life.

Summarizing the work of the Holy Spirit again Luther writes in the Large Catechism, "Now this is the article of the Creed that must always be and remain in use. For we have already received creation. Redemption, too, is finished. But the Holy Spirit carries on His work without ceasing to the Last Day. For that purpose, He has appointed a congregation upon earth by which He speaks and does everything. For He has not yet brought together all His Christian Church [*Christenheit*] or granted all forgiveness. Therefore, we believe in Him who daily brings us into the fellowship of this Christian Church through the Word. Through the same Word and the forgiveness of sins He bestows, increases, and strengthens faith. So when He has done it all, and we abide in this and die to the world and to all evil, He may finally make us perfectly and forever holy. Even now we expect this in faith through the Word."

Dear people of God listen again to the words of Jesus, "Jesus said in the Gospel reading, "These things I have spoken to you while I am still with you. But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you. Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid." Be encouraged on this Day of Pentecost because you belong to Jesus. You are his holy people, the communion of saints, and he is your God. Amid everything that is life on this side of the grave and in this vale of tears, suffering, bearing crosses, facing persecution, and everything in between, you have peace. Your sin is forgiven, and you have eternal life. Jesus is crucified for you, and you will be with him forever even in your own physical body. Always remember this which is to say listen to God's word and treasure it.

### The Day of Pentecost—May 28, 2023

The Lord's peace is yours this very day. It's real peace, the forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation. Not only that but there's confidence and certainty in the peace of Jesus. That's the wonderful thing you see here at Pentecost. God is working in your life when you have his word and sacraments, and this is where you find him for you. You aren't scattered about tossed back and forth when it comes to the Christian faith. He doesn't leave you wondering whether you are his or if you have Christ. You don't find the gospel apart from the means of grace. The Holy Spirit is a preacher, and he sanctifies you; you are a holy one, a saint.

Beloved, peace is yours as you have been called, gathered, enlightened, and sanctified by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit makes you holy. The Holy Spirit, God himself, is your Helper, Comforter, Advocate, and all those things for he gives you Christ and his benefits. What joy then to know and have all of this as a holy people, the Christian church. It's so simple that it's profound. You aren't left wondering and wandering through this life like an orphan who does not have a father or home. You are a holy people, and the Holy Spirit is guiding you and working as you have God's word and sacraments. There's certainty too in all this that baptized into Christ you know what God says to you amid this life and as you head toward death. The Father looks at Christ crucified when he looks at you, so you have peace with God. Cling to Jesus because you have the Holy Spirit and he is at work. You are free to live in this new life and assurance that you are God's children and will be forever. "Come, holy Fire, comfort true, grant us the will your work to do and in your service to abide; let trials turn us not aside. Lord, by your power prepare each heart, and to our weakness strength impart that bravely here we may contend, through life and death to you, our Lord, ascend. Alleluia, alleluia!"

In the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.