

God Sends us His Holy Spirit **John 14:25-27**

²⁵“I have told you these things while staying with you. ²⁶But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and remind you of everything I told you. ²⁷“Peace I leave with you. My peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Do not let your heart be troubled, and do not let it be afraid.

Before our Lord Jesus ascended back to heaven, he gave each of his disciples an important assignment. He told them to go into all the world and gather disciples from every nation. He told them how to do this—by baptizing and by teaching. Baptizing was easy—apply a little water in the name of the Triune God. But teaching people to obey everything Jesus commanded would be more difficult. How could they remember everything Jesus commanded? A lot of what he taught them went over their heads. Would they know enough to be teachers of God’s saving truth? Jesus knew their limitations. That’s why he told them, *“Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you heard me speak about. For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit”* (Acts 1:4,5). And just ten days after his ascension it happened. With Jerusalem filled with people from all around the Mediterranean world to celebrate the Jewish festival called Pentecost, God filled the disciples with the Holy Spirit. Jesus had promised that same Spirit fifty days earlier when he gathered with his disciples to celebrate another Jewish festival—the Passover meal. From that dining table in an upper room, Jesus promised to send them the Holy Spirit. The Spirit would give them the understanding they needed. The Spirit would also cause them to live at peace. As we study this Scripture, we pray God would send us the Holy Spirit to give us greater understanding and peace.

Our text begins with Jesus telling his disciples, *“I have told you these things while staying with you.”* When our Lord spoke these words to his disciples, they were all gathered in an upper room in Jerusalem for one last meal together. This would be the last time they were all together. That same night a band of men would arrest Jesus. They next day he would be put to death on a cross. On Sunday he would live again. Forty days later he’d return home to heaven. He would not be with them much longer. They’d have to go it alone in carrying out the work of gathering disciples for his kingdom. Were they ready for this? The sad reality was that they really didn’t understand what Jesus’ mission was all about. A number of times he told them about his arrest, his crucifixion, his death, and resurrection. But that night they left the upper room, they were shocked to witness their best friend bound and put on trial for crimes he never committed. They’d see his innocent life taken away by a criminal’s death. And when he rose on Easter, just like he said he would, they were nowhere to be found. They were locked away in fear. They were afraid because they didn’t understand what his saving work was all about. Even when he showed himself alive for forty day they still didn’t understand. As he was about to ascend back to heaven one of them asked, *“Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?”* (Acts 1:6). They still didn’t get it. When was he going to drive the Romans out of town. When was he going to set up his throne in Jerusalem and rule God’s people the way David did in Israel’s glory days. They didn’t understand that his kingdom was not of this world. And Jesus was soon leaving. How could they have any success in getting

the word out about what Jesus had done, when they really didn't understand what he had done.

Jesus knew that. That's why he wouldn't leave them alone to do the work. He promised a helper. He told them, "*But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and remind you of everything I told you.*" The sermons that Jesus preached, the parables he taught, our Lord's one on one instruction with them—most of it the disciples didn't grasp. But once they received the Holy Spirit on Pentecost, it all made sense. God the Holy Spirit helped them see Jesus as the Christ, the Son of the living God. God's Spirit helped them know why Jesus left his glorious throne in heaven to join us on earth. The Spirit helped them grasp how the One who gave us his law had to keep those commands flawlessly. The Spirit helped them appreciate why the innocent Jesus had to suffer and die the way he did. The Spirit showed them why the Father had to forsake his Son and punish him for mankind's sin. He helped them piece together his death and resurrection and see why forty days later he'd return back to heaven. Jesus did it all to save the world. And with the gift of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost it all made perfect sense.

The disciples could now tell others about the Savior. They'd spent the rest of their days preaching and teaching about Christ. On Pentecost they were given the ability to share Jesus in languages they had never spoken before. God would even use some of them to join the inspired authors of Holy Scripture. That way generations to come including us can hear that precious good news of Jesus till the end of time. When God sent them his Holy Spirit, they could now understand the important work God called them to do.

We can be thankful that our Lord sends us the Holy Spirit still today. We need the Spirit to give us understanding. It doesn't matter how high an I.Q. you have. Sinful minds cannot comprehend God's saving plan. If you were smarter than Einstein and could fathom any mathematical equation, you still could not figure out the solution to mankind's greatest problem: how to escape punishment from a God who must punish all sin. Scripture tells us why we can't figure this out on our own. "*The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned*" (1 Corinthians 2:14). We need our Lord to send his Holy Spirit because "*no one can say, 'Jesus is Lord,' except by the Holy Spirit*" (1 Corinthians 12:3). Maybe you've heard the statement: it's not so important what you know, but who you know. That may be true when it comes to getting ahead in this life. It's especially true when it comes to attaining eternal life. Jesus is the only answer to our problem of sin and lack of holiness. That's because "*God made him who had no sin to be sin for us so that in him we might become the righteousness of God*" (2 Corinthians 5:21). Why you and I have that understanding and other people smarter than us may not is explained by Paul in his first letter to Christians in Corinth. "*Not many of you were wise from a human point of view, not many were powerful, and not many were born with high status. But God chose the foolish things of the world to put to shame those who are wise. God chose the weak things of the world to put to shame the things that are strong*" (1:26,27). God chose to have his Son suffer the injustice of death on a cross so the rest of us can enjoy heaven. And God chose to send you his Holy Spirit so you can know and believe it. Thank you, Holy Spirit, for giving us such understanding.

Once you understand that Jesus has completely freed you from God's wrath and punishment, once you know that he's won you God's forgiveness and a place in eternal life, then you can live in peace. It's the kind of peace that Jesus spoke of in the upper room. The disciples needed peace. Their first weekend without him was anything but peaceful. Terror filled all of them when that armed mob came to arrest him. Less than 24 hours later, Jesus was dead. Would they be next? On Sunday morning there was a knock at the door. Who leaked where they were staying? Whew! It was just their women. Even after Peter and John left to find out what happened at his tomb, they still came back to hiding behind locked doors. And then he appeared before their eyes. Their first reaction: he must be a ghost. His first words that came out of his mouth were similar to what they heard him say three nights earlier. *"Peace I leave with you. My peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Do not let your heart be troubled, and do not let it be afraid."*

Because Jesus was alive, they had nothing to fear. They didn't need to fear God. Jesus tore down the dividing wall between God and man. They didn't need to fear their enemies. Once God sent them the Holy Spirit on Pentecost, you couldn't find an ounce of fear in any of them. At peace with God they could boldly share his peace with anyone. And when the tally came in that first Pentecost Sunday, there were 3,000 new souls belonging to Christ. Filled with the Holy Spirit they could now let the peace of Christ rule in their hearts. They could now boldly proclaim *"salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved"* (Acts 4:12). They could stand up to the most intimidating figures and disobey their gag order in order to obey God rather than men. They would handle jail time and even beatings, but they could not help speaking about what they had seen and heard (Acts 4:20). God had sent them his Holy Spirit. And they were living at peace.

It's nice to live at peace. Where do we find our peace? Nations we are allied with are at war. You won't find it there. Do we find peace at work? Is there real job security for any of us. Health care costs continue to skyrocket. Society's immorality is threatening our children and destroying our families. Where do we find peace? It's not found in this world. It's found in Christ. Only the peace that Christ brings us can get us through each frightful day. It would be nice to have more of that peace. The peace of Christ comes when God sends us his Holy Spirit. Every time we pray: "Thy kingdom come," we're asking God to send us his Holy Spirit so we believe God's holy Word and live more godly lives. But is praying for the Holy Spirit enough? The Holy Spirit does his important work through the gospel. The gospel is found in God's Word and the sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper. With a steady diet of Word and sacraments you keep the Holy Spirit active in your life. That way you never forget how Jesus saved you. That way you can always live at peace with God. So we need to hear, read, and study God's Word more. We need to frequent his table to receive God's forgiveness that Christ purchased with his body and blood that we receive in the sacrament.

So we can understand more and live at peace more we need more of the Holy Spirit. What a gift the Holy Spirit is! With word & sacrament the Spirit works in us, strengthens us, helps us. God grant us the Holy Spirit to fill us with faith and peace for Jesus' sake?