

Pentecost

The Work of the Holy Spirit

John 14:15-27

If you love me, you will obey what I command. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever – the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you. I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. Before long, the world will not see me anymore, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live. On that day you will realize that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you. Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves me. He who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love him and show myself to him.

Then Judas (not Judas Iscariot) said, “But, Lord, why do you intend to show yourself to us and not to the world?”

Jesus replied, “If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. He who does not love me will not obey my teaching. These words you hear are not my own; they belong to the Father who sent me.

“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 I have said to you. Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.

Pentecost is the festival of the Holy Ghost, the third person in the Godhead. We celebrate Pentecost in commemoration of the miraculous outpouring of the Holy Ghost upon the disciples when they were all gathered together ten days after the ascension of Christ. But, above all, we celebrate Pentecost in order to remind one another of the great and wonderful gifts of the Holy Ghost. The Holy Ghost even today bestows gifts upon his disciples every time they are gathered around the Word and Sacrament.

What are these gifts? If we had sent out messengers to proclaim that today a good and well equipped ranch would be given as a free gift to every one who came to church; - or, that \$10,000 would be given to every one who came inside the church doors, don't you think that this church would be filled to capacity? Don't you think that people would hurry; for fear that they would come too late, that the crowd would be so great that they would not get inside and thus loose their chance of getting the gift? I'm sure that we would have line-ups of cars to get into our parking lot the same way that people line up for gas!

And still, if the things of this world could be received as a free gift in church - it would not be such a great thing. That is because the things of this world will perish. We must remember that soon, very soon we all will die and leave all of our worldly

goods behind and not one penny can anyone take along with them. Therefore the Lord warns us again and again not to seek our treasure here on earth.

No, friends, the free gift that the Holy Ghost wishes to bestow upon us here in church is greater than worldly goods, so much greater that there is absolutely no comparison. The Holy Spirit's gifts are there for every single person who comes to hear God's Word. But there are many, God tells us, who resist the Holy Ghost and do not accept the gift, and they go home empty handed. O that the Holy Ghost may succeed in giving us all these wonderful gifts and let us earnestly pray for the gift of the Holy Ghost.

The Great and Wonderful Gift of the Holy Spirit

John 14:23-31

Jesus replied, "If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. He who does not love me will not obey my teaching. These words you hear are not my own; they belong to the Father who sent me.

"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 I have said to you. Peace I

leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.

“You heard me say, ‘I am going away and I am coming back to you.’ If you loved me, you would be glad that I am going to the Father, for the Father is greater than I. I have told you now before it happens, so that when it does happen you will believe. I will not speak with you much longer, for the prince of this world is coming. He has no hold on me, but the world must learn that I love the Father and that I do exactly what my Father has commanded me.

I. What is the Holy Ghost’s gift

II. The means through which God brings these gifts

I – What the Holy Ghost’s gift

This world with all its riches and all its glory will pass away. But God will create for his believers a new world that never will pass away but that will stand forever throughout all eternity. The inhabitants of this present world will live a few short fleeting years; their life is as a tale that is told. People die and are gone to be succeeded by another generation, and soon they too will die and return to dust. And so on and so on, from generation to generation until the end of the world. But the inhabitants in the new world will never pass away for there shall be no more death.

There will be no more sorrow or crying; neither will there be any more pain.

There are many pleasures here on earth, but not one that will satisfy the desire of the human heart. Sooner or later every one of these pleasures will prove empty and worthless. But the pleasures of that new world will fully satisfy the desire of the human heart, as we read in Psalm 17: 15 . . . **I will be satisfied with seeing your likeness.** And in Psalm 16:11 . . . **you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand.**

But sin has separated us from membership in the blessed heavenly kingdom. In that kingdom there will be no more death but perfect joy and glory throughout all eternity - that is possible only because no unclean thing will enter there. Where there is sin there must be death, for the wages of sin is death. Sin and death cannot be separated. Therefore no one can hold membership in that heavenly kingdom unless they are purged from every taint of sin.

Membership in the heavenly kingdom is possible only through the blood of Christ. Christ suffered, died, and shed his blood that all our sins might be purged away, as it is written in I John 1:7 - **the blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, purifies us from every sin.** Now Jesus Christ suffered and died for all. I Timothy

2:6 - **Jesus Christ, who gave himself a ransom for all men . . .**

The gift of forgiveness, eternal life and salvation is therefore offered to all. But only those who sincerely believe in Christ and trust in his blood and righteousness can accept that gift. Faith is the only hand that can accept that wonderful gift. Mark 16:16 **Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved . . .**

But now we have learned in our catechism that we cannot by our own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ, or decide for Jesus Christ our Lord, or even come to him, but the Holy Spirit has called us by the Gospel. The work of the Holy Ghost then consists in creating and upholding the true living faith in our hearts. And thereby he gives us membership in that glorious kingdom that will stand throughout all eternity and where there will be no more death.

But does our text speak of faith? Does it not much more speak of love? Jesus says in John 15:10 - **If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love . . .** Here Jesus speaks of love. It is faith which creates and love that saves.

You may of your own reason or strength have an historical faith - you may believe that Christ is the Son of God, that he suffered and died for the world, that he arose the third day, etc. But that historical faith alone does not create love. Historical faith does not change the heart so that one begins to hate sin. It

is the difference between saying Jesus is a savior - to Jesus is my Savior! You must believe that he died for your sins and trust that he is your personal Savior. If you believe that, then love will follow. The Holy Ghost alone can give you that faith which creates love.

Have you that faith? How may you know? Jesus tells us in our text, John 14:21 - **Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves me.** And again in John 14:23 **If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching.**

Therefore, if you believe that Christ kept the law for you, suffered and died for all your sins, and was raised again from the dead for your justification, then you have faith. If this faith has changed your heart so that you earnestly and sincerely wish to live up to every single one of the commandments and wish to put away sin, then you have the faith which the Holy Ghost alone can create. Then God himself has given you a new heart, according to his promises in Ezekiel 36:26 **I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh.** And when the Holy Ghost has given you that heart of flesh, that faith that you have is a gift so great that a thousand worlds can not begin to be compared to it: for then the triune God dwells in your heart as written in John 14:23: **Jesus replied, "If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My**

Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. These are not empty words for they are spoken by God himself, and God cannot lie. Three times Jesus in this chapter assures his believers that the Triune God dwells in them.

In the 17th verse he says that the unbelieving world cannot receive the Holy Spirit because they do not see him or know him. But he says: **But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you.** And in verse 20 Jesus says: **And at that day you will realize that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I in you.** And our text says John 14;23: **Jesus replied, "If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him.** Again it is written of the believers who the Holy Spirit has come to dwell in I Corinthians 3:16: **Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body.**

Just consider what this means! Is there any power on earth or power in hell among all the devils that can harm God the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth? There is no power on earth or in hell that can really harm those in whose heart the Almighty God dwells, for they are one with him.

And because there is no power in existence that can harm the true believer, they have true peace. As Jesus says in John

14:27: Peace I leave with you, my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid. It is not the peace that the world gives that believers receive, for the peace of the world is worthless. Let trials and tribulation come, let hatred and slander come, let sickness and death come, let the day of judgment come and the peace of this world is destroyed. But the peace which the believers have, they retain in the midst of hatred, persecution, sickness, sorrow and death. For all these things must serve them and will help them to gain the eternal glory. Peace will give them greater glory in heaven during all eternity. They have peace and nothing can harm them. For the eternal God, who cannot lie, but will live forever, and will be one with the believers. As Jesus says in John 14:19: **Because I live, you also will live.**

It is absolutely impossible for us to begin to comprehend the wonderful and heavenly glory of God. This glory will belong to the true believers for all eternity, for they are one with God.

II. The means through which God brings these gifts

This is the gift of the Holy Ghost: the gifts he gives through the Word and the Sacraments. It was through hearing the words and being baptized that about 3,000 souls were added to the church on the first Pentecost day. The holy men of God, who wrote God's Word, wrote as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. II

Peter 1:21: For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit. And Paul says in I Corinthians 2:13 - This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the spirit, expressing spiritual truths in spiritual words. And in a great many other scripture passages we learn that it is through the Word and Sacraments that the Holy Ghost works upon our hearts.

Romans 10:17 - Faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ. If we wish the Holy Ghost to create faith in our hearts and keep us in the faith, then we must diligently use God's Word and Sacraments. If we wish him to give us that gift which we will enjoy throughout all eternity, then we must diligently trust (believe) that he can give us his grace as he said he would. God give us such grace. Amen.

Pastor Arvid G.W. Gullerud