

<sup>25</sup> “All this I have spoken while still with you. <sup>26</sup> 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. <sup>27</sup> 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.

Have you ever received a parting gift? “Here’s something to remember me by…” Maybe it was a picture, a locket, a special heirloom that gets passed on from generation to generation. The purpose of the gift is to “keep thinking about the relationship” even when you can’t see the other person.

In John 14 Jesus is saying goodbye to his disciples. There’s going to be a painful parting. Soon he’ll be back in heaven again. What will they do? What will become of them? He’s been there to guide and lead and teach....Jesus says these words as he is saying goodbye. He’s giving them some important parting gifts...to remember him by.

In the first part of chapter 14 Jesus already started giving them comfort. He said “Do not let your hearts be troubled.” He told them that he’s going to prepare a home for them in heaven and that he is the way the truth and the life. he will answer their prayers. As they continue to obey him and listen to his word they will be blessed. Those are comforting things for his disciples to remember as he says goodbye. Now he comforts them with 2 farewell gifts. The gift of the Holy Spirit and the gift of peace.

This promise is fulfilled in our reading from the book of Acts today...we heard how the Holy Spirit filled the disciples and empowered them for their work in the world. We too need this same Holy Spirit and the peace he offers. We too have him! The promises that Jesus gives to the disciples here...are also promises and gifts that he gives to us as well.

Look at verses 25 and 26.... Jesus has been their comforter, their counselor from God, but soon he is going away and so he sends another one. This new counselor will be with them forever. Who is he? God himself. The third person of the Trinity. God is three persons in one God and one God in three persons. We don’t fully understand that, but the Bible tells us it’s true. So the Holy Spirit is the Counselor

As a Counselor the Holy Spirit is one who stands beside to help and comfort and teach. He shores up our confidence and strengthens us, plants the Word deep within us, opens our eyes to see what God wants and says. It’s like having someone give a spiritual pep talk inside us...like a coach and a personal trainer wrapped into one. Earlier in v16 Jesus called The Holy Spirit “the Spirit of Truth”. That’s because he has the truth, is the truth and gives the truth. (Jesus just recently said he is the way the truth and the life). The Spirit reveals Jesus and his word as the truth.

And, as Jesus says, the world does not want to hear this. What is truth? Pilot asked in scorn. Truth bothers people. According to the world having “no truth” or only “personal truth” is liberating. If you claim to have *the* truth you are harmful and hateful, because that means someone else has to be “wrong.” But there is truth. There’s truth we don’t want to hear: A doctor could diagnose me with cancer and I could say, “I don’t have it! I don’t believe it! It’s not true!” Cancer will kill me whether I think it’s true or not. The Holy Spirit convinces us of a worse condition...our sin which will send us to hell and our desperate need for a savior. There’s also truth we want to hear. If someone tells you, “I’ll give you the deed for your dream home! (maybe its a castle in Europe, a cottage up north, a place by the lake...whatever your dream home is) You look at him funny and say “You’re full of beans and sauerkraut! I don’t believe it! It’s not true!” But there is really a home deeded in your name that you will never see. The Holy Spirit brings us a much better truth...Jesus has saved us from our sins. God poured out his wrath on Jesus instead of us and we get Jesus’ perfection and the best dream home we could ever imagine, in heaven with God. The Holy Spirit gives us the truth.

When Jesus ascended into heaven he sent the Holy Spirit to teach and remind the disciples in a special way on Pentecost. It was very visible. There was wind and fire to indicate to others that the disciples had the Holy Spirit. The Spirit powerfully deepened the disciples’ understanding of who Jesus really was and what he had done. He then empowered them to proclaim this good news to many people. He reminds and teaches. What a comfort for us! Did you ever wonder how the disciples could remember all of Jesus’ words—word for word—from 3 years of ministry? I have trouble remembering what last week’s sermon was all about, let alone the one

before that! The Holy Spirit reminded them. God wrote the Bible through these human beings...he used their style and disposition but the words they wrote are God's words. The Holy Spirit did this. He reminds and teaches us too through that very Word! Our faith rests on God's work too, not our memories or our own thoughts.

The Holy Spirit came in a visible, grand, exciting way to the disciples. How does he come to us today?

God promises that the Holy Spirit comes and works in us in a quiet way, through God's Word and Sacrament. I heard recently of a person who has a unique way of cooking. She grinds up vegetables in a food processor until they are finely ground up. Then cooks them into her kids' favorite meals...like chicken nuggets and macaroni and cheese. So they eat brownies with spinach ground up and cooked into them. It looks like a brownie and tastes like a brownie...but its healthier...because of the spinach hiding in there. Well that's a little like God's Word. It sure looks ordinary doesn't it? The world thinks so. The world lumps it in with every other kind of self-help book on the market...and misses the point. We get bombarded by words and messages from every direction, some good advice, some misleading spiritual things. But! God's Word has the Holy Spirit in it. The Holy Spirit hides in the simple-looking words and message of the Bible. And whenever and wherever his word goes out into people's hearts and lives he works. Through the word he shows us who we really are: sinners in desperate need. Through the word He changes hearts to see who Jesus really is... the one who saves our souls, the one who took the blame for all of our sin and made us right with God again. "I am not ashamed of the Gospel because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes." That's a healthy thing for our faith. The Holy Spirit works and empowers through the word and the sacraments, creating faith, strengthening faith. What a comforter! What a counselor!

That's why it's a terrible and dangerous thing when we neglect God's word, when we cut ourselves off from this healthy spiritual diet or we treat God's word, family devotion, personal bible reading as if it is no big deal. "I can do that, maybe, if I feel like it." It is a big deal. The good news of Jesus is how God the Holy Spirit strengthens and keeps us in the faith.

Yes, Jesus is saying "Good bye" but he promises that he will send the Holy Spirit to come and strengthen his disciples and be their counselor and so that is one farewell gift that Jesus gives his disciples. Now let's look at the next farewell blessing from Jesus. Along with the Holy Spirit Jesus gives true peace.

I once saw a bumper sticker that read "What would Jesus Bomb?" Obviously it's an anti-war bumper sticker. But Jesus said there will be wars and rumors of wars. Once he said, I have not come to bring peace but a sword. And he was talking about relationships here on earth. Here, though in verse 27 he says *peace I leave with you my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives.* Jesus gives us true peace. He gives it in a new way.

The world gives peace in a fake way, by claiming there is peace when there is not. It confuses peace and financial security. If I were rich, I wouldn't worry about my pension and my kid's tuition fund. But then we see the lives of millionaire's and they are anything but peace. The world confuses peace and personal happiness. Kids think, "If I were popular in school then I'd have peace." And the popular kids are thinking, "I'm tired of this drama all the time!" The world only gives the appearance of peace and it doesn't last. It's what you don't see that makes no peace. Jesus gives peace differently. Jesus gives a different kind of peace.

Miss America often says, "I will work to promote world peace." I have news for Miss America. We already have world peace...not visibly among the nations. We have peace with God. One of the things the Holy Spirit convinces us of is the truth that by nature we are enemies of God, objects of wrath. We violated God's holy perfect law. He had every right to wage a relentless, decisive, hellish war against us. On earth, war is often called hell. People endure intense sorrow and suffering. People come back changed from war. Well, if war on earth is called hell, then war with God is hell on steroids. War with God is true, actual hell-itself! And God had every right to wage that war against each and every one of us. But instead he sent Jesus! Jesus, on the other hand, was at peace with God. He is God's son. He is God and man in one person and he lived a perfect life, never once violating God's holy laws. He had perfect peace. Then what does he say here? *My Peace I give you!* God turned his war against sin and waged it squarely on Jesus as he hung on the cross. He emptied his guns of wrath into his perfect son so that we would have the kind of peace Jesus enjoyed with God. The guns are silent between God and people.

The realization of that actual, true peace brings joy. WWII ended and the party began...what a feeling swept across our country when peace was at hand. But that joy was based on a true, objective thing. There was a peace treaty, signed, sealed and reported in the news media. And that was just an earthly, temporary thing. We have an objective, true, real, permanent peace. The peace treaty is signed in Jesus' blood and sealed by Jesus' resurrection from the dead, when God's stamp of approval, saying I accept the sacrifice for sin. And now it is reported in God's powerful word and by word of mouth as we share that peace with others. Let the celebration of that peace begin! That's what we are doing this morning, when we worship we celebrate that peace. When we go out and love and live for and help others we are celebrating that peace! At Pentecost the disciples began to powerfully share that news of peace with the world. That's the message we get to share too.

Jesus next says, *do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid*. There's no reason to be troubled any longer! We have true peace. The victory celebration has begun! That empowers our life! What would it mean for us if we remembered that kind of peace all the time and if we kept growing in the knowledge of that peace? We could suffer a thousand things worse than what we are suffering now and we would be confident. God may not want us to be happy...but he wants us to be at peace, to remain at peace, to grow in the realization of the peace we have! How crazy it would be for someone if they were facing a battle that's over...to be afraid. Our battle is over. Why be afraid of anything anymore? If God is for us what or who can be against us? Live confidently in Jesus, live confidently for Jesus.

What is it today, this morning, that troubles your heart? What is it this morning that makes you afraid? What powerful problems are weighing on your mind? God is on your side!! We have God. What do we have to fear? We still do though, don't we? We are so often like Peter when he was walking on the water. He had Jesus right in front of him. He saw the great waves and he doubted. But when Peter started sinking, Jesus grabs him and pulls him up again. Jesus has solved our greatest problem! There's no reason to be afraid of any other problems. And when we do fear, when we look at the big waves coming in our lives. Jesus takes hold of us and pulls us up again. We confess our fear and our doubt to Jesus and he forgives us.

The Holy Spirit is the one who casts our fear aside as he strengthens our faith through the message of Jesus. He is the one who casts fears aside and plants new faith into people through that powerful word. We get to share that word with people. We get to communicate God's truth to a dying world. We get to share the gift of salvation. The gift the Holy Spirit brings. The gift of true peace. What a privilege! Amen.

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