

John 14:25-27 The Holy Spirit helps us to speak God's truth! May 20, 2018

Pentecost/Education Sunday/Celebration of Ministry for Mrs. Barb Speerschneider

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God's peace that was won by Christ's death is now yours through faith worked in you by the Holy Spirit.

We hear Jesus' words to His disciples about the Holy Spirit written in John 14:25-27

This is Your Word heavenly Father. Help us to know the truth by the Spirit and to teach it to others.

Dear Christian Friends,

It is not easy for people to learn a foreign language. After the Tower of Babel, where God dispersed the proud people by mixing up their languages, God purposely kept people from easily learning other languages. It's even more difficult to hear someone speak a language quicker than you can process the words. But, with time some people learn it.

Spiritual words of God are worse than a foreign language. Due to our sinfulness, we speak a completely different language than God i.e. He said, "*Keep My Law!*" But we interpret that: we're close to keeping the law. We can make a deal now or eventually be accepted by God. But God's Word says, "*Be perfect!*" (*Matthew 5:48*) It states, "*Your iniquities have separated you from your God.*" (*Isaiah 59:2*) It states that "*we were by nature objects of wrath*" to God. (*Ephesians 2:3*) All the works in the world cannot change that status. Yet, God changed it when He sent His Son to take our place. Jesus lived perfectly as a human so that He earned a place in heaven and earned the status as "God's Loved One." Then he died an innocent death to take away the guilt of all sin. What great news to those who understand it. But by nature we don't! It's beyond our reason. Yet today, as we celebrate Pentecost and Christian education Sunday, we are thankful that God sent His Spirit to reveal everything we need to know so we can believe God's Word and be saved. Jesus' words from today's verses remind us:

The Holy Spirit will teach us the truth!

1. Truth can be learned! Many people today think that there are no absolutes; that what we call truth is relative to whatever works for each person. But, that doesn't work with God! When death knocks at their door, they wonder what's waiting on the other side and what will happen to me?" Last Thursday I got a phone call requesting visit to a non-member who had only a day to live. If someone asked you to do that, what would you say to a dying man about salvation? I visited and said that the power of sin leads to death. Then I talked about Jesus, God's Son, who was willing to become a man and die and take away our sin. He was like a Good Shepherd who lay down His life to save His sheep. I read Psalm 23 and then I turned to John 3:16, to tell him that God loved him so much He sent His Son. Whoever believes in Him will be saved from the power of death and hell. Then, I sang some familiar hymns centered in Christ and, after a prayer and blessing, left him. I pray that the Holy Spirit was working to save him before he died on Friday.

With Jesus and the disciples, there was a role reversal. He was about to die. It seemed terrible to the disciples, but Jesus told them, "*Peace I leave with you; My peace I give you.... Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.*" (v.27) When people wish their friends well, it's only a wish. When Jesus offered peace to them, it was theirs to keep. He established peace for us by paying for all sins which kept God's love from reaching us. Jesus turned away God's anger against us by taking it Himself. His death changed our status from being rebellious prodigals to being seen as God's forgiven children. This is the peace which Christ won and which we receive through faith in Him! (*Romans 5:1*)

2. Without the Holy Spirit, we wouldn't believe the truth! Paul wrote, "*We have ... received the Spirit who is from God, that we may understand what God has freely given us....because they are spiritually discerned. (1 Corinthians 2:12-14)* Without the Holy Spirit, even if we read the Bible through a 100 times, we could not understand it. Even if we did understand it, we could not believe its central message of Christ as our only Savior. The Bible states, "*It is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God.*" (Ephesians 2:8)

The Holy Spirit called us to believe in Jesus through His Word when we were baptized; and He has blessed us with His Word ever since! Jesus promised His disciples: "*the Holy Spirit ... will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.*" (v.26) On Pentecost and beyond, the Holy Spirit taught the Apostles, those who heard them, and every generation since. He inspired the Apostles to write the Scriptures that we have today. We know that God's Word is certain and without errors because the Holy Spirit inspired it; so we can be certain that God's truth will bring us salvation in Christ.

3. We are blessed by the Holy Spirit to teach others the truth. If you ask most teachers: "Is it a privilege or responsibility to teach children?" They would say both, but mainly a privilege to teach children about Jesus as their Savior. People can give children things on earth which better their lives, but Christians offer children and all people eternal life in Christ! As we bring God's Word to our families, friends, and others who need to know the saving truth, we offer a gift won by Jesus that will change their lives forever!

The fact that on Pentecost the followers of Jesus spoke languages from various countries of the world was a sign that God wanted all peoples to know His truth. At His ascension, Jesus told His disciples to go to ends of the earth. They spoke on Pentecost day and for the rest of their lives they told people about Jesus wherever they went. Although the Holy Spirit has not filled our church with sound of wind or fire above our heads or with speaking in foreign languages, He has given us His truth to believe. It also is a natural response for Christians who have the love of Christ and the truth to want others to know how to be saved. Paul wrote, "*I believed; therefore I have spoken.*" (2 Corinthians 4:13) When we think of teaching, we usually think of books and words to share. It is important that we teach God's Word in its truth and purity. But, we also are to be living examples of God's grace and love in Christ.

Whether we teach in church, in our Christian day school, our Sunday school or any other setting, our focus is on Christ as the only Savior. Today we are celebrating the teaching ministry of Mrs. Barb Speerschneider. She has been sharing the great news of Christ with little children for over a generation. The Holy Spirit has worked through her to bring the saving news of Christ into the hearts of little children. Those children have grown and not only continue to believe in Jesus, but are teaching the news of Christ to their own children!

All of us should count it a privilege to share the good news of Christ with others, whether it is to little children or to a dying older person. We don't need special effects, like fire above our heads; we have the Gospel of Christ, which is the power of God to save all who believe! Thank God that the Bible is not like a foreign language to us. By the Holy Spirit's work, God's Word is now our native tongue. And the more we hear and read it, the more the Spirit will help us understand it so we can teach it clearly to all! Amen.