

John 14:25-27 Celebrate the work of the Holy Spirit! Pentecost/Graduation May 24, 2015

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The Holy Spirit assures each of you of God's grace and peace through our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Jesus' words to help all of us keep learning are written in John 14:25-27.

These are Your words heavenly Father to sanctify us by Your truth, Your Word is truth! Amen.

Dear Christian Friends,

We are celebrating two things today: Pentecost - the work of the Holy Spirit; and graduations for our Trinity kindergarten class and our eighth grade class. We are also honoring those who are graduating from high school or college. Congratulations to all graduates! No matter what your age or level of education, think how far you have come in learning. You have grown and matured and applied the knowledge you have learned. And it is certain, no matter what age or level you're at, you have more to learn. As Christians, all believers can say, "God has blessed us through parents, teachers, and others so we have learned!" More than that, God gives us the Holy Spirit so we can learn so much more! Today we:

Celebrate the work of the Holy Spirit!

First, His work is to teach us. Jesus said, "*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.*" (v.25-26) Have you ever experienced a time when you heard someone explain something, perhaps directions to a destination or describing how something is supposed to work. You think you know what they're talking about until they leave and you are trying to figure out where you are supposed to go and what you are supposed to do! Jesus spoke the words of our verses on the night before He died. He wanted to prepare His followers for His death and for what lay ahead. Most of His talk went right over their heads. The parts they understood, they didn't know how to apply. But, Jesus told them. "Don't worry. I am sending the Holy Spirit not only to remind you of My words, but what they mean!"

When we first were brought to faith as infants in baptism, many of us were so young we didn't know that we were made the children of God and that we had given an inheritance in heaven through Jesus. But, as time went by, the Holy Spirit led us to understand the blessings of Jesus and receive His Word by faith. As believers, our faith matures with experience, just like we matured between Kindergarten and 8th grade, 8th grade to high school seniors, and seniors to college graduates! So, in time the Holy Spirit helps us view life differently. I heard it yesterday at the KML graduation that learning doesn't stop with graduation at any level, it continues for life! When I listen to Christians who have specialized in biology or astronomy, they say that the more they study, the more they realize how much more they need to learn. It was spiritually the same for the disciples of Jesus and for Christians of any age and any time!

It was the mature Apostle Paul who had studied the Scriptures and wrote, "*Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out!*" (Romans 11:33) On our own, we could never find God. But, the Holy Spirit has revealed Him to us! Paul also prayed that the Holy Spirit would help the Ephesian Christians. "*I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge--that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.*" (Ephesians 3:17-19)

We're not going have this spiritual growth by watching TV or sports, although there can be a time for everything. But we grow when we take time with God's Word in worship and in devotion. Then, the

Holy Spirit will show us how Christ has made a difference for sinners like us. The more Paul grew in faith, the more he realized his great sinfulness, and he realized the depth of Jesus' love to daily forgive him and call him to serve in His kingdom. Paul never ceased to be amazed and we shouldn't be either. Our value before God is not based on our social status or our wealth or lack of money, but on Christ alone as our Savior. With Christ, we have everything good from God, without Him we have nothing! This is what the Holy Spirit continues to teach to us.

Jesus warned His disciples that life would not be easy. He said, *"I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."* (John 16:33) Our peace is not based on how easy and quite life can be. Christians are under attack by the devil and the world constantly. At times, we long for the peace the world offers: quiet surroundings with no cares in the world. People are constantly looking for that kind of peace, but never find it for long.

Second, Jesus described His peace that He offers through the Holy Spirit. He said, *"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."* (14:27) Earlier, Jesus had called the Holy Spirit "the Counselor." This was a legal term for in a courtroom when a person stood by the side of an accused person to defend him. He was an advocate for defense against any accusations. The Holy Spirit does this not by overpowering all evil around us, but by using God's Word to help us focus on what it means to have Christ as our Savior.

Paul wrote, *"Since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ...."* (Romans 5:1) No matter what happens in our lives, no matter how bad it seems, the Holy Spirit convinces us through His Word that God is not angry with us. He is allowing trouble or heart-ache for a good purpose that we may grow in our trust in Him and let go of the world so that we hold on to Christ more firmly! We are God's forgiven children whom He loved enough to send His Son to die for us. God has accepted the payment of Christ on the cross. We stand in the grace or favor of God based on Christ's work alone. The Holy Spirit uses this truth so we can rejoice in Christ. God will work all things for good. The pain we experience is only temporary. And the glory that is ours through Christ is eternal!

As we stand in Christ, nothing can take His peace away! David wrote in Psalm 23, *"Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for You are with me, Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me."* (v.4) Jesus is our protection to see us safely home. David wrote, *"You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies."* (v.5) We can be so confident in God that even if we are surrounded by enemies, we can sit down and eat without fear for we know that God will provide for us. This peace is what Jesus offers and the Holy Spirit makes our own. Isaiah wrote, *"You will keep him in perfect peace, Whose mind is stayed on You, Because he trusts in You."* (Isaiah 26:3)

So, to the graduates, I congratulate all of you on what you've achieved and may you continue to grow as long as you live! For all of us, may the Holy Spirit keep teaching us from His Word in meaningful ways as long as we live! The devil is never far away to tempt us to forget God's promises. But, the Holy Spirit will keep us focused on Christ and the victory He already won for us. Today, we celebrate how far the graduates have advanced in education. Today, we also celebrate how far the Holy Spirit has helped all of us grow in Christ and in amazing grace. Amen.