

“All that I have said to you”
John 14:23-31
The Festival of Pentecost
(Rite of Confirmation)
June 9, 2019

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.

Our text, “The Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.... I have told you before it takes place, so that when it does take place you may believe.”

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

The “it” Jesus hints at in our text is the day of Pentecost; when *it* took place, the disciples could believe that the Holy Spirit had indeed come, just as Jesus had promised. And that means *you* may believe – just as those disciples – and you may have every confidence in Jesus’ promises, for he does not leave his Church alone, but cradles and shields and comforts and defends us with the ongoing work of the Holy Spirit, which the day of Pentecost began.

And consider exactly what life is breathed into the Church on that day of Pentecost!: in American Christianity, dominated by revivalistic religious tendencies, Pentecost tends to be thought of as the day of tongue-speaking... that *that’s* how the Holy Spirit comes. But, the truth is the foreign languages of that day only demonstrated to the crowds that the disciples not only *had* the Word of God, as Jesus’ promised His Spirit would lead them into it, but also that that Word of God was to be shared with all nations, tribes, languages.

But, *how* was it shared that Pentecost? Was it shared by everyone else speaking in tongues? No, no one else spoke in tongues that day! Rather, the Word of God and the promised comfort of the Holy Spirit was shared in the Word and Sacraments now being distributed to the people, just as Christ had instituted and promised (and, in our text, ‘prophesied’) those means of grace. That day of Pentecost was the public introduction to Holy Baptism into the Church, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, for the forgiveness of sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. And this gift is for you and your children and all who are far off!” *And*, not only were the crowds brought into the Church through baptism, but also by the preaching of repentance and forgiveness, just as Jesus had said as he prepared to ascend into heaven, “Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, and that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations.” *And*, on that day of Pentecost began the great unity of the Church around Word and Sacrament, in which – the Scriptures declare – all were devoted to the apostles’ teaching (right doctrine), the breaking of the bread (the Holy Supper), the fellowship (the corporate gathering), and the prayers (the liturgical life of the Church).

And that means that, beginning with that first day of Pentecost, Christ’s promise in our text – “The Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things

and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you... I have told you before it takes place, so that when it does take place you may believe” – that means that *that* promise of Christ was fulfilled, beginning that first Pentecost of the new era, and that fulfilled promise has continued to carry the Church ever since... even to this very day, not because the means are “man-made, but tried and true,” but because the means are divinely instituted, divinely promised, divinely secured on the cross, and divinely poured out. The life of the Church is a divine reality, to keep every generation of the faithful in the “all things” Christ promised the Holy Spirit would teach and continually bring to our remembrance that Christ has won the victory and prepares for us a share in the eternal inheritance, so that our hearts need not be troubled, neither would we let them be afraid.

That means you belong to something much bigger than what you see around you. As wonderful as it is for the sanctuary to be full, how impossibly full would it be if the whole church around the earth tried to meet in one place, and how much more full is it than you can perceive when the Scriptures promise us that we gather with angel and archangel and all the company of heaven!

Suddenly, any gospel that points to something other than Jesus dying for sins, Jesus establishing the new covenant, Jesus paying for and bleeding for and dying for the eternal life of the Church... any other gospel is shown to be a cheap and shallow

imitation. Sermons are about Law and Gospel, not your best life now or the day's most relevant topic, because the sermon declares something far beyond today, far beyond life now... it declares the eternal Word of God, the "all things whatsoever" that continually keeps you in and prepares you for that eternal life of the one true Church.

So then, confirmands, as you stand today as baptized children of God, that status means something far greater than any of us can properly imagine. And, as you stand today and confess the great Christian faith through the simple words of the baptismal creed, and as you say you will remain in this – even unto death – rather than depart from it – you confess something far more profound and glorious than what eyes can see and ears can hear. And, as you stand today and receive for the first time of many, many times to come the true body and blood of the Lord Jesus Christ into your mouths, the benefit is far greater and far more eternal than any of us can properly explain.

But, what we *can* explain, *can* say, is that Jesus promised this. He *knew* our hearts would often be afraid in life; He *knew* our hearts would often be troubled – tempted by distractions, false gospels, the burdens of life in this fallen world – he *knew* the individual Christian and the individual congregation would often see themselves in lonely isolation rather than as a member of the history-spanning body of believers that is the Church, with Christ Himself our head and captain

and mediator and Lord. He knew all of it – and so, on the day of Pentecost – he did not leave the Church to fend for herself against sin, death, and the power of the devil – and *today* he does not leave you to fend for yourself against the devil, the world, and your old sinful flesh (don't you dare leave from here and think you have graduated from the protection and care of God!)... Christ did not leave you nor forsake you, rather he lovingly said, "If anyone loves me, he will keep my word" (that's what disciples joyfully do because they know the safety and security of Christ's Word, His plan and purpose for his Church), "and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him." *This* is the comfort and glory that belongs to the Church; this is the comfort and glory that belongs to you. So then, be of good cheer, for Jesus' plans continue to be bestowed upon you, "the Helper, the Holy Spirit... will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you." *That's* the ongoing life of the Church, isn't it?, that's what you have been baptized into, have been brought up in, confirmed your faith in, been continually preached to about, been sustained at the Table in ... just as Jesus promised and planned it. Thus, "let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid."

In the Name of the Father
 And of the Son
 And of the Holy Spirit.
 + AMEN +

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 Calvary Lutheran Church
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