

Fifth Sunday of Easter – Cantate, May 15, 2022

Readings: Isaiah 12: 1-6; James 1: 16 – 21; John 16: 5 – 15

Jesus Promises to Send His Holy Spirit, the Helper

Though Jesus has departed from us visibly to the right hand of the Father who sent Him, yet this is to our advantage. For Jesus—who is Lord over all creation, who intercedes for us before the Father, who is preparing a place for us in heaven—has sent the Helper, the Spirit of Truth (John 16:5–15). *“Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights”* through Jesus Christ (James 1:17). The Holy Spirit helps us by taking what is Christ’s and declaring it to us. In the Word of truth, the Spirit works repentance and delivers to us the forgiveness of sins, the righteousness of Christ, and victory over the devil. For the ruler of this world is judged and defeated by the cross. Through the ministry of the Holy Spirit, we have been brought forth to new life in Him who is the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. Confident of our resurrection with Christ we confess, *“Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and will not be afraid”* (Is. 12:2).

Sermon Transcript:

Grace, mercy and peace be to you from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.

If you were to ever memorize any one hymn in our hymnal, this one would be it. (Sermon Hymn - “Salvation unto Us Has Come” LSB 555). It gives the entire story in history of salvation, from sin to grace, to the mercy of God, to trust in His faithfulness. It walks through everything that is our faith and is a wonderful, wonderful hymn. Now we sing a new song unto the Lord. That is what we started out with. And why do we do this? We sing unto the Lord because Christ left this earth. Now, when the disciples heard that Jesus was going away from them, they were anything but happy, or joyful, or ready to sing a song. They were upset. They were worried. They were concerned. What are we going to do now that Jesus is not here with us? But Jesus stayed just long enough.

He stayed 40 days here on this earth and appeared to the disciples, to many other of the apostles and other people who heard about Him over 500 people at one time. He made sure that everybody who believed in Him saw Him, so that when He left them, they would be able to declare with absolute certainty that Christ had indeed risen from the dead. They did not create cleverly invented myth, that Jesus was alive. They saw Him, they knew Him, and He spent 40 days ensuring that they had seen Him. Now the 40 days, this number has given me problems throughout my career, as I've been trying to figure out what in the world the 40 means. I understand the 10, the 10 commandments. It's a complete whole counsel of God. So anything with 10 really reminds us of the fullness and completion of days like a thousand years, thousand years is like a day. The completeness of God.

Three, obviously the Trinity. Twelve, the 12 tribes, the 12 apostles. These numbers are pretty straightforward. Seven, the number of perfection. God created the world in seven days and it was perfect and it was very good. But 40, where does that come from? And I think just this year, someone brought this to me and it made perfect sense. And I think I've finally figured it out. So, I'm going to share it with you. So 40 days, 10 of course being a number of wholeness and completion. And 4, we talk about the 4 corners of the world. The 4 from the 4 winds. In other words, something is being accomplished here on earth and it is going to be the complete work of God done in the 40 days. It's for what is here on earth. So we have the it rained for 40 days and 40 nights in the ark, destroying all the stuff on this earth to recreate new. The Israelites going into the promised land for 40 days to check out what their new land was going to be. And then when the Israelites rejected it, 40 years in the wilderness to purify them and get them ready to come back into the promised land. Moses was on the mountaintop for 40 days to receive the 10 commandments, what is required here on earth. The law is required here on earth. It's not for heaven, and heaven will be perfect. We won't need the law of God. So, the 40 days to get the law of God. Jesus being tempted for 40 days and 40 nights. Elijah, up on the mountaintop for 40 days as

he's lamenting his faith and despairing, and God comes and strengthens him for his prophetic ministry here on earth, in the future. And here Jesus, ascending after 40 days here on this earth, after His resurrection to complete that, which He needed to do here. The ministry, His ministry on earth is done.

Now, He needs to ascend to be with God, to sit at His right hand so that He might send not the earthly blessings, but the heavenly blessings of the Holy Spirit. The counselor, the comforter, the one who will speak to us, the one who gives us faith through water and the Word of God. The one who gives us faith and nourishes us through the bread and wine and the body and blood of Jesus Christ. The Word of God empowered by the Holy Spirit creates life in us. And so He convicts us not just of sin, although He does that, as Jesus says, "The Spirit comes to convict the world concerning sin." All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. The Holy Spirit convicts us of that, ensures that we know that we are sinners. Without redemption, we are doomed, but He also comes to the world to convict them of righteousness. Not the righteousness that we have. Well, actually He does convict us that our self-righteousness is insufficient.

And just as a little example of that, look at the book of James. After James talking about that every good and perfect gift is from above, i.e. from the Holy Spirit, coming down from the Father, and Jesus giving it to us through His Word. He brings forth the Word of truth, and we are the first fruits of His creatures. And so we are to know this, what's the first thing? Let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger. If we are talking about self-righteousness that little phrase right there condemns us. How often are we actually quick to hear and slow to speak? More often than not, we hear somebody that we disagree with and rather than hearing them and listening to them, we're actually forming our ideas on how to refute them and tell them they're wrong. We don't really hear very easily or very often, except what we want to. And we're not very slow to speak. Thought comes into our brain, it comes out nine times out of 10, and nine times out of 10, it probably shouldn't have come out.

Nor do we seem to be very slow of anger. We seem to be very quick tempered. It's so easy for our anger to just pop out. You know, I've given this example multiple times, and it's a very simple example for everybody. And you clearly understand it. You're driving on 301 and somebody cuts you off. And your first words are, "Praise God, he didn't hit me." Or maybe something else. I won't talk about that, but we are not slow to speak and slow to anger. And so our self-righteousness is condemned by God because we are sinners, and deserve absolutely nothing. Anything that we have is a gift given to us by God, and so we can rejoice and be glad in that. And I think that's a part of the reason why this Sunday is the Cantate Sunday. Sing into the Lord the new song. When you are singing praises to God, what are you not doing? You're not allowing your anger and your words to get in the way. You're focusing upon Christ and His salvation and the joy of God. And when you're focusing upon the joy of God, it's very hard to be angry and upset.

And let's face it, there's enough in this world to cause us anger and to get us upset, to worry and to fret, and to despair. I mean, just in our own personal lives, we realize that all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. That I have sinned, that you have sinned, that we all have. And then we look at the world around us, and it doesn't give us much hope. We look at where evil seems to be succeeding, and good gets trampled on. Where the righteous are defamed, and the wicked are celebrated. Where there is war and rumor of war, where there is evil being actively displayed in this world. And they can bring you to despair. But the Holy Spirit comes and convicts us also of this, of judgment that this world will be judged, and the evil will not succeed in the end. That the evil has no power and authority over us because we have been bought with a price.

And Christ has assured us of that because His coronation has been complete. He reigns, and He sends His Spirit to comfort us, and to assure us that we are His children. That the affairs of this world, no matter how evil they get, are not able to overwhelm us. Even if it come to take our lives, it will not overwhelm because God is with us, and He will never leave us nor forsake us. What does Isaiah say? He says that, "In this day, I will give thanks to the Lord. For though, He was angry with us, His anger was turned away." God is no longer angry. Because of Christ, His anger has been turned away upon the cross. And we are free that God now is our salvation. We will trust and not be afraid. If we know that God who is rightfully angry at our sin, and yet for the sake of Christ, we have been forgiven, we have been comforted, we

have received salvation, and so therefore we do not need to be afraid. What do we do? So, for the Lord is my strength and my song. We don't rely upon our self-righteousness, but God's righteousness for us. We don't allow our words to come out, just whatever may come. But we allow the Word of God. We read the Word of God and we allow it to transform our lives. And so that what comes out of us is not our own words, but the words of God that we sing and praise to Him. And again, when we sing the joy of our salvation, the cares of this world no longer seem as strong and overwhelming. And we can face them because we know that Christ has conquered all. And therefore, then we can simply thank and praise and serve and obey Him out of the joy of our salvation, confident that He has gone away, but He will return.

And when we see Him, what a glorious day that will be. And all the cares of this world and all of the sin, and all the anger and frustration, and evil and wickedness will be gone, and we will be free. Sing a new song to the Lord. He has done marvelous things for you. You are His children, and He loves you.

May that grace, and that mercy, and that peace be and abide with you always, now and forevermore, under life everlasting, Amen.