

## Jesus Sends the Holy Spirit

 **Spirit of counsel** (vv.5-7)

 **Spirit of conviction** (vv.8-11)

In the name of Jesus, our faithful Savior and divine Friend, dear believers:

It's hard to imagine how worthless our cars would be if suddenly there were no fuel. The American dream would die. Most of our homes in the suburbs would be too far from any store to live. Few who knew farming would have the animals to raise even enough crops for themselves, much less their entire community. Fuel of some sort will always be needed because sitting in the driver's seat of a shiny new automobile with the gauge on "Empty" leaves nothing to do but make motor noises.

Spiritually speaking, life without Pentecost is empty noise. People can polish up their life all they want, but the fuel of faith that powers the soul to heaven comes from the Holy Spirit. His gas pump and fuel delivery system is what we call the Means of Grace, the Gospel in Word and sacraments. Soft seats and tinted windows won't keep you warm in a fuel-starved automobile. They don't do any good for the soul either, trapped in a body where the fires of faith have died. Do you see why we still need Pentecost? Today we thank our gracious God that **Jesus Sends the Holy Spirit**. Faith afire, He is the...

 **Spirit of counsel** (vv.5-7)

Some of you may remember enough from the first class in our Comparative Religion series to know that the theme of this sermon would never fly in the Eastern Church around A.D. 1054. That was the year of the Great Schism when the Pope in Rome excommunicated the Patriarch in Constantinople and the meat cleaver of massive schism sliced the western church from the eastern church so thoroughly that even today they will not honor each other's baptisms. As far as Rome is concerned, no one in the Orthodox Church has a valid baptism because none were administered with the Pope's authority. But the reverse is true for the Orthodox Church denying Roman Catholic baptisms too. Would you be surprised to know that we in the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod honor both even though they would not recognize ours? According to the Bible, water applied in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit is a valid Baptism. And based on our text, we would side with Rome on "filioque."

That's the Latin word in our Nicene Creed that says, "We believe in the Holy Spirit...who proceeds from the Father and the Son (*filioque*)..." (CW p. 19) The Eastern Church says, "No," to that; the Western Church, "Yes." Jesus also tells us in these verses that He sends the Holy Spirit. That's why we believe it too. It's just too bad Rome demands belief in tradition rather than the Holy Scriptures.

But think about how bad off Jesus' disciples would have been if He had not promised to send the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. None of them were asking Jesus where He was going, but they were all overwhelmed with grief at the prospect. Yet Jesus' departure would prove a great blessing because then He would send the **Spirit of counsel**. And His comforting presence would fuel the fires of their faith and understanding to carry the Good News of sins-forgiven from Jerusalem to the ends of the earth.

Without that first Pentecost none of us would be enjoying the warmth of Christ's motivating power today. We would not know God as our loving Creator because Satan's lies of evolution would have overwhelmed all the evidence of creation around us. We would still be angry at God because His Champion Christ and the victory He won on the cross and in the empty tomb would be buried in the dust of ignorance. We would have no comfort or consolation from God to take away our guilt. No marriage, no family could enjoy God's unconditional love and the steady joy of daily forgiveness. Every child would be left behind in the blindness of parents living for self instead of God. We would suffer from our natural born evil and violence. And all our questions about life and God would have no answers.

But praise God because **Jesus Sends the Holy Spirit...of counsel**. He pleads our case before the Judge's bench. That means for all the times we've messed up by ignoring God and the needs of our neighbor, the dear Holy Spirit keeps holding up the cross of Christ as God's verdict in our favor: "Not guilty." And when we have questions in our congregation, in our marriage, in our life as children or adults, we can go to God and ask for wisdom, knowing He "*gives generously to all without finding fault.*" (James 1:5) Evil fathers like all of us can be confident that God has forgiven us in Christ and will not withhold the greatest blessing of all: "*Which of you fathers, if your son asks for a fish, will give him a snake instead? Or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!*" (Luke 11:11-13 NIV) Pentecost proves that God meant it when Jesus gave that promise. And if you believe this, you can cash in on Jesus' priceless promise every time you read the Bible, every time you remember your Baptism or receive Christ's Holy Supper. The **Spirit of counsel** will power your faith-life like high octane fuel. And since He is God, the supply is endless and free.

### **Spirit of conviction (vv.8-11)**

The only question is why anyone would turn away from Pentecost. Perhaps the simplest answer is mass confusion. Think about this next time you're pumping gas. Look for the little sticker on the pump that says it was certified by the Minnesota Department of Weights and Measures. Without that, you would never know whether you were pumping gas or water, or whether paying for a gallon meant getting a gallon. Greedy businessmen could set up fuel pumps everywhere and no one would know whether their car would run five minutes after a fill-up.

So the real question is why anyone would accept uncertified fuel for their faith. Satan knows how to set up gas pumps in churches and synagogues and mosques all over the world. In most American and world churches today the fuel of God's Word and sacraments is watered down at best and at worst, nothing but vapors. Very little imagination can stand and tell stories to hold your interest long enough to pass the plates and send everyone home self-satisfied. It does no good for your life on earth and even less for your escape from hell. Soon a world of people will be in a world of hurt like the campers around Spirit Lake in Washington State, when Mount Saint Helens blew in 1980. Only one man got out alive when he jumped in his car and drove the fire roads at full speed. 200 feet down the rest are buried.

Now imagine all the campers got together in a meeting the night before. The one with the biggest mouth convinced the rest that the authorities were wrong. "We'd all be better off staying here with empty gas tanks just in case the sparks start flying!" So everyone siphoned off the fuel and stored it in a tank with a wick sticking out. That's American spirituality today without the Holy Spirit, without the Means of Grace, without Pentecost. Eternity will tell who was right. But for most it will be too late.

*"When [the Holy Spirit] comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment: in regard to sin, because men do not believe in me..."* – though I am the only Savior from sin who counts at the judgment seat of God. **Conviction** by the Spirit "*in regard to righteousness, because I am going to the Father, where you can see me no longer...*" for I am the only *righteousness* that opens heaven's gates to sinners who all need a pass which only I can provide. **Conviction** by the Spirit "*in regard to judgment, because the prince of this world now stands condemned.*" And everyone who chose Satan instead of God will go down with him into eternal flames.

The beauty of Pentecost, dear Christian friends, is that Christ Jesus already conquered sin, death and hell. He already vanquished Satan. Faithful preachers and faithful hearers are just mopping up pockets of futile resistance. We who by faith accept Christ's **conviction** under God's wrath in our place, have already escaped the wrath of God in Satan's eternal **conviction**. We live on these convictions. We live because **Jesus Sends the Holy Spirit...of counsel** and **of conviction**. There's nothing left to do but praise the Lord – in Jesus' precious Name! Amen.