**John 14:15-21 (ESV)**

[15] "If you love me, you will keep my commandments. [16] And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, [17] even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you. [18] "I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. [19] Yet a little while and the world will see me no more, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live. [20] In that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you. [21] Whoever has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me. And he who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and manifest myself to him."

**“The Spirit of The Resurrection”**

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, Amen. On this Memorial Day weekend, Americans honor the lives of fallen soldiers who died while in military service. Rather than a spirit of celebration like on the Fourth of July or Thanksgiving. A streak of sadness and loss goes along with recognizing Memorial Day. War is not a win-win situation. It has a spirit of sacrifice. Even if there is victory, we still feel defeat. After war, someone ends up without a son or daughter, a wife or husband, a friend or neighbor. This loneliness from loss latches-on not to the dead, but to the living. Memorial Day is about honoring fallen soldiers, but also letting those who have lost loved ones in battle know they are not alone.

If human beings naturally recognize this emptiness created by war. Certainly, Jesus knew the grief and seclusion that would fall upon His own disciples. As much as the Gospel was to be good news, it was far from what would be “good” to a world ruled by sin, death and the Devil. Justification in Jesus as Savior just does not fit-in among those happy with their works or who have no hope that God graciously saves sinners. A military must show strength against its enemy. Yet, chaplains are present to proclaim a message of forgiveness for the weak and dying. The pain of loss and loneliness extends farther then wartimes. Sin, death, and the Devil follow no rules of engagement nor respect any kind of boundaries. They are all consuming. This is why the promised Savior came. By God’s grace Jesus gives what we need because the Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son.

“If you love me, you will keep my commandments.” There are no questions, service is to either Christ or the Devil. Where many today confuse Christianity to be like any other religion of works or want to turn Church into whatever caters to the spirit of an individual. Jesus on the night when He was betrayed said these words to His disciples in the upper room. It is not Moses at Mount Sinai thundering with the Law written on stone tablets. Instead, Jesus as the Savior speaks to establish Himself as the source of love and how His Word would be worshiped. Whatever Jesus says is for our good because it carries both Law and Gospel. As St. John has said, “For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome” (1 John 5:3). The love of Jesus is to give His Word to us. It is what we need against sin, death and the Devil.

How are these commandments of Christ not burdensome? Because the baptized already have God’s saving Name. These “commandments” are not a return to a salvation by works, but faith in the Word that takes hold of our lives as Christians. All other standards of this world have drowned in the water of baptism. Like the days of Noah being wiped away by water the apostle Peter declared, “Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you, not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ…” Love for Jesus comes from how He first loved us. The Word became flesh to suffer and die on the cross. It was The War to end all wars with God. Some trust in the mass media, others seek comfort in the majority, and still others standalone. Baptism denies all these worldly standards. Jesus makes the promise, “If you love me, you will keep my commandments.” It is not perfect acts based on works, but a faithful dedication to what Jesus says. As the Psalmist declares, “Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path” (Psalm 119:105).

If it were really going to be easy the Savior would not have said, “And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you.” The problem with love for Jesus and treasuring His Word is that we are weak, we lack faith, and we like the sinful world. Only Jesus as the Son of God cares for His precious sheep by asking the Father to send the Spirit. This is the Spirit of Comfort from Baptism. It is the Spirit helping by Christ’s Word. It is the Spirit working in our time of loneliness. The World advances against the Church by way of aggression or offering a false hope. Yet, Christ as Savior already promises a Comforter for all our crosses. As St. Paul said, “Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God” (1 Cor. 2:12).

The Holy Spirit is not our spirit. If that were so, then why would He be called, “The Comforter?” This Helper is not for the World, but sent for the baptized. Luther states,

“Since the Father sends this Comforter, and Christ asks Him to do so, He will surely not do this out of anger; it must flow from sheer fatherly and cordial love. Therefore a Christian should learn diligently to make good use of this title or name of the Holy Spirit for himself and should note that He is a Comforter and that we are the downcast and weak ones He is to comfort… Thus He says here that the Holy Spirit is a Comforter who will abide with Christendom forever.”[[1]](#footnote-1)

The danger is to confuse the Holy Spirit with all other forms of worldly comfort. Since we live in a comfortable society, this can pose a challenge to the Church. Yet, God’s task remains the same. He is at work by the Word and Sacraments. Since the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son, the Comforter is living among us for the sake of the Gospel nothing more and nothing less. The goal is to have forgiveness for sinners in Jesus’ Name, to lift up the brokenhearted by what God says, and to speak the Truth hidden in the Cross.

“I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. Yet a little while and the world will see me no more, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live.” Not only is the Comforter promised, but Christ claims to be that Comfort. This happened for the disciples on the days following Jesus’ resurrection to Pentecost. It was not a life in self or by the strength of a society, but everlasting life in the Savior. A recent article from the Lakefield Standard noted an elderly man who having come close to death had saw Jesus’ twice. Why or how God wished to do this is out of our hands. We know such an amazing event happened to the Apostle Paul on the Road to Damascus. Experiences are exciting, but they can never be the same for someone else. However, what was more exciting was to read about how the man in the article not only saw, but also heard Psalm 23 and 33. That is something we can share for the promise of the Word is to comfort us in our time of need. This is the living presence of Christ at the Divine service coming as Savior, who also engages our lives at daily at home to serve Him and our neighbor in love, and who unites the baptized so we are never alone but can always pray “Our Father.” By God’s grace Jesus gives what we need because the Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son. Amen. Now may the peace of God, which passes all understanding, be with your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus to life everlasting. Amen.

1. Luther, M. (1999, c1961). *Vol. 24*: *Luther's works, vol. 24 : Sermons on the Gospel of St. John: Chapters 14-16* (J. J. Pelikan, H. C. Oswald & H. T. Lehmann, Ed.). Luther's Works (Jn 14:17). Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)