**John 14:23-31 (ESV)**

**23** Jesus answered him, “If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. **24** Whoever does not love me does not keep my words. And the word that you hear is not mine but the Father’s who sent me. **25** “These things I have spoken to you while I am still with you. **26** But 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. **27**  Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid. **28**  You heard me say to you, ‘I am going away, and I will come to you.’ If you loved me, you would have rejoiced, because I am going to the Father, for the Father is greater than I. **29** And now I have told you before it takes place, so that when it does take place you may believe. **30** I will no longer talk much with you, for the ruler of this world is coming. He has no claim on me, **31** but I do as the Father has commanded me, so that the world may know that I love the Father. Rise, let us go from here.

**“One Kind of Comforter”**

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen. Pentecost Sunday celebrates the unshakable promise worked by the Gospel. The suffering, death and resurrection of Christ is truly a kingdom not of this world. Let us be thankful, since the tower of Babel is proof that what sinful man achieves by works finally undoes what he does. Judgment rendered at Babel was not by a warring army or some tragic disaster like at Sodom and Gomorrah. It was simply this: confusion. Everyone went off on his or her own way and as the text states, “they left off building the city.” When Jesus ascended to heaven, He did not leave off building His Church for others to do. The coming of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost cleared up any misunderstanding. It was a gift worked by God to hear the Gospel, “in their own language.”

We have our own Babel today with its many voices and noise-making throughout our culture. Yet, these confirmands by the grace of God will make the good confession of Christ in spite of the confusion. It is to acknowledge what God already spoke of His righteousness and salvation for them as a gift in baptism. It is to answer the question, “Do you intend to continue steadfast in this confession and Church and to suffer all, even death, rather than fall away from it?” How tempting is it still for us after confirmation to ask like a disciple did in the upper room, “Lord, how is it that you will manifest yourself to us, and not to the world?” (John 14:22). Yet, the kingdom of Christ is not a tower of Babel by the hands of men. It is God at work in a sinful world clearing up the confusion like on Pentecost. There is only One Spirit and He gives comfort in Christ alone as promised by our Father.

The Holy Spirit stands apart as comfort for us from Christ. There are plenty of other “spirits” floating around today. We have man-centered ones like team spirit, school spirit, community spirit and the spirit of a personality. We have ones that attack the Gospel like calling upon spirits of the dead, false spirits in preaching, and the spirit of demons and the Devil. Finally, people might even opt for their own spiritual expression on how to experience God. Here is why Jesus sent the Holy Spirit. He is God, not a force, a form of energy, or a warm fuzzy. Jesus tells you how you know the Holy Spirit who proceeds from the Father and the Son. He said, “If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. Whoever does not love me does not keep my words. And the word that you hear is not mine but the Father’s who sent me.” Anything apart from Jesus and His Word is at best a confusing spirit and not the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit stands apart because He comes as the Comforter. St. Augustine explains it well, “So then the Son speaks, the Holy Spirit teaches. When the Son speaks, we take in the words; when the Holy Spirit teaches, we understand those words…” (ACC). Pentecost is the confirmation of what Christ already said. On the night of His betrayal when it seemed another tower of Babel would leave confusion by the cross. Jesus said, “But 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.” There are many popular spirits and some offer love that looks good. However, replacing the words of our Lord with what we think or how something sounds never leads to Jesus. The Holy Spirit is the comforter because the cross holds out the only true victory and not a tower of Babel. As Peter declared on Pentecost, “And it shall come to pass that everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.”

The Holy Spirit is fighting to comfort us with the peace of Christ. Pentecost was a Jewish festival celebrated fifty days after the Passover. It marked the time when Israel arrived at Mt. Sinai to receive the Law. Of course, even this towering truth of the Ten Commandments given by God came to be another tower of Babel. Israel ended up thinking people could be “good” as if the sinful nature just needed a little nudging. By the time Christ came as Savior, they figured what God said could be achieved as if life was one success after another. Yet, St. Paul a former Pharisee reminds us, “For by works of the law no human being will be justified in his sight, since through the law comes knowledge of sin” (Romans 3:20). If the Law finally shows sin then a sinful world will naturally want to silence Jesus. Yet, He told His disciples, “Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.”

The peace of the world makes many promises for health, wealth, power, and glory. It is peace grounded upon a lie for the sake of comfort. What Jesus gives as peace has everything to do with fighting for you. He sends the Holy Spirit to battle against the devil, the world, and our sinful nature. This takes place among the baptized daily because it is peace ground upon Christ alone as Savior. Martin Luther remarks, “If the Holy Spirit is to retain this name (Comforter) he must exercise his office only where there is no comfort and where comfort is needed and desired. Consequently, he cannot comfort the hard heads and audacious hearts, for these have not tasted of struggle and despair…”In other words, the Gospel is for those broken with no peace in the Law. The peace of Christ thus comes to comfort our troubles and fears. He earned it by crying out in His flesh on the cross. He dealt with it by fulfilling the Laws demands against our sinful failure. Peace is not in a lie of ignoring the Law or doing your best. It rests upon the death and life of Jesus Christ as proclaimed on Pentecost.

The Holy Spirit gives comfort to us as promised by Christ. Jesus told His disciples, “And now I have told you before it takes place, so that when it does take place you may believe.” If confirmation teaches anything, it is you need not look for Christ somewhere else. As the Creed confesses, “I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body and life everlasting.” All this flows out of the Holy Spirit who now works by the Word and Sacraments. The Church is a place and not a dispersed people unto themselves that would be another failed tower of Babel. The place is where the Spirit works to give the certainty of being a child of God by Baptism. This place is a Word of forgiveness as an answer to the confession of our sin. It is a place with Christ at the Lord’s Supper proclaim His true body and blood present for our peace. All of this served out by the office of His ministry caring for His sheep.

The Holy Spirit is not trying to hide Christ or make it hard to find Him. God fully knows how confused this sinful world continues to be. Pentecost pulls it together by speaking the promise of the Gospel to many nations in their languages. The cross is a witness to a kingdom not of this world. This is far from spirituality, but the work of the Holy Spirit. There is only One Spirit and He gives comfort in Christ alone as promised by our Father. Amen. Now may the peace of God, which passes all understanding, be with your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus to life everlasting, Amen.