

Pastor Ben Libby  
 Sermon  
 6/8/2019

To Jesus Christ, who was delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification, be glory forever Amen.

The Word of the Lord which forms a portion for our sermon text this morning comes to us from John's Gospel, chapter 14, starting at verse 23:

John 14:23-31 <sup>23</sup> Jesus answered and said to 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. <sup>24</sup> "He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine but the Father's who sent Me. <sup>25</sup> " These things I have spoken to you while being present with you. <sup>26</sup> "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 things that I said to you. <sup>27</sup> "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. <sup>28</sup> "You have heard Me say to you, 'I am going away and coming back to you.' If you loved Me, you would rejoice because I said, 'I am going to the Father,' for My Father is greater than I. <sup>29</sup> "And now I have told you before it comes, that when it does come to pass, you may believe. <sup>30</sup> "I will no longer talk much with you, for the ruler of this world is coming, and he has nothing in Me. <sup>31</sup> "But that the world may know that I love the Father, and as the Father gave Me commandment, so I do. Arise, let us go from here.

This is the Word of God. Congregation may be seated.

Grace and peace be to you from God our Father and from your Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Dear fellow Redeemed...

There are a few events that go hand in hand with summer. BBQ's, baseball games, family vacations. We often do these things in the summertime because that's when the weather is the nicest. But it is also why summer can be a busy time.

It can also be a busy time because of the many things we do in summer, people also plan their weddings for the summer. Weddings are happy and busy times. People have weddings in the summer because people are more widely available to attend in and the weather is usually pleasant. Perhaps you have been invited to attend a wedding or two this summer.

If you have been invited to attend a wedding, will you give a gift? It is customary to give a wedding

gift. This is a good tradition; it is nice to be able to contribute to a brand-new family. But what makes a good wedding gift? No doubt, the two people who are about to be married already have many things. But, especially with young couples, they lack many basic things. Maybe they had lived at home or on their own for a while and now that they are moving out on their own, they need many new things of their own.

This is of course why couples register for wedding gifts. It is hard to know ahead of time what a couple already has and what they don't, so they make a list of things that they think they could use once they get married.

You want to give a good wedding gift. You want to give a gift that will last. My wife and I got married about 6 years ago, and we still have and use many of the wedding gifts we received still today. And that is the idea behind wedding gifts; you want to give something that not only the couple needs but something that will last for a long time.

But that is sometimes easier said than done. It is hard to give a useful gift that will last. If you are able to give a gift that will last even more than only a few years, I'd say that was a good gift then. Well, how about a gift that would last for their whole entire lives? That goes above and beyond the call.

This Sunday is when we observe the event known as the Pentecost. It was the day when the Apostles received the gift of the Holy Spirit. There was and is truly no better gift than what was given on that day. It is a gift that has also been given to us. The Holy Spirit is eternal, so you'll don't have to worry about outgrowing the use this gift gives you. The Holy Spirit endures, He is the gift that keeps on giving. The Holy Spirit also provides us with peace, a peace that is useful for any future need we could ever possibly have. So, let us pray for this gift right now! **MAY THE WORDS OF MY MOUTH AND THE MEDIATIONS OF OUR HEARTS BE ACCEPTABLE IN YOUR SIGHT O LORD, OUR MAKER AND REDEEMER, AMEN.**

Our sermon text before is something that Jesus said on Maundy Thursday of Holy Week. We have had either excerpts or sermon texts from this section of Scripture for about the past 4 Sundays or so. If you were to open your Bible's to these chapters of John, if you had a red-letter edition where the Words of Jesus was printed in red, you would see very few words in black. Jesus is speaking here to His disciples, and He had much to say. He really would map it all out here. What did He have to say to His disciples?

<sup>23</sup> **Jesus answered and said to 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. <sup>24</sup> "He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine but the Father's who sent Me.**

Weddings are awesome events to attend, but they also take a lot of planning. You need to have a schedule planned out so that everything runs smoothly. You also need to let people know well ahead of time that they are invited to it and they should plan on whether they will be able to attend or not. This is why couples often send out "save the date" notifications. You need to know what future day they are planning on getting married so that you can put the appropriate plans in place so that you can go it. People want to go, so you let them know well ahead of time to make that possible.

The events of and following Maundy Thursday were busy, to say the least. But they were also very well planned out. It probably seemed in the moment to the disciples that these things were all very sudden and shocking. But God is always in control. Jesus is God, and likewise, He also knew what was about to happen. In these red chapters in John, Jesus basically tells His disciples everything that would happen. He foretold His betrayal. He foretold Peter's denial. He foretold His death, His resurrection, and His ascension. But He also foretold the sending of the Helper, the Holy Spirit, and He also promised His return. That was why when He was leaving, He commanded them to not leave Jerusalem, but rather to wait for the Promise of the Father. They obeyed and returned to Jerusalem, where ten days later, Pentecost took place.

But following the orders of Jesus was not always the disciple's forte. This whole section of John is a discourse telling the disciples exactly what would happen in the upcoming days and weeks. And yet, they could not believe it when these things actually happen. Not only were they not good at remembering the things Jesus said, but they were also not good at following them. Just one chapter before these Words, Jesus told Peter before the rooster

crows twice, he would deny Him three times. Peter swore he would never do such a thing, even if it meant having to die with Him, but in the end, it was Peter who instead swore that he did not know the man and went out and wept bitterly.

But the Apostles are not the only disciples of Jesus who had a hard time doing what He said. We also frequently struggle to do what Jesus has told us to do. Time and time again, we do the opposite of what He has commanded us. The disciples loved Jesus. So do we. And yet, here He says, **"If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word"**. We don't do like even close to like we should. Does that mean we don't love Jesus?

Loving Jesus means keeping His Word. But what does that mean? The word here that gets translated "keep", has an interesting idea behind it. It means to "guard, keep, or treasure". Truly, we don't keep it as we should. Our sinful flesh gets in the way of that every day. But, because we have been converted by the water and the Word, we can treasure and cherish His Word. Despite caring around these cursed and sin-filled bodies, at the same time, we have God living inside of us! Jesus goes on to say, **and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him.** Through this blessed possession, we do keep His Word and He lives in us!

Through our conversion, we do have God inside of us. That is why when Paul warned the Corinthians against sexual immorality, he explained, **1 Corinthians 6:19-20 Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? <sup>20</sup> For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.** How is this that we have God in us? Through the Holy Spirit! He takes people like us, who were dead in our trespasses and sins, and makes us alive to God! That is why the Holy Spirit is the greatest gift we could ever receive, He gives us spiritual life, and it is eternal life!

<sup>26</sup> **"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 things that I said to you.**

This sending of the Helper, the Holy Spirit, would have immediate implications for those disciples. They would experience them at Pentecost. They would be able to perform great signs and wonders through the Holy Spirit. This included the giving of the gift of tongues. People were gathered there from all around the known world. Yet, they heard these men praising God in their own tongues, despite the fact that they were uneducated Galileans. This made the onlookers confused, and it even caused some to suspect that they were drunk. They could not understand it.

I think that sometimes, in our conservative Lutheran circles, there is a little uneasiness when it comes to the Holy Spirit. The reason for this is that some church bodies over-emphasize these gifts of the Holy Spirit. They desire to speak in tongues to prove that they have the Holy Spirit inside of them.

We do not do that. But not being able to speak in tongues does not mean that we don't have the Holy Spirit inside of us. That was not the point of the gift of tongues anyway. That was a special gift given to the brand-new Church, and it was for a very special reason. It signified that it did not matter what language you spoke; the Gospel was meant for you as well!

For a group of men who were about to go out into the world and preach Christ crucified, what better gift could they have been given? I mentioned how hard it is to give a good wedding gift. While these men were not getting married, the principle behind the gift was the same. Their Master had just ascended into heaven, and soon they would leave not only each other but also their familiar home. They would need a gift that would help them when they were on their own, in strange and foreign countries.

Being able to preach the life-saving message in the native tongue would be a great asset to them.

We also have this same gift. No, most of us cannot speak in foreign tongues. The disciples also had other gifts of the Holy Spirit that we do not have today. But we do have the same gift that they received on Pentecost: The Holy Spirit! Our mission is the same one that they had back then: To make disciples of all nations. We have been given spiritual and eternal life through the Holy Spirit. We, in turn, give that same gift to others. Even though we only speak in English, the Holy Spirit is the key part of that gift. The power comes from the Word. The Holy Spirit has the power to take sinners like us, turn us into saints, and make saints out of other sinners as well! What a gift and what a helper!

<sup>29</sup> "And now I have told you before it comes, that when it does come to pass, you may believe. <sup>30</sup> "I will no longer talk much with you, for the ruler of this world is coming, and he has nothing in Me. <sup>31</sup> "But that the world may know that I love the Father, and as the Father gave Me commandment, so I do. Arise, let us go from here.

It is a good thing that we do the gift of the Holy Spirit, the Helper, because we need all the help we can get! Jesus mentions another spirit here, namely, the "ruler of this world". Who is He talking about? He is talking about the most unhelpful spirit, the Devil, Satan. Whereas the Holy Spirit helps us, the Devil only tries to hurt us. He walks about this earth like a lion, seeking whom he may devour. He is always looking for a way to trip us up, to listen to his lies instead of God's truth. He is our one true enemy, and he is always looking for a way to drag us to hell.

And make no mistake about it, he is the ruler of the world. That is why this world is such an inhospitable place for Christians to live. Sin and temptation lurk in every direction here. The World, the Devil, and our own sinful flesh are always trying to get us to forget about God and His promises to us!

But, we know and believe that which cannot be taken away from us. Namely, that Jesus loved us so much that He even died for us, and our sins have all been wiped away clean at the cross. That is also why the Gift of the Holy Spirit is the best gift we could ever have. It provides hope wherever we go. <sup>ESV</sup> **Psalm 139:7-8 Where shall I go from your Spirit? Or where shall I flee from your presence? <sup>8</sup> If I ascend to heaven, you are there! If I make my bed in Sheol, you are there!**

No doubt, just like the disciples were about to go into every corner of the world, Christ's disciples today are found everywhere throughout this earth. Those disciples would find places where the gospel was successful and their message was welcomed. But, they would also experience places of rejection, persecution, and strife. We can expect more of the same. Thankfully, right now in this country, we are still able to worship our God. But that does not mean that will always be the case. The world grows more and more sinful, and it has become increasingly hostile to those who speak up for the truth of Christ.

And that is exactly why we need the Helper! **John 14:27 "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.**

Through the Helper and His life-saving message, we truly have peace. It is, like Paul said, **Philippians 4:7 the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.** This peace is how we are able to go on through this world. It is not military peace, which so often does not last very long. It is not like the fabled world peace; which people seem to always be looking for. It is far better than that! It is the peace that only the Holy Spirit can give us. It is the peace that we have with God! The peace which knows that even though we are sinful, **1 John 1:9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from**

**all unrighteousness.** This truly is a peace that surpasses

all understanding. It is the peace that Jesus loves us and forgives us our sins!

Summer truly can be a very busy time. There are all kinds of events and plans that we have for the summer months. But let us never be too busy to receive the gifts that God gives us! Go back to the Word of God. Through the Spirit, the Word will lead you to the fact that you are sinful, but God has forgiven those sins. Go back to church, where we see that not only have we been forgiven, but we taste it as well, and we have an opportunity to praise God for His loving kindness. Then, go back out into the world equipped with the faith that the Spirit gives you. Faith that has the peace that surpasses all understanding within it. We go back into the world where the darkness of sin and Satan rule, and let our light shine in its darkness. The light that shines is not of our own, but of the God who lives inside of us!

It can be hard to give a good gift, especially one that will last. But that is why God gives us the best gift we could ever have, His Holy Spirit! With the Holy Spirit, we have a gift that will be useful for any situation we could ever encounter here on this earth. He is the gift that truly keeps on giving, for not only does He give us the gift of eternal life, but He gives us the means to give that same gift to others! All praise and thanks be to our God, who gives hapless sinners like us truly the most helpful gift ever! AMEN!!!