

**Holy Trinity Lutheran Church
Des Moines, WA
June 8, 2014
Pentecost Day**

John 16:5-11

"It Is for Your Good that I Must Go"

- 1. Good for the disciples**
- 2. Good for the world**

Hymns: 184 – 176 – 186 – Closing: 190

All Scripture quotations from NIV 1984

John 16:5-11 –

"Now I am going to him who sent me, yet none of you asks me, 'Where are you going?' Because I have said these things, you are filled with grief. But I tell you the truth: It is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. When he 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; in regard to righteousness, because I am going to the Father, where you can see me no longer; and in regard to judgment, because the prince of this world now stands condemned.

Imagine this scene. A father gathers his little children around him. He has an announcement to make. He must leave. He is going to be gone for a while. He will not be with them again for a long time. He will not be able to spend time, have meals, or have conversation with them. And he tells them that this leave of absence he is taking is for their good. How do you think the children would react?

I'd imagine that a hush would fall over them. Sadness would fill the room. And confusion too! Questions would come from them. Where is he going? What will he be doing? How long will he be gone? And how can this be for their good?

If you can imagine a scene like that, you can imagine the atmosphere in the room where Jesus and his disciples were meeting in our sermon text today. Jesus has told his disciples the exact same thing: He is leaving.

Today on Pentecost Day we focus on the Gospel reading from John 16. We focus our thoughts around the striking phrase that Jesus told his disciples: **"It is for Your Good that I Must Go."** This morning we will see that this will be:

- 1. Good for the disciples**
- 2. Good for the world**

1. Good for the disciples

The scene was in the Upper Room the night that he would be arrested in the Garden of Gethsemane. Jesus had made his declaration earlier in chapter 13: *"My children, I will be with you only a little longer. You will look for me, and just as I told the Jews, so I tell you now: Where I am going, you cannot come"* (13:33).

Toward the beginning of our text, Jesus said more about this: *"Now I am going to him who sent me, yet none of you asks me, 'Where are you going?' Because I have said these things, you are filled with grief. But I tell you the truth: It is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you."* He adds something that may have confused them even more. It will be more beneficial for them if he is gone and sends someone else to be with them? How can this be?

We also see that Jesus' feelings were hurt! The disciples were thinking a bit selfishly here. No one has inquired more about his leaving, except for a couple brief, selfish questions from Peter and Thomas. Peter was more concerned with what would happen to the disciples when left behind, and Thomas asked about how they could follow later. All they were consumed with was grief for themselves. They don't ask things such as:

- Why must you die?
- Are you really going to rise from the dead, as you said?
- Since you tell us you are returning to the Father, what is heaven like?

Yet Jesus still decides to enlighten them. He promises to send someone who will not leave them all alone. This is the Counselor.

Why would the disciples need the Counselor? Jesus knew they would need him for three reasons. First of all, they will need him because of their ignorance. Perhaps you are familiar with some of the frustration and surprise Jesus felt many times because his disciples didn't understand what he was teaching or saying. They continued to argue to the end of his ministry about who was the greatest among them. When Jesus was preparing to ascend back to heaven, one of them asked him, "Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?" (Acts 1) Some still thought the Messiah was going to get rid of the hated Romans in their land! They needed someone to enlighten them.

They will need this Counselor, secondly, because of their fear. Jesus said here that grief had filled their hearts because he had told them these things. This grief would later change to fear after he was gone. You might remember that when Jesus appeared to his disciples after he rose from the dead, and then again a week later when Thomas was present, they were together in a locked room for fear of the Jews. This would not be their role in life after he was gone! They needed the Holy Spirit daily to live in them and empower them to be his witnesses!

They, thirdly, will need this Comforter because of the hatred of the world. They would encounter the Jews that had put Jesus to death. They would face riots in towns where they tried to preach in the coming years. Most would even face death as they gave their lives for what they were witnessing about. The hatred of the world would be intense from those that would not believe their message.

How would the Counselor help them? Jesus had already told them two chapters before, "I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever - the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you... The Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father

will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you." (John 14) And in a verse right after our text he said, "He will guide you in all truth."

Who is this "Counselor?" On this Pentecost Day, it's good for us to clearly recognize that it is none other than the Holy Spirit, the third person of the Trinity. The Holy Spirit is quite unique. There are two unhealthy extremes that Christians often have concerning him. Some Christians down through time have been caught up in an emotionalism and mysticism with the Holy Spirit. Their desire to see outward, visible signs of his presence and feel his breath on them and in them has obsessed them to the point of even obscuring the cross of Christ. Other Christians live with an indifference toward the Holy Spirit. They have a lack of appreciation for his work and seldom think of him.

We certainly want to avoid these two extremes! Who is the Holy Spirit? Literally in Greek in these verses, he is called the "Paraclete." That's worth mentioning because in past times there were prayers and hymns that used that name for the Holy Spirit. That word Para-clete means "called to your side." The picture is that there is a helper, an advocate, a counselor, an aid who is called to your side when you need help. It was used of a lawyer in a courtroom. Many translations translate this "Counselor." The older KJV translated it "Comforter."

How would the Holy Spirit do this work?

- He would enlighten them in their ignorance to know and believe what Jesus had been trying to teach them.
- He would move them to have the courage to preach God's true Word!
- He would also use them to write down God's truth of the New Testament, explaining and proving that Jesus is the Christ, the Savior of the world!
- And he would strengthen them to combat the attacks of the world!

Jesus makes it clear that he must complete his work and return to the Father before the Paraclete could come to them. It was for their good that Jesus was going away!

We are also disciples of Jesus. What can this Paraclete, this Counselor, do for you, so many years after Jesus promised to send him to his followers? You need him, my friends! We, as disciples of Jesus, need him to enlighten us about the truths of God's Word. Listen to a couple verses that describe this:

- *"The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned." (1 Corinthians 2:14)*
- *"No one can say, 'Jesus is Lord,' except by the Holy Spirit." (1 Corinthians 12:3)*

We are like the Ethiopian eunuch that was riding back to his homeland, when the evangelist Philip came up to his chariot, moved by the Holy Spirit, and asked him, "Do you understand what you're reading?" He said, "How can I understand with no one to explain it to me?" He was reading about a sheep being led to slaughter and his life being taken from the earth. And the Holy Spirit then used Philip to explain these truths to him.

He continues to enlighten us even today. Growing in God's Word, after all, is a lifetime project. When you hear a sermon or read the Bible or have a devotion at home, he is the one who is at work building your faith. So an important question to ask today is, "Have you been making use of him?" Have you taken advantage of this Counselor that Jesus has promised you? Is your faith stronger than it was at this time last year? Have you had a good growing spurt, or have you been content to stay the same, perhaps even declining by giving no maintenance to your knowledge of God's Word or your faith? May we make use of this Counselor!

2. Good for the world

We learn a second lesson in the words of Jesus that he spoke to his disciples that night. Not only would he have to leave for their own good. It would also serve for the good of the world. Jesus said, *"When he 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; in regard to*

righteousness, because I am going to the Father, where you can see me no longer; and in regard to judgment, because the prince of this world now stands condemned."

This is a pretty deep section of Scripture. What did Jesus mean? It begins with the word "convict." This word in Greek usually has a negative meaning. It means to expose or to bring to light. It's another word used in court for the cross-examining of someone on the stand. Testimony comes out that exposes the truth and convicts!

The Holy Spirit would be sent by Jesus to the world to expose and convict it in three ways. First, the Counselor convicts the world "in regard to sin, because men do not believe in me." What is the Holy Spirit's message to the world about sin? This can have two possible meanings. It says here that this happens because men do not believe in me. When the Holy Spirit sees unbelief, or impenitence, sins are not forgiven. This brings to mind the section in 1 John 1, which says, *"If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness."* When the Holy Spirit sees impenitence, sin stays.

The other meaning here is that when the Holy Spirit looks at the unbelieving world, he sees many sins that are a result of the base problem, unbelief. All the outward sins that we see – swearing, cursing, murder, hatred, drunkenness, sexual immorality, dishonesty, slander, lust, gossip, stealing – come from one source: lack of faith. This is why the Holy Spirit convicts the world. The basic sin is unbelief. **Regardless of the exact nuance of these words, the point is, the world is in trouble! The world stands under the wrath of God because of its unbelief!**

We also heard that the Holy Spirit is sent to convict the world of righteousness. He does this, Jesus says, because he is "going to the Father, where you can see me no longer." What does this mean? We see the meaning in what Jesus would be doing as he returned to the Father. He was preparing to enter the last steps necessary to win salvation for us. He has

obeyed the Law perfectly for us. Now he is going to the cross to suffer and die for us and then rise, thus winning our redemption. **In a strange picture, the Counselor would convict the world of righteousness because of Christ's work. You cost this price! Nothing shows the damnable price of sin as clearly as the acts that were necessary to pay for it, namely the suffering and crucifixion of Jesus our righteousness. Yet he willingly paid it!** And then Jesus would leave to ascend to his rightful place at the right hand of God in glory and power. Jesus shows us the importance of the Paraclete, the Counselor, because without his work, Jesus' work would be a sealed book.

Note that Jesus did not say, "The Holy Spirit will convict the world of righteousness because your good works will earn you heaven." He also did not say, "The Holy Spirit will convict you of righteousness because God is going to overlook all sin anyway." He will convince the world of righteousness only because Jesus goes to do these very important steps to win heaven for us. No other reason!

The third thing the Holy Spirit will be sent to do for the world is to convict the world of judgment because the prince of this world, the devil, now stands condemned. Judgment really begins with him, doesn't it? He was the first one to sin. He led Adam and Eve into sin. Even in Jesus' parable of the sheep and the goats as he describes Judgment Day, he tells unbelievers to depart from him into the eternal fire "prepared for the devil and his angels." Judgment begins with him.

Many in our world today don't really feel judgment is imminent. Peter wrote in his second letter, *"You must understand that in the last days scoffers will come, scoffing and following their own evil desires. They will say, 'Where is this 'coming' he promised? Ever since our fathers died, everything goes on as it has since the beginning of creation.'"*

Jesus said it was this way before the Flood also. But for those who don't feel God will do this, Jesus tells them to look at what happened to the devil. See how the devil has been judged. We hear how he was thrown out from his place in heaven and how Jesus has

overcome him and put him in chains by his victory. **How true it is when the hymn "A Mighty Fortress" states, "He's judged, the deed is done!"** Yes, the Holy Spirit indeed will convict the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment!

Probably the clearest illustration we could point to on this Pentecost Day is the reading from Acts where we heard how the Holy Spirit was poured out on Jesus' disciples. Look at the message Peter preached. And look at the reaction of the crowd gathered there for the festival in Jerusalem.

What a strong encouragement this is for us today! Why, you may ask? Recognize again that God does these things for the world through his Word. That is where the world finds out these facts. Whenever a person of the world goes to some religious service and hears a Bible-based message, they will hear this. Whenever they happen to flip around the TV channels and hear a preacher or teacher who is Bible-based, they will hear this message. And whenever they hear YOU SPEAK about these things, they will hear this message! That is why this is such an encouragement for us.

God uses us to bring this message to the world! You are Peters. You will convict it of sin when you speak at the proper time. You will convict it of righteousness when you speak at the proper time. And you will convict it of judgment when you speak at the proper time. You may not see the visible results quickly or outwardly. However, as you use the living Word of God the Holy Spirit is surely at work.

If that thought makes you fearful, this takes us back full circle to the Upper Room where Jesus was talking to his disciples. He left to send you a Paraclete! It's also comforting that he had told them before a witnessing trip in Matthew 10: *"When they arrest you, do not worry about what to say or how to say it. At that time you will be given what to say, for it will not be you speaking, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you."*

"I must leave for your good!" As we close our look at these words of Christ on this Pentecost Day, it might be interesting to close with the thought of what the Old Testament

festival at this time was. It was the Feast of Weeks, a harvest festival and a time of thanks. How ironic that the Old Testament festival of harvest would become the New Testament festival of Pentecost, when a harvest would be begun. This harvest would include your own soul, and also the souls of the world that the disciples and you spread the Word to. All because... Jesus had to go finish his work.

May we thank God for the Holy Spirit, the Paraclete, today. And may he work powerfully through us as we live and speak up for the gospel! Amen.