

They were under a virtual fifty-day lockdown, or so it has been traditionally portrayed. We know the first two Sunday nights after Jesus' resurrection, the disciples were gathered in a locked room, fearful of what Jesus' enemies might do to them. Yes, they would eventually travel back to relative safety of Galilee during this fifty-day period and see the risen Lord there as well. But when they were in Jerusalem they appeared to be in hiding.

It is also traditionally thought that the house where the Spirit entered was the one with the upper room where Jesus had instituted His supper. Not only were they gathered still in fear, they also were gathered in great doubt. The Gospel writers reported how even when Jesus appeared to them doubts were swirling about in their minds.

Forty days into this lockdown, they still were questioning what Jesus' purpose for being here was and what their purpose was in following Him. One of them had already defected in his act of betrayal and was replaced with another to return to the sacred number "12". But fear and doubt kept them confined and confused. Then the Spirit entered replacing fear with boldness and doubt with confidence. Let us seek the same from the Spirit this morning casting out all our fears and all our doubts – please rise to sing Hymn #399.

These things God has revealed to us through the Spirit. For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God. For who knows a person's thoughts except the spirit of that person, which is in him? So also no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. 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. And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual. The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned. The spiritual person judges all things, but is himself to be judged by no one. "For who has understood the mind of the Lord so as to instruct Him?" But we have the mind of Christ.

Almighty God, who according to promise did pour out Your Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, and has promised that He shall abide with Your Church for ever: Let that same Spirit guide us into all truth, defend us from all evil, and enrich us with all grace; that we may serve you with pure hearts, *minds* and lives, to the honor of Your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. (Parish Prayers, ed. Frank Colquhoun, pp. 102-103, *adapted*)

In Christ Jesus, who sent the Spirit to us, so that we might understand the things God freely gives us for our eternal benefit, dear fellow redeemed:

We are surrounded by many neighbors, who think we believe some very foolish things. Some are well aware of what we believe, teach and confess and some who know very little, but regardless they think it foolish for us to gather together regularly, do much to support and maintain not only a church but also schools. After all, they look about and see many clubs we could join if we want to socialize with other like-minded human beings with fewer meetings, less expectations and avail ourselves of public schools which are tuition free. They do not have in mind the deep things of God, but the shallow day-to-day concerns of naturally sinful mortal mankind.

You and I are blessed having the deep things of God revealed to us and enlightened to believe, teach and confess them. What started on that first Christian Pentecost continues to happen for us today. The same outpouring of the Holy Spirit has been poured out upon you. Recognize what God has done for you and rejoice: **The Mind of Christ Is Yours, Because You Were Born of the Spirit.**

I

Have you ever had someone insist that they know what your inner hidden motives are? Often they are your accusers and are wrong. Sometimes they guess correctly but in no way do they really know. Spouses in conflict do this often much to their harm. Humans cannot read the hearts and minds of each other. Not even Psychics can do this, however being empowered by demons, they may have better guesses than humans because they operate in the spirit realm.

Just as this applies to human beings, “so also no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God.” But there is no lack of those who presume to know God and have the audacity to teach the unsuspecting. However Paul speaks about how he and the other Apostles were inspired to write what God desires to reveal: “we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual.”

You are spiritual; you have been born again by the Spirit of God. Yes, you retain your natural sinful self, but your flesh does not rule you, in truth your new man of faith drowns the old daily in the gracious waters of your baptism. But the unbeliever is not spiritual, he/she is what Paul calls the natural person. “The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to

him, ... not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned."

We admit this every time we recite Luther's explanation of the Apostle's Creed 3rd Article: *"I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, or come to Him; but the Holy Ghost has called..., enlightened..., sanctified and kept me in the true faith."* You would be accounted as a natural person, except God the Holy Spirit has been gracious to you and regenerated you in Christ.

II

What is it that we know about God? We are like the Apostles, since they too are spiritual, believers in Christ, made so through the working of the Spirit. "You have received ... the Spirit who is from God, that you might understand the things freely given you by God."

Through the work of regeneration by the Holy Spirit we have a new spiritual self. As Paul tells us elsewhere: "If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation." Or as Jesus puts it to Nicodemus: "that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." You and I have **now** been given in our new man the mind of Christ. This does not mean we are omniscient like Christ who is God from eternity. We do not know **all** things, but we do understand God to be our loving Creator, Redeemer and Comfortor who gives us all good things freely, without conditions.

To help us understand the point Paul is revealing to us in our text, we might look upon the twelve year old Jesus in the temple. Remember, He was in His state of humiliation, not making full use of His divine powers. So Jesus sat among the teachers of the Holy Scriptures as a student. He was not presumptuously teaching them, but sat as a humble pupil. They were amazed at His understanding and consequently His answers to their questions. He had what Adam and Eve had at the very beginning, which was the image of God. They knew God perfectly. So your new man of faith is in that same category possessing the mind of Christ.

Of course you and I still struggle with our old sinful natures and so what is clearly known and understood from holy Scriptures by our new man, the old assails with doubts and questions. By the work of the Spirit, we are enlightened and know the God who loves us in Christ and freely gives us forgiveness, life and salvation. We know and trust that all our sins are forgiven, even the sins of doubt, which we share with the disciples in Jesus' day. Through that faith and knowledge your sins are forgiven, you have the peace, which the world can never give. It is peace with God, who created you.

I remember being challenged because I was able to instruct a developmentally disabled young man, with an intellectual capability

of a four year old. The challenge was - how could I require more from junior high students with at least average IQs, refusing to confirm without the normal instruction expectations. Those who were capable of doing the work required for confirmation simply refused to do it. On the other hand, the developmentally disabled person understood enough, according to his capability, to profess an understanding of the things freely given him by God through Christ Jesus His Son and receive the holy supper with blessing. He too had been blessed with the mind of Christ. Those who refused to do the work according to their God-given abilities needed to mature to the point where these holy things were treasured as the 20 year old did.

While our Lord clearly teaches that we must all become like little children, we all still must have the mind of Christ to accept the things of God as revealed in His Word as taught by the Spirit. God has graciously worked in you through His Spirit, the mind of Christ and you believe and confess the things freely given you by God through His Son. Yes, still folly to the world; but it remains the wisdom of God, which alone saves you for all eternity. *Peace Jesus leaves with you; His peace He give you; not as the world gives does He give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled neither let them be afraid. Amen.*