

The Holy Spirit Proceeds from the Father and the Son | St. John 14:25-26, 16:12-15 | #360-18

We bow our hearts in prayer: Dear Father, send us Your Holy Spirit, through Jesus Christ. Amen.

Dear Fellow Redeemed,

We have come to the Sunday known as the Feast of the Holy Trinity.

While every Sunday we worship the Triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit

(His nature as well as His work *for us men and for our salvation*),

THIS Sunday, we set aside time to be reminded of these mysteries.

It's a fitting week, then, for us also to consider in our Catechism Sermon Series

the comfort that we have in knowing that the Holy Spirit *proceeds from the Father and the Son*,

by meditating on what He does as He *proceeds from the Father and the Son* to you.

In our text, we hear Jesus speaking to His disciples the night before He was crucified.

He was preparing them for the time when He would no longer be visible among them,

but they were not to be afraid or be sad, for He was sending them the Comforter.

Our text for meditation...

... We read as follows in Jesus' name:

"These things I have spoken to you while I am still with you. 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.

..."I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. When the Spirit of Truth comes, He will guide you into all the truth, for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak, and He will declare to you the things that are to come. He will glorify Me, for He will take what is Mine and declare it to you. All that the Father has is Mine; therefore I said that He will take what is Mine and declare it to you." (ESV)

This is Your Word, heavenly Father; sanctify us in the truth, Your Word is Truth. Amen. (John 17:17)

Jesus had been telling His Apostles about His coming crucifixion & resurrection for some time.

But they didn't understand. They didn't know what to do with that information.

It did not process with their incorrect understanding of what the Christ was to be and what He was actually to accomplish while on Earth.

Jesus also recognized that though He had more that He could tell them, but they couldn't bear.

Such a traumatic experience that they were about to go through would, no doubt, shock them and tempt them to question whether or not Jesus was the Christ, as Cleopas indicated on His way to Emmaus, "**we had hoped that He was the one to redeem Israel.**" (Luke 24:21)

It is common for us, during stressful times, to forget things said to us, even important things.

But when Jesus appeared to the disciples 40 days between His resurrection and ascension,

He comforted them and clarified from Scripture that all had happened according to God's plan, and it all accomplished the real **redemption of Israel**, the forgiveness of sins.

...And not only for ethnical Israel, but for the whole world, all nations.

But Jesus would not continue to appear to them after His ascension.

They would not be able to speak with Him as they were, but neither was He abandoning them.

He would send the **Helper, the Spirit of Truth**, the Holy Spirit to them.

But it's hard to understand how this arrangement is better than having Jesus visibly present among us, isn't it?

Wouldn't it be easier for people to believe in Him as the crucified and risen Lord
if they could see His hands, feet, and side and yet still alive among them?
Couldn't He better discredit the nay-sayers of creation and the authority of Scripture
if He was able to debate with them in person?

Wouldn't His visible presence strengthen and encourage the Church?

Wouldn't it keep the Church united instead of separating into so many denominations?

Wouldn't His visible presence strengthen and encourage you?

When doubt starts to set in?

Or when you are confused about something?

Or when you are afraid of what is happening around you, or what is to come.

... During such stressful times, it is common for us to forget things, even important things,
like how the Triune God loves you and knows what is best for your eternal welfare.

The Father knows it isn't better for Jesus to have remained visibly present on earth,
otherwise he wouldn't have ascended out of our sight.

And experience also proves that God's visible presence doesn't automate belief.

Two times God's presence was visibly seen for any who had eyes:

when Israel wandered in the wilderness for 40 years with God's pillar of fire / cloud;
and when Jesus walked the earth and performed countless divine miracles,
observed by friend and foe alike.

But in both of these cases, God's messengers were mocked and His Word was rejected.

People refused to listen. They refused to believe.

More to the point: they refused to believe, not that God existed, but that the Triune God saves.

And that is at least part of the point here, Beloved.

The Christian faith in the Triune God's salvation is not something that is seen.

No one was present at creation.

Adam was the last creation created, and was in a deep sleep when Eve was made.

Though many people witnessed Jesus die,

they couldn't see the spiritual reality of sins atoned for, nor did any witness Jesus rising to life.

And no one can directly see the working of the Holy Spirit,

who works as invisibly as the wind blows.

But this isn't to say that you have a blind, unfounded faith.

The world got here somehow and it is still preserved and sustained. Someone is in control of it.

And though there are various views about its origin, the Biblical account still holds true.

That the earth and everything in it is not evolving into something better is plain to see.

But instead, the continual decline and corruption of this world is very compatible
with the creation account followed by the fall into sin.

That a man named Jesus lived in the early part of the 1st century and was crucified by Pilate
is not disputed among historians.

That His apostles' attitudes made a dramatic turn around after His death,

from cowering behind locked doors in an upper room to boldly preaching about this Jesus
having not only been crucified but also raised to life and confidently facing various forms
of persecution, even to the point of death, is well attested.

But knowledge of these facts alone do not make someone a Christian.

The devil also knows these things... and works against them.

To be a Christian, one must believe these things, that they are true,
and that they have been done by the Triune God for him.

That one believes these things is not a work that one can do on his own.

This is the work of the Spirit, *who proceeds from the Father and the Son,*

who goes out from the Father and the Son and is sent to you to give you His gift of faith.

But if the Spirit does His work invisibly, How, you might ask, are you to know where He is working?

Where can you go, what can you do, to receive and be strengthened in this faith,

when you have doubts, confusion, or fears?

We can get a pretty good idea from our text. Just look at the action verbs Jesus assigns to the H. Spirit as He is sent from the Father in Jesus' name:

He will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.

He will guide you into all the truth,

whatever He hears He will speak, and He will declare to you the things that are to come.

He will glorify Me, for He will take what is Mine and declare it to you.

So whatever the Holy Spirit is to take from the Father and the Son, is able to be declared.

What is it then that the Holy Spirit takes? It is God's Word. And that Word is Christ.

Jesus said that the Holy Spirit will glorify Him.

In John's Gospel, Jesus constantly spoke of His crucifixion as His glory.

So what is that glorious Word that the Holy Spirit teaches, brings to remembrance, declares, guides, and speaks? It is Christ crucified for your sins.

Just as Jesus said, so the Holy Spirit did. He taught, brought to remembrance, declared, guided

and spoke to the apostles and inspired them to write down the story of Jesus' glory,

from His conception to His crucifixion, to His resurrection, to His ascension into heaven.

He inspired them to write Jesus' teachings in their epistles, their letters to God's people.

This was the same that He had done with the OT prophets, as St. Peter testifies:

For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit. ^{2Peter1:21}

So going back to the question, How are you to know where the Holy Spirit is working?

He is working in the same way that He always has: through the Father's Word.

So gather together where God's Word is read and preached.

God the Holy Spirit is still speaking through that Word. Go to the Scriptures.

These are **able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.** ^{2Timothy3:15}

Come, gather together at the Baptismal font and let the Spirit bring to your remembrance

blessings of your **rebirth by water and the Spirit**, where not only your sins were washed away,

but where the Triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit bestowed His name on you,

and clothed you in Jesus' righteousness, and made you an heir of eternal life.

Gather around His table as the Holy Spirit drives you to **hunger and thirst for righteousness.**

Do not neglect to share in the Holy Spirit's work of glorifying Jesus in this meal, for

as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup you proclaim the Lord's Death until He comes.
And here you have the promise of God, that this bread and wine, are not alone in this supper,
but Jesus comes to you supernaturally, with His crucified and risen body and blood.
He comes to you in this meal to *forgive you all your sins through faith,*
which the Holy Spirit increases in your hearts to full assurance.

Here Jesus proves that He has not abandoned you in this corrupted world,
but continues to be with you, until the great day when you are taken
into His visible and eternal presence.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit,
as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, forevermore. Amen.

Soli Deo Gloria