

In Nomine Jesu

Psalm 66:1-8

Isaiah 12:1-6

James 1:16-21

John 16:5-15

The Helper on Earth

Christ is risen!

He is risen indeed, alleluia!

Grace, mercy and peace to you from God our Father, and from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.

It is helpful to note that our Gospel readings for last week, this week, and next week, are a sort of series that are built into the historic one-year lectionary. Last week you heard the middle section of John 16. This week you have heard, and will hear again, the beginning. Next week you will hear the ending.

John 16 is the beginning of the conclusion of Jesus' Upper Room Discourse. The Upper Room Discourse is what we call the lessons that John tells us of where Jesus gives His final teachings before the Crucifixion in the upper room on the night in which He was betrayed. It was after this that He would leave and go out to the garden to pray and be handed over.

In this chapter Jesus is trying to prepare them for what they are going to be facing after He is gone. Last week you heard about how the disciples' sorrow was turned into joy. Next week you will hear Jesus speaking of both His and your

relationship with the Father and about the fact that Jesus has overcome the world.

Today you have heard, and will hear more, about The Paraclete. The Paraclete is the Greek title that we usually translate Helper or Comforter, and He is the Holy Spirit. Specifically you are going to hear Jesus explain exactly what the Spirit is going to do here on Earth when He comes. Our reading begins:

But now I am going away to the sending Me One, and not one of you have asked Me, "Where are you going?"¹

As is somewhat common, particularly in John, the disciples seem to have missed something. It's easy to forget that you all have a divine advantage over the disciples in the Gospels. John in particular takes note of the times when the disciples simply don't get it. This problem can sometimes be presented as a character flaw of the disciples. However, the real problem is not an issue that is peculiar to the disciples. In this pericope, Jesus explains what the real problem is. In this section He is telling them *why* they aren't able to understand things yet and *why* they still don't ask the right questions. The reason is because Jesus hasn't yet sent the Holy Spirit to them.

You all *have* received the gift of the Holy Spirit. After all, He is the one who inspired the Word which you have heard today, not to mention when He came to

¹ John 16:5

those of you who have been baptized along with the water and the Word. So one way or another, you all have had your minds opened to be able to understand the scriptures.

The disciples do not yet have that advantage in our reading. They will receive the Spirit in His fullness on Pentecost. As of yet in our reading though, it is impossible for them to truly understand what Jesus is saying to them. They are fallen human beings without the aid of the Spirit. Jesus does understand this fact though. He also understands the effect His words have on those who have not yet received the Spirit.

But because of these which I have spoken openly to you, grief has filled your hearts.²

Jesus words, which He has spoken openly to the disciples, have only succeeded in filling their hearts with grief. This grief would also fill your hearts if you did not have the Spirit guiding and convicting you in your understanding. The disciples aren't able to realize yet that by Jesus going away and dying He is saving them. He is making sure that they will live forever with Him into eternity.

They only hear that He is leaving them, and this fills them with grief. Jesus is going to try and explain some of this to them though. He's going to speak to them of Another. One who is coming to help them. One whom He will send to them.

² John 16:6

But I the truth speak to you, it is better for you that I go away. For If I do not go away, the Helper will certainly not come to you, but if I do journey, I will send Him to you. And if that One comes He will convict the world concerning sin and concerning righteousness and concerning judgement.³

Considering that the disciples were having trouble understanding the things Jesus was saying before, this saying was probably a huge shock to their system. Jesus is trying to tell them that it is actually a good thing that He is going away. By going away He is able to send the Spirit to them. The reason this is a good thing is simple. It is because the Spirit convicts or exposes the world concerning sin, righteousness, and judgement.

The Greek word for 'convict' which is used here can also be translated 'expose.' There's value to both translations, and by using the word Jesus is tying a little of both meanings into His thought. Next, Jesus explains to the disciples why it is better that the Helper come to Earth than to have Jesus not ascend to the Father.

Concerning sin on the one hand, because they are not believing in Me.⁴

The Spirit is going to convict and expose the world concerning three things. The first of those things is sin. You all know that you sin, or at least you should. The disciples knew it as well. The world is not so convinced of this. The world likes

³ John 16:7-8

⁴ John 16:9

to think that they do pretty well in this category. Of course this is complete nonsense. All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. If any of you don't think that includes you, I would suggest looking up the definition of the word 'all'. The first part of the Spirit's work in the world is to show to you and everybody else that they are sinners.

With that in mind listen to the Spirit's work of convicting the world of this. To convict someone is to prove that they are guilty. The Spirit does that. He convicts the world concerning sin. The Spirit convicts the world on a deeper level though than, for example, a judge in a courtroom. A judge in a courtroom convicts a specific person of a specific act. The Spirit does do this, but He also convicts the very nature of mankind. The Spirit exposes and convicts the world of original sin.

The Spirit proves that you are not as you are supposed to be. Jesus describes this in our reading with, "they are not believing in Me." Original sin is the lack of original righteousness, the lack of fear, love and trust in God above all things. This lack of original righteousness and concupiscence, or the human inclination to sin, go hand in hand. When you hear of original sin this is what is being spoken of, the replacement of fear, love, and trust in God above all things, with the inclination to go against God in all things. The Spirit convicts the world

regarding sin in order to reveal this truth to the world. He reveals that on our own, because of original sin, we simply cannot live up to God's standards.

By revealing this, Jesus and the Spirit, are exposing where all sin originally comes from inside of you. Sin comes from your inherent sinful nature. All other sins are fruits of this original sin. The Spirit reveals to the world and to you that by yourself, there is no hope. The inherent unbelief and distrust of God that all people have had since the Fall would result in your damnation because you aren't able to do anything other than sin. Thankfully there was one Man who was *not* born with this inherent sin, and His actions have freed you from the eternal punishment you deserve. The Spirit will convict the world concerning Whom this person is. Jesus continues:

Concerning righteousness on the other hand, because to the Father I go away and not one of you will see Me.⁵

The Spirit will convict the world concerning righteousness. He will reveal to the world what and Who righteousness truly is, and He will convict the world concerning Him.

Jesus reveals to the disciples, and you, what righteousness is. Righteousness is that Jesus is going to the Father. Jesus going to the Father proves that all of the sin that was laid on Him at His baptism was atoned, or made up for.

⁵ John 16:10

He goes to the Father to sit at His right hand and to rule over the universe, proving that He is right with the Father. When He did this He also proved that He atoned for the sin of those who have been and will be baptized into Jesus death and resurrection. Therefore they also are right with God because of the fact that Jesus is right with God.

The Spirit will expose this righteousness to the World and will convict those who refuse to believe it. Those who try to be righteous on their own will fail miserably, and the Spirit will prove that they are guilty of that failure. Those who refuse to acknowledge what the Spirit convicts the world of first, original sin, aren't able acknowledge the need for righteousness outside of themselves. In other words if you don't know about original sin, you will think that you can manage to be righteous by yourself without Jesus.

However, those who *are* convicted and convinced by the Spirit regarding original sin, can also be convicted regarding righteousness. This is not a bad thing. The Spirit convicting you concerning righteousness is Him showing you that through Christ you are righteous. The work of Christ was to die on the cross to accomplish our salvation, the work of the Spirit is to create the Faith in this reality inside of you. He does this by convicting you, showing you that Jesus is now your righteousness.

The third and final thing that the Spirit will convict the world concerning is judgement.

But concerning judgement, because the leader of this world has been judged.⁶

The Spirit will convict and expose the world concerning judgement. The reason Jesus gives for this is that the leader of this world has already been judged. The ruler of this world is the devil. He is the prince of the powers of air and darkness, and he is a fearsome foe indeed. His successful temptation of Adam and Eve in the garden led to his kingdom being established on earth. This kingdom is a kingdom of lies, death, darkness, and evil.

However, those who are in Satan's kingdom rarely realize this to be the case since they refuse to be convicted regarding original sin and righteousness. As I said, the devil's kingdom is full of lies and darkness. Those under his rule do not realize the terrible and horrifying situation that they are in. If a person is in the kingdom of the devil that means that whether they know it or not, they are standing against the oncoming Kingdom of God.

One of the greatest lies that exists in the kingdom of the world, over which the devil rules, is that the devil is just as powerful as God. The devil would have you believe that he is a force that is at the very least equal to God Himself. This is

⁶ John 16:11

in truth what he wishes he was. He wants to be as powerful as God. What the Spirit of Truth will expose to the world is that the devil is nothing compared to God.

Not only this, the Helper will expose to the world that the devil is already judged. If you're wondering where and when this happened, it was declared in the Garden of Eden, when God foretold that the devil would have his head crushed, and it was enacted on the Cross, when Jesus died for the sins of the world.

For those in the Kingdom of God, those who have been convicted of their inherent sin in themselves and their new righteousness who is Christ, this is wonderful news. Here on Earth the power of the devil is still strong. He is still ruler of the world, and is striving to get Christians to reject the Faith. That can make it difficult to remember the truth that the devil has already failed. But there will come a day when all know this to be true. On that day, you who by the grace of God believe that Jesus is now your righteousness on account of His sacrifice will see this truth fully realized before your eyes. Those who refuse to be convicted of this will join their ruler in his judgement.

Our reading concludes with how the Spirit, the Father, and the Son work together.

Yet much I have to speak to you, but you are not able to endure it now. But when that One comes, the Spirit of Truth, He will lead you in all Truth, for He will not speak openly from Himself, but whatever He hears, He will speak, and He will proclaim to you the coming things. That One will glorify Me, for from Me He will receive and will proclaim to you. Whatever all the Father has is Mine, through this He said that from Me He is receiving and is proclaiming to you.⁷

Unfortunately that silly time thing refuses to slow down for me, so I won't be able to cover this in much detail today. Jesus first reaffirms what He said earlier about how it is more advantageous for the disciples that He leave and the Spirit come. He points out to them that they are not yet able to endure His full teachings.

But the Spirit of Truth will lead them in all Truth. He will give them the full teachings. There is no hidden knowledge regarding our salvation that God hasn't revealed in the Scriptures. The Spirit has revealed everything that is necessary to know to all people. So whenever the next guy comes up who says that he has been given a new revelation from the Spirit, remember this verse and then check said revelation against Scripture.

Next Jesus gives you a wonderful picture of what life in the Trinity looks like. The Spirit doesn't speak on His own. He speaks only what He has heard. He will proclaim only what Jesus has given Him to proclaim. The Father has given all things to the Son, and the Son has in turn given the Spirit that which you must

⁷ John 16:12-15

hear. Jesus reveals to you that the Trinity is always working in unity toward the same goal. They do different jobs that need to be done in order to accomplish that goal, but They are All working toward the same thing.

The sweetest and most refreshing thing about this fact, is that the thing They are all working towards is your salvation. The Father, the Son, and the Spirit, working in unity to save you. You are Their concern. You are the objects of Their love and Their attention. You are Their prize, and by the Crucifixion and Resurrection They have won you. They have succeeded in Their goal, and you are with Them even now. They are here giving you Their gifts of forgiveness and salvation. You are now Theirs, and They are now yours.

Now may the peace which passes all understanding guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.

Easter 5
May 3rd, 2015
Vicar Christopher M. Craig
Soli Deo Gloria