

LD 20; Eph. 4:1-7; John 14:25-31; 16:12-15 “The Holy Spirit” I. Who He Is II. What He Does

Congregation of our Lord Jesus Christ, today we celebrate the culmination of Jesus Christ’s work on earth. At the end of His earthly ministry He promised- I will return to you. I will not leave you as orphans. Pentecost is the time when the Spirit was poured out on the church. When we come to the Holy Spirit and His work, we find that there is much confusion found in churches today. Some churches all but neglect the Holy Spirit while others focus on the Spirit to the point of neglecting His connection to the other persons. The Pentecostal movement looks for an added word or conviction of the Spirit apart from Scripture. They look for a specific time in their live when they can point to the Spirit revealing or teaching them something special apart from what the Bible says. But we remember that the Spirit speaks through the Word and normally works through the means of grace! There is also a promised place in which the Spirit works- specific means that God gave to His people through which the Spirit works. When we confess the Apostles Creed- we say that we believe IN the Holy Spirit. Not only do we believe that the Holy Spirit exists- but we believe in Him as a person worthy of adoration and praise. Today we are considering the person and work of the Holy Spirit with this theme: God the Holy Spirit applies the work of Christ to God’s people. Although you may not always be conscious of the Holy Spirit- a Christian will see the Spirit’s work in His life!

I. Who He Is

We begin by considering who the Holy Spirit is- How is He revealed to us in Scripture. Already active and present at creation, we find that the Spirit of God is a unique person of the Trinity. He is not an informal power- but a person who can be grieved and lied to. As we find in Acts 5:4 when Ananias and Saphira lie to the Spirit- Peter tells them that they have lied against God Himself! Although the Spirit and His work is often compared to the pouring out of water- or the coming of power from on high- this does not mean that the Spirit is an impersonal force. The Spirit is more than some law or power of God and nothing more- He is called the Helper in John 14:25- the One who brings help. He is also the comforter- He will be sent and He will teach- not it- the masculine singular- but He will do these things. Thus He must be fully God- as our Catechism says. One that is equal to the Father and the Son- as great as the Father and the Son- and worthy of adoration and praise like the Father and the Son. The Spirit is listed on equal stance with the other persons of the Trinity in Matthew 28 and II Cor. 13- where we find the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Not only equal to the

Father and the Son- but in union with the Father and the Son! The Spirit is in complete harmony with the other persons and their work. To put it another way- you cannot have the Father without the Son- the way to the Father is through the Son as I John 2 says. But the same is applied to the Spirit- we do not have the Spirit if we do not believe in the Son - and we do not have the Son if we do not have the Spirit. The only way you will know the Son- the only way you will understand His Word- is through the Spirit! The Holy Spirit comes with the Father and the Son- He does not work in the abstract nor does He work apart from the others. As we read in John 16:14- The Spirit will take what is Christ's and declare it to you. The teaching that the Spirit brings is the teaching of Christ. So the unity and the connection between the Spirit with the Father and the Son must first be understood. He is the Spirit of God- He cannot be seen with the human eye, rather He is not material in substance. He is powerful- active like the wind.

But the Spirit is also unique in that He proceeds from the Father and the Son as we confess in the Nicene Creed. It was the place of the Father to send the Son- and the Son to be sent to take on flesh. But the Spirit uniquely proceeds- He is promised by and sent from the Father as we read in John 14:16- and the Spirit is also the Helper sent from the Son after the Son departs- John 16:7. So the Spirit is sent- or comes from the Father and the Son. The words that He teaches- the blessings that He brings are directly connect to the Father and the Son and cannot be removed from them! As John 16:14 says, The content of the Spirit's teaching is Christ! So it is the Work of the Spirit to take the works of Father and the Son and to apply them to God's people. Yes, the Father loved us and chose us- and the Son died for us- but it is the Spirit that makes us one! He is God- because He is present everywhere as we read in Psalm 139, and also He is the One the knit us together in our mother's womb.

II. What He Does

As we continue to look at the specific work that the Spirit does, we continue to see His unique person and work- both of which prove that He is God! As all powerful God, the Spirit is able to do things that only God can do- things that man cannot do! And one of the key works of the Spirit is to bring life! Already in Gen. 1:2, the Spirit was hovering over the water, bringing life, order and vitality. The Spirit also equipped the OT prophets, priest and kings for service. Even today equipping men to serve within their office within the church. As Jesus promised in Acts 1, the Holy Spirit gives us the power to be a witness concerning His work. The Spirit also regenerates- brining life to that which was spiritually dead. Although the Son is the way, the truth and the life- it is the Spirit's work to bring that life and make God's people

live! As Romans 8:11 says, if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwell in you. So it is the work of the Spirit to bring life- new life, eternal life and resurrected life come from His work! The benefit and blessings we receive from the Spirit is that He applies Christ work- and applies them while dwelling within! As LD 20 says, the Spirit has been given to me personally! The Spirit is a gift from the Father and the Son- a gift that dwells in our very hearts. The Spirit comes when Christ left- so that we would continue to enjoy fellowship with God! He comforts us- making the presence of God known in our very hearts! It must be said that everyone who believes will only believe if the Spirit dwells within. Every believer has the Spirit- there is no such thing as a Spirit-less Christian. Now dwelling within, the Spirit takes the things of Christ and implants them- so that we benefit from the teaching, witnesses, and comfort of Christ now experienced within! As II Cor. 3:17 says, where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty! With the Spirit dwelling in us- we are all- each of us anointed to be prophets, priests and kings! It is the Spirit's work to bring glory to Christ- and to bring what is Christ's to us -to make us like Christ and to bring us too Christ! The Holy Spirit is called the Comforter- the Helper- the Spirit of peace and reconciliation. How does the Spirit encourage- comfort- teach and train! Again we must be clear. The Spirit works through the Word. For example, when someone in our family dies- or a loved one becomes sick- we pray that the Spirit would give comfort- but how? We are not asking for some mystical fog to take away the pain- rather we are asking the Spirit to bring the words of Scripture to the mind of those suffering! One of the key ways the Spirit gives comfort is by reminding and impressing Scripture upon the hearts of His people! And what if someone is suffering with sin- with a guilty conscience? What does the Spirit do? He reminds us of what Christ has done- impresses Christ's sufficient sacrifice and atonement upon my soul- so that I can have comfort! The Spirit joins us to Christ- and enables us to exalt the Son! And in our prayers- it the Spirit that stirs us- so that we might desire to pray- and in prayer the Spirit guides us to ask for things in accordance with God's will- and even puts into words the groaning of our heart! All these the Spirit does for us and in us!

In I Peter 4:14 we find that the Spirit is called the Spirit of glory- who remains with us. The Spirit is also a guarantee- a down payment and He will remain with me forever as our answer says. This means that the Spirit is not only a present blessing- but a lasting possession! We now have the same Spirit by which we will be physically raised- the Spirit that dwells within now will enable us to enjoy the blessings of eternal life- the Holy Spirit will equip us and sustain

us forever while we walk the streets of gold! The Blessing of the Spirit is not a passing- but a permanent thing! As II Cor. 1:22 says, the Spirit guarantees our belonging to God- and He is a foretaste of our eternal blessings! By the Spirit, we begin to enjoy the blessings of union and communion with Christ- which we by the Spirit will enjoy for eternity!

But the Spirit not only works in me personally, He also works in the church as a whole. In Eph. 4; the Spirit brings unity and peace within the body of Christ- as the Spirit works through the leaders within the church so that church is strengthened and matured. Not only are we individually temples of the Holy Spirit as I Cor 6 says- we are also corporately; together being built up together- as a body we are living stones being built into a spiritual house I Peter 2:5 says! So we enjoy the blessings of the Spirit individually- and as a group of believers! The Spirit is working in me- and in my church! How does Christ rule His church? By His Spirit and the Word. We enjoy the benefits of preaching and the sacraments as the means given to the church by which the Spirit matures and strengthens our faith- again we have such a blessed gift from Christ who sent His Spirit! As Eph. 2:22 says, the church is the dwelling place of the Spirit! The means of grace are Spirit empowered and Christ driven- Christ works within His bride though sword of the Word wielded by the Spirit! The blessings foretold in Joel 2- where everyone would be able to know, speak and testify to God's glorious salvation has been fulfilled in Acts 2- the Spirit has been poured out on all flesh- so that everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved! The Spirit enables us to know and confess- to believe and be saved! Such is His gracious work!

To conclude, we have just begun to consider what the Spirit is able to do- and is doing! We have seen today that the Spirit glorifies Christ and He makes us able to receive and understand the things of faith. By the Spirit we are able to understand the things above revealed in the Word- by the Spirit we are enabled to believe and respond with faith- and by the Spirit we are able to offer our lives as a pleasing sacrifice. True, spiritual life only comes by the Holy Spirit! The Spirit not only gives us new birth- but will also raise our physical bodies when the Son returns. This is what we must believe and confess concerning the work of the Spirit! The Spirit comes to the church and works in believers- He works through the Word and applies the work of Christ! The Holy Spirit is God- thus He is to be worshipped as God! He also unites us to God- making us temples of God! These are the benefits that we receive because God the Holy Spirit dwells within us! The Holy Spirit applies the work of Christ to God's people- so rejoice that He is yours and you are God's treasured possession!