



Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. **AMEN**

A young man was apprenticed to a master artist who produced the most beautiful stained-glass windows anywhere. The apprentice could not approach the master's genius, so he borrowed his master's tools, thinking that was the answer. After several weeks, the young man said to his teacher, "I'm not doing any better with your tools than I did with mine." The teacher replied, "So, it's not the tools of the master you need; it is the spirit of the master you need."

What is it about the Holy Spirit that makes us Lutherans squirm in our seats? We all believe in God. Right? Coming to church today you probably expected me to preach about Jesus just like I do 90% of the time. Right? So, what is it about the third member of the Holy Trinity that makes us uncertain of how to react? Sitting here right now are you feeling a bit worried or even concerned about our topic of conversation and what is to come in this message today?

We, as Lutherans are a creedal people. We recite the Apostles or the Nicene Creed most Sundays. We say in both, that we believe in the Holy Spirit. Right? So, what makes us so uneasy when we hear about the Holy Spirit? Is it possible that because the Holy Spirit is not as definable as God the creator and Jesus the Savior, that we do not know how to react? Do we secretly think that the Holy Spirit is intended for those "other churches"? Maybe we try to believe but our unbelief is also still present.

Well, Jesus himself promised the disciples before His ascension that the Spirit would come to them. The Spirit would be a counselor and an advocate that would give them power. And in our lesson today from the Gospel of John, in answer to Philip's questions, Jesus promises the Holy Spirit will be with the disciples forever. Our reading from the book of Acts tells us that the Holy Spirit descended upon the disciples as they were probably going about their daily tasks. The Spirit seems to have arrived by itself out of nowhere. The

Spirit came of His own free will. The disciples did not ask for it, but remember Jesus promised it. The Spirit came and filled the disciples with its power as Jesus had promised.

You see this is one of many promises that Jesus made that He kept. The Holy Spirit was now with these disciples as Jesus had promised. The disciples were now empowered with the Spirit of God to spread His word throughout the nations.

What an event that must have been, the Spirit of the Master, the Spirit of Jesus, came and entered the souls of the people on Pentecost and collided with their own spirits. Truly we all have our own spirits within us. Our spirit is the thing that drives us, empowers us, embarrasses us, frightens us, and causes trouble for us. It is in our DNA to have a spirit that is defiant, that takes pride in itself and wants to be in control. Our spirits want us to be independent and to watch out for me, myself, and I.

And folks, it is our spirits that the Holy Spirit comes to and wants to change. So, when you think of the valuable gift of the Holy Spirit that came on Pentecost, remember it is our human spirits that it will collide with. The Holy Spirit comes to us at our baptism as the first collision of souls. For many of us we were too young to understand the entry of the Holy Spirit in us. And today the Spirit of God comes to us over and over again in the bread and the wine of Holy Communion. The Holy Spirit comes to us today in the Word of God, the Scriptures. The Spirit is present as I speak these words to you this day.

As Jesus promised the Spirit will be with us always. He will continue to collide with our spirit of our souls to change them to His Spirit of love and kindness.

It is like the following Aesop fable:

A tall straight fir tree which stood towering up in the forest was very proud of his height and dignity and despised the little shrubs which grew beneath him. One day a bramble asked him why he was so proud. "Because" replied the fir tree, "I look upon myself as the finest tree for the beauty of any in the forest. My top shoots up toward the clouds, and my branches spread round in constant loveliness while you crawl on the ground, likely to be crushed by every animal that come near."

"All this may be true enough," replied the bramble, "but when the woods man has marked you for cutting down, and the ax comes to be applied to your root, I fancy you will wish that you could change places with me." The moral of the story is pride always goes before a fall!

And as humans we are filled with pride. And sometimes our pride manifests itself in an attitude that says we don't need God. But God has a different plan. He sends His Holy Spirit to squelch our pride and replace it with a Holy Spirit of love and mercy. After all we are God's precious children, and he does not want us to fall. But rather, God wants us to live in and through Him to receive his gracious gifts of forgiveness, abundant and eternal life.

A pastor once explained it this way: "Once in a while the Spirit comes. Sometimes he stings the soul, sometimes he sakes it, sometimes he troubles our conscious, something he soothes it, sometimes he heals our pain, sometimes he just helps us to endure it. He lifts

the clouds just long enough for us to glimpse the City that was not made with human hands in order that we can go back and take up our cross and follow him.”

It is this Spirit of God that has been with the church on earth since the first Pentecost. The Spirit is still entering our souls to enable us to be the kind of people God intended for us to be. Each day we need to renew ourselves and allow the Holy Spirit to replace our pride full spirit, so that we can bear His cross in the world around us. The Holy Spirit works constantly with our spirit so that our lives may be transformed, be made new and rewarding. The Holy Spirit works for the good of God’s kingdom and affords us abundant life each and every day. When we look to God’s Holy Spirit, evil will be denied, and the Devil will have no chance to control our actions.

This story by Pastor Tim Zingale and tells it well. You might have heard this before. It is called, “The Touch of a Master”.

Wishing to encourage her young son’s progress on the piano, a mother took her boy to a Paderewski concert. After they were seated, the mother spotted a friend in the audience and walked down the aisle to greet her. Seizing the opportunity to explore the wonders of the concert hall, the little boy rose and eventually explored his way through a door marked, “NO ADMITTANCE.”

When the house lights dimmed and the concert was about to begin, the mother returned to her seat and discovered that the child was missing. Suddenly, the curtains parted, and spotlights focused on the impressive Steinway on stage. In horror, the mother saw her little boy sitting at the keyboard, innocently picking out “Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star.”

At that moment, the great piano master made his entrance, quickly moved to the piano, and whispered in the boy’s ear, “Don’t quit. Keep playing.” Then leaning over, Paderewski reached down with his left hand and began filling in a bass part. Soon his right arm reached around to the other side of the child, and he added a running obligato. Together, the old master and the young novice transformed a frightening situation into a wonderfully creative experience. The audience was mesmerized.”

The Holy Spirit working with our spirit will transform the world and mesmerize it as well.

Now that was not so scary was it. The Holy Spirit of God be with you always!

AMEN