



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

Quick story paraphrased from Max Lucado's Gods' Promise:

Have you ever been to a big garage sale? People are moving around looking for bargains. Ah, then you see it. Just think of the joy your grandchild will have riding up and down the sidewalk on this spectacular trike. Fire-engine red. Tassels that dangle from the handles. And listen to this, a little bell that sits on the handlebar. Again, a great bargain. The seller is offering it at one-third the original price. With these savings you can take the entire family out to dinner! Not today! There is, however, the small matter of one missing wheel. But the trike still has two. Little Johnny will eventually need to ride a two-wheeler anyway. Might as well start him out right. Buy him this two-wheeler trike. Then maybe add a third wheel?

For many believers, this trike might do. They settle for a two-thirds God. They know the Father and the Son but overlook the Holy Spirit. Well, I am here to tell you today, on this Day of Pentecost, that the Holy Spirit is God and the third face of our Triune God. I do not believe that the word Triune

is never mentioned in the Bible, but Holy Spirit is referred to over 100 times. He is with God the Creator and Jesus in the beginning. Genesis verse 1:2; “the wind from God swept over the face of the waters.” Yes, God’s Spirit was there at creation.

You might remember that the Hebrew word for Spirit is *ruah* which means breath. God created Adam from the dust of the earth and then breathed into his nostrils the breath of life. Adam became a living Spirit, made in the image of God. Yes, folks the Holy Spirit is the inseparable, amazing, and necessary third wheel, if you will, of our great and gracious God.

It is interesting to note that Jesus says more about the Holy Spirit than He does about the church or marriage. Our Scripture text for today is Jesus’ promise of the Holy Spirit to the disciples. Jesus is going away, and He recognizes the need for the 11 disciples to feel secure in their faith that they will not be alone. And so, Jesus goes on in this text to talk about how the Father and He are one, after Philip asks to see God face to face. Philip is much like a lot of us, he wants empirical evidence. He wants to see with his own eyes. Then the talk turns to the promise of an Advocate, that Jesus will ask His Father to send to them so they will never have to feel alone. Verse 26 says, “But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said to you.”

And so, on Pentecost, God “breaths” His Spirit, the Same Spirit that resided in Jesus into the disciples in Jerusalem. This Spirit sent by God will be known to us as He will abide with us and he will be in you, says Jesus. Verse 17 And so today we celebrate that gracious gift of the Spirit as well as the birth of the church. The church, the new living body of Jesus was created. And that is why you and I are here today, dressed in our shades of red. Jesus delivers on his promises. We symbolize the coming of the Holy Spirit, the one who visited the followers of Jesus on that day called Pentecost. The mighty wind swooped down where they were waiting together and their tongues were set on fire.

Jesus makes his departure less scary to all as the Spirit will be there to comfort and teach them. Remember our Acts reading, “and suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. And all of them were filled with the Holy Spirit.” WOW. Have you ever been in a tornado? Well, fortunately I have never seen one in person, but expect that it would be very scary. One of my favorite movies of all time is “Twister”. How brave those folks are that chase tornados and sometime find themselves right in the midst of them, just to learn more about them. And if you haven’t seen the second act, “Twisters”, it is just as good as the first one!

Well, after this violent wind came, they were able to talk to each other in different languages, yet they could understand each other. That would have been really handy in my college French class that I struggled with! Do you wonder what they talked about. Doesn’t say, but I am sure it was not the stock market or even the Milwaukee Brewers latest hot streak. They talked about God and remembered Jesus’ promises. There was no need to fear anything. They were filled with the Holy Spirit.

Even though the Holy Spirit is the least understood of the faces of God, we do confess our belief in the Spirit in our faith confessions or creeds. In fact, Martin Luther had this to say in his explanation of the third article of the creed.

“I believe that I cannot, by my own understanding or effort, believe in Jesus Christ my Lord or come to him. But the Holy Spirit has called me through the Gospel, enlightened me with his gifts, and sanctified and kept me in the faith. In the same way he calls, gathers, enlightens, and sanctifies the whole Catholic Church on earth and keep it united with Jesus Christ in the one true faith. In this Christian church, day after day, he fully forgives my sins and the sins of all believers. On the last day he will raise me and all the dead and give me and all believers in Christ eternal life. t  
This is most certainly true.”

Many of us have learned or even memorized this in confirmation class years ago. But think about Luther’s view that the Holy Spirit brings us to faith as we hear the Gospel message. Awesome. How powerless we are

without the Spirit. He is an amazing gift from God. And I love the thought “day by day”. Folks that means that the consistency of God’s faithfulness, His promise to be with us every day, and guide us all day through all the trials of life, is true.

Do any of you remember taking drivers ed in high school? Or was that before your time? Well, I sure do. I remember going out on the road for the first time with this big, huge gym coach that looked more like a football player, sitting next to me. He was, however, very kind as he guided me out of the parking space. We were told that it was a special car that had a second brake pedal on the passenger side. I felt rather secure knowing that Mr. Ward could stop me before I made a huge mistake. I don’t think he ever used that brake pedal, but it sure quenched my fear.

Do you remember the first time after getting your license that you drove by yourself? It almost felt like someone, or something was missing. Mr. Ward was not there sitting next to me. Yet, I could still hear his steady voice coaching me in my head. It was almost like he was there still sitting beside me.

Folks, that is how the Holy Spirit works. He leads us to learn what we need to know from Scripture. He guides us. He is that still, small voice beside us. He enlightens us with the gifts from above and sanctifies and keep us in true faith. He coaxes us and encourages us by prodding and sometimes shouting. The Holy Spirit guides us and our church. Sometimes I wish he would just hit me upside my head with a baseball bat, so I get the message. Not to be subliminal right? But the Spirit comes to us day after day to strengthen our faith.

The Spirit is also present in our church. He is here right now, working in each one of our hearts. Gathered together we are church, and the Spirit will also lead us into mission. Do you feel the Holy Spirit at work here at Christ the Servant? How is the Spirit leading us out the doors today into a mission field, where we can be of service to our neighbor? That is a question we all should be pondering as we think about our place in Draper WI, or Park Falls, WI. What is God calling us to do and be to this

community. What is our mission? A great question to give some thought too!

As Lutherans, I believe we are guilty of not putting enough emphasis on the power and work of the Holy Spirit. Once upon a time there was a confirmation class that was lined up in front of the congregation to recite the Apostles Creed. (Lauren, aren't you glad you don't have to do this since you are the only one being confirmed in three weeks.) Each child was to say one phrase. The first child said, "I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth." The second child said, "And in Jesus Christ, his only son, our Lord, etc. Everything was going well, until they got the phrase, "I believe in the Holy Spirit". All of a sudden there was silence. The pastor looked up to see what was wrong. One of the children explained. "Billy, the little boy who believes in the Holy Spirit isn't here today!"

Are we sometimes absent too as we don't put enough emphasis on the Holy Spirit. What a shame that is because the Holy Spirit is nothing less than the presence of God within us and among us to give us the confidence and strength to deal with life. Paul said it well as he wrote to the Galatians, "It is no longer I that live, but Christ living in me." Galatians 2:20 He also said to the Philippians, "I can do all things through Christ, who strengthens me." Philippians 4:13 The Holy Spirit, Father God and Jesus are with us, and enables us to find peace in the midst of chaos, power, when our own strength is not enough and purpose, when the world around us seems to be going in the wrong direction. We will never have to be afraid again. This is the promise that Jesus gave to those 11 disciples, and he promises it to us today.

And as our reading concluded today, Jesus gives us, "the Advocate, the Holy Spirit whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything, and remind you of all I have said to you. Peace, I leave with you; my peace I give to you, I do not give to you as the world give. Do not let your hearts be troubles, and do not let them be afraid."

A story is told of a little boy who was flying a kite. It was a windy day, and

the kite kept going higher and higher. Finally, it got so high that it was out of sight. A man passed by and saw the little boy holding onto the string. The man could not see the kite, and he asked the boy, 'How do you even know you have a kite up there?' The boy replied, 'Because I can feel it.'

Although, we cannot see the Holy Spirit, we should strive to sense that spirit in our lives, changing us into the disciples of Christ. And that will lead us to celebrate this day, Pentecost, as a very important day, the gift of the Holy Spirit and the birthday of the Christian Church in our world. Thanks be to God! Amen