

# Sermon: The Holy Spirit for us

John 14:8-27

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Pentecost is a wonderful feast, and not only for pentecostals. They may be one-sided maybe with their focus on the power of the Spirit and the gifts of the Spirit.

But they are fully right to celebrate this feast as a very important one, and they are more right than we are, if we do not appreciate and enjoy what God did for us on that first day of pentecost.

Because we cannot live our lives without the presence of the Holy Spirit. For a Christian, His presence is not optional.

## **1 The Holy Spirit as our always present helper**

We have read how the Spirit first fell on the first group of disciples, gathered in Jerusalem. They had an amazing experience.

In John 14 Jesus explains ahead of time what the meaning of the coming of the Holy Spirit would be for those first disciples. And what it means for us.

Jesus explains in John 14:16, that he will ask the Father that he will send another Comforter, to be with the disciples forever. Jesus was about to ascend to God, after his death and resurrection. And then God would send another Comforter.

Comforter, or Advocate, or Helper. These are all good translations. Someone to stand beside you to help you in all circumstances of life.

Jesus, while on earth, could only be at one place, and he could only be with a limited number of people. But of the Holy Spirit, he will be with the disciples forever.

That is a good promise! This means for us today, that He is with you. You have an always present Helper - the Holy Spirit.

How does he help us? Yes, he gives us power, he gives us gifts, he comforts us when we need that.

But to the disciples Jesus underlines some other benefits.

First, "he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you."  
Written in John 14:25.

This was a promise the 12 disciples needed much. They were called to go into the world and preach the Gospel - but they did not have the four gospels in their hands, they did not have commentaries on the words of Jesus. They had no New Testament.

They had received three years of training, they had heard Jesus speak, and now Jesus promises them that the Holy Spirit would help them to remember all that he had spoken.

Just as the Holy Spirit also brings the life and teachings of Jesus to your mind; we must be reminded of this a lot and that is what the Holy Spirit does. He is a great Helper.

Another benefit of the presence of the Holy Spirit mentioned here by Jesus is that he gives you peace. In our world in turmoil, with our hearts often also in turmoil, this help of the Spirit we need urgently.

After his resurrection Jesus met with the disciples and he repeated this promise. He said, peace be with you. And he breathed on them and said, receive the holy spirit. Peace and the holy spirit belong together. Jesus wants us to be peaceful inside, and he wants to make us peacemakers - so he gives us his Spirit.

He gives us inner peace, and he enables us to bring peace to others. This is a quality we urgently need in our world filled with hatred and war.

So, the Holy Spirit is our Helper; he stands beside us. And this helper makes Jesus known to us by reminding us of the words of Jesus; and he gives us peace in order to make peace.

That is absolutely what I desire! This is what we need. To be people of Jesus who make peace in this world. That is what the Holy Spirit came for. To help us live our Christians life in this world.

## **2 Being filled with the Spirit means being filled with God**

But there is more to it. The feast of pentecost is not only for enabling us to live better.

John writes very densely. He says a lot in a few words. In John 14:21, Jesus says that he will manifest himself to his followers. He does this through the Holy Spirit.

During his life, Jesus could only do this in a restricted way. After he ascended to heaven and after the Holy Spirit came, Jesus himself could manifest himself to all believers at all times and in all places.

Pentecost is not just about gifts and power - It is really Jesus coming to you, the giver. And what is more important? The giver or the gift? The giver of course. Because if the giver is with you, the gifts and the power come with Him automatically.

"I will not leave you orphans" when I ascend to heaven, Jesus told his followers. An orphan is a child with no father and mother, lonely in this world. Worry not, Jesus tells his disciples, that will not happen to you, because, verse 18, "I will come to you."

When the Holy Spirit came to forever be with the church and with each individual Christian, Jesus came to be with us. The Holy Spirit makes it possible that Jesus can say to us: where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in their midst.

And because of the Holy spirit here with us, Jesus can tell us: see I am with you till the end of the age.

But this is not all. repeatedly in the verses that we read, Jesus says: I am in the Father and the Father is in me. I am in the Father and the Father is in me.

Jesus - God the Son - and God the Father - can be distinguished, but not separated. They are always together. They are 'in each other', closer you cannot have it.

In theological terms this is sometimes expressed as God's eternal dance in His 'community of being'. We believe that God is one, but also that inside this oneness, there is a community of three beings that can be distinguished, but not separated. God in himself enjoys and eternal love-relationship.

And you know what? In John 14:23 we read this:

"Jesus [said], "If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him." WE!

Imagine! Imagine!

God the Father and Jesus his Son, will come to you and make their home with you.

Father and Son come to live with you. This is a very individual, personal promise of God to you. If anyone loves me, we will make our home with him. Or her.

We cannot have it better. This is mind blowing. God of heaven and earth. To live in my life. And that is what happened when the Holy Spirit came. He brings God the Father, and God the Son, into our very life.

God is at home with you.

Imagine what this says about the value of you, and of your humanity. You are a house of God. A temple where God lives.

The presence of the Holy Spirit in your life, and therefore, of the Father and the Son as well, lifts you up to unimaginable heights.

### **3 So what to do?**

"If you love me, you will keep my commandments, and I will ask the Father and he will give you another helper," Jesus encouraged his disciples. That Holy Spirit is part of our life if we love him and obey him.

To love Jesus and to listen to him, that is the normal Christian life. So if we live the normal Christian life, then we know that this Helper is in our life. It means the whole Trinity is with us, is at home with us.

But for the Holy Spirit to feel at home with us, we want to create, of course, the right atmosphere that makes Him feel at home. What to do? Love Jesus, listen to his words, and do what he says.

Be a true follower of Jesus Christ, and you can be assured that God in his fulness fills the rooms of your life. And if there are rooms where there is dust and darkness, allow Him to clean it up, so that he fills you even more!

If you need help with the cleaning of the heart and of your life, ask Jesus. He promises that if we ask him anything in his name, he will do it.

To ask in the name of Jesus is not ending a prayer with the formula, "in Jesus' name amen." It means that you ask it while your life is hidden in him. In his name. In who he is.

Jesus will answer your prayers if they are in line with who he is. And one thing we can be sure of, if we need more love, more obedience, more rooms in our lives tidied up, then he will surely answer your prayers.

His Holy Spirit is already at work in you. So allow him to continue and make himself more at home, give him more room, more space,

And our reading from John 14 ends with a command by Jesus, 'Let your hearts not be troubled'. The Holy Spirit, the bringer of peace, is in your life. Peace does not mean the absence of stress, it means the presence of God who helps you deal with life.

But even though we know that God in his fullness dwells in you, we can be such worriers sometimes. Do not allow yourself to be too worried. God is with you. Pentecost has happened and the Spirit of God has brought the Father and Jesus Christ in your life.

The fruit of the Spirit is joy and love and peace. Allow God to develop that in your daily life. And that happens, when we love our Lord, when we obey, when we pray, when we make ourselves aware again and again: God lives in me.

He has adopted you into his family, and he has made his home in your life.

### **Conclusion**

I like us to pray now, together, that God will get more space in our lives. That the spirit can fill more rooms. That we hold nothing back, no doors locked.

Be filled with the Holy Spirit, Paul commands us in the letter to the Ephesians. Be filled with the Holy Spirit. That is, let God - Father, Son and Holy Spirit - occupy all space in the house of your life.

### **Prayer**

Dear heavenly Father, we know that the Holy Spirit lives in us, together with you and with Jesus Christ. And we are now asking you for a fresh work of the Spirit in our life. Bring life to the stagnant places in our life. Enter the rooms where we tend to keep you out.

So Father, we ask for a fresh stirring and filling of your Holy Spirit. We need this. Without you filling us, we find it hard to believe the gospel and to love Jesus Christ.

Open the eyes of our hearts to see more of Jesus.

Grant us your peace - peace that comes when you fill our lives. Bring light into all dark corners of our hearts. Clean what needs cleaning. And take possession of all space in our life, so that it is peace everywhere inside, and so that we can be peacemakers.

Fill us with love for you; with obedience to you; fill us with yourself we pray.

**Let us now sing from the Taizé booklet, number xx**

Holy Spirit come to us  
Kindle in us the fire of your love  
Holy Spirit come to us  
Holy Spirit come to us