

Pentecost

May 23, 2010

Scripture, such as the piece of it I just read to you, makes clear the vital, indispensable work of the Holy Spirit in God's saving us from our sinfulness, guilt and fully deserved eternal death. In fact, if the Father did not do what He did there would be no rescue for us. If the Son, our Lord Jesus, did not do what He did, there'd be no rescue for us. And if the Holy Spirit did not do what He did (and does), there would be no rescue for us either! If the Father has planned to send His Son as our Savior from eternity as He did, and if our Lord Jesus had come and finished all His work as He did, but if the Holy Spirit would not have come and done what Jesus here talks about, there would be not one believer in Jesus on the planet today.

So we have every good reason to set aside a day especially to thank, honor and worship the Holy Spirit. And what better day on which to do it than on the 50th day after Easter, the day Jesus did give His Apostles the Holy Spirit from the Father – Pentecost Day!

May these words of God encourage us also to

Testify about Christ in Accord with the Spirit's Testimony.

There was no doubt about the Holy Spirit coming to the Apostles, to these men who had been with Jesus from the beginning of Jesus' public ministry. The Father had promised it; Jesus, the eternal Son, had promised it. On this particular evening, the one before Jesus died on the cross, Jesus, in fact, repeatedly told about the coming of the Holy Spirit, the Counselor and about the wonderful blessings that would be theirs and belong to future believers in our Savior, too!

What great things did the Apostles receive from this special giving of the Holy Spirit?

Let's not miss the obvious. They would receive the Spirit Himself. He would come to them. What can we even say about such a gift? Though Jesus promised special gifts for the Apostles from the Holy Spirit, it is a fact that every believer in Jesus has received the Holy Spirit Himself as a precious gift. In Galatians, St. Paul asked these Christians rhetorical questions, questions that assume only one possible answer. Among those questions was this one, "Did you receive the Spirit by observing the Law or by believing what you heard?" There was no question that every one of those Christians has received the Holy Spirit, nor was there any question that they had received the Spirit not by their keeping the laws, but by faith in the Word of God. Paul preached and taught concerning Christ and Him crucified.

What else did the Apostle's receive from the Spirit? They received the Holy Spirit's testimony about Jesus. In the previous chapter, Jesus spelled out more about His testimony. The Spirit would teach them all things and would remind them of everything, all things, Jesus ever said to them.

God the Spirit is called the Counselor because He Counsels through spoken and written testimony He gave to and through the Apostles (and Old Testament prophets, too). The Holy Spirit, by His testimony, teaches us, convicts us of being sinners, corrects us, urges us to repentance, but then also encourages and comforts us by urging us to Jesus as our Savior from all sin and its guilt and its condemnation.

The Spirit gave them the truth. He is the Spirit of truth. God the Spirit is the Source of God's truth. He is also the One who brought God's truth not only to the Prophets and Apostles by the miracle of His divine inspiration of every word of Scripture He moved them to write, but also He brings that very truth of God to us today through the Scriptures written by the Prophets and Apostles. This is God's truth, absolute truth, not relative truth. This is eternal truth. It is real, not just an appearance of truth.

And so, for you and for me, it makes us sure and certain of every single thing Scripture says, and certainly what it says about Jesus, His work and His blessings to us. It's all called the Spirit's testimony about Jesus because every single teaching in Scriptures is connected in one way or another to Jesus Christ, our God, Lord, and Savior. The Spirit's testimony about Jesus finally is the whole Word of God. And about that Word Jesus himself said, "Your Word is Truth."

The Spirit and the Truth are an inseparable team! This also assures us that when John, the last of the Apostles, died the Church had the whole, complete revelation that God intended to give in writing for all time. We see this because the Holy Spirit taught the Apostles all things and He reminded them of all the things Jesus ever said to them. And Jesus said that all future believers in Him would come to believe through the Word the Apostles wrote. We pay no attention at all to any claims of additional, new revelations from Jesus or the Spirit. And inevitably these supposed new things contradict the Word that we have.

Today, sadly, it is often "Jesus, Jesus, but there is no Jesus." The only Jesus that is the real Jesus is the Jesus the Bible presents which is what the Spirit gave us.

The Holy Spirit, through the Apostles, through their testimony, identical to His testimony, has given us Jesus and His Word, which is also the Word of the Father. The Spirit did this with a purpose. First, to assure all of us, it gives us our Savior and His teaching, the Law and Gospel. This lets us know the spiritual truth about ourselves as lost, ruined sinners, but sinners who have a Savior in Jesus, the forgiveness of all that sin, Christ's own righteousness, new life and the certain, living hope of life with Jesus in heaven that can never perish, spoil, or even fade.

And, this gives us the true Word of God to pass on. Jesus commanded His Apostles to testify what the Spirit testified to them. Well, we have that testimony of the Spirit and of the Apostles on the pages of the Bible. We Christians need to testify to our world, next door and on the other side of the planet. That's the only way other poor, lost sinners are going to hear the Spirit's almighty, saving Word of truth about Jesus.

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The Holy Spirit never departs from His testimony, the truth, the Word He has provided. He continues powerfully to work in it, with it, through it to keep and to strengthen His people in Jesus and to create new believers in Jesus. This is why we want to tell the world this Word. This is why we ourselves will want to go on hearing it, reading it, learning it, trusting it all our lives. Amen.