

The Feast of Whitsunday
St. John 14:23-31
June 4th, 2017
Sts. Peter & Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church, UAC
Greenville, SC
Pastor Jerald Dulas

He Will Teach You All Things

In Nomine Iesu!

In the Name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

Prayer in Pulpit before Sermon:

O Lord, send out Thy Light and Thy Truth, let them lead us. O Lord, open Thou my lips, that my mouth may show forth Thy praise. O Lord, graciously preserve me, lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be rejected. Amen.

Grace, mercy, and peace be to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior + Jesus Christ. Amen.

When the Lord created Adam the Holy Scriptures say that, *“He breathed into him the breathe of Life.”* Today we have the out-pouring of the Holy Ghost. This day is called Pentecost, (Fifty Days after Easter) or Whitsunday (White Sunday). It is called “White Sunday” because this is the day that the Holy Ghost is poured out upon the Christian Church and purifies her, that is, makes her pure and holy without sin. On this day the Holy Ghost was *“breathed”* into the holy Christian Church by the Lord + Jesus to give the Church life, just like He did with Adam. The New Adam recreates the Old Adam by breathing into all those who believe on His Name, the breath of life—the Holy Ghost. And the Holy Ghost is *“breathed”* into the Christian Church through the Means of Grace.

At the revelation of the Holy Ghost the Church sees her hope and rejoices. Today the Spirit reveals Himself to us. And the Spirit reveals Himself to us through the Means of Grace. First, the Spirit reveals Himself to us through Holy Baptism. We have been made a new creation through water and the word. We have been *“breathed”* into by the Holy Ghost through our Holy Baptisms. We have a new life. That, which was dead, is now made alive. Our sins which dragged us into the grave, have been removed, and the Holy Ghost breathes into us the breath of Life. Our sins have been forgiven through Christ! Our meriting of death on account of our sins has been removed and is now replaced by a life in Christ through faith. And the Holy Ghost reveals to us through our Holy Baptism that new life in Christ, giving us faith to believe on our Lord + Jesus. We have been brought back into life by the Holy Ghost working through the Means of Grace. Wherever He works, we have new life. When the Holy Ghost works, the Church is brought out of death into life with Christ through faith.

Whenever we hear the Word of God, the Holy Ghost, *“breathes”* into us the breathe of Life. He brings us out of death into life. He brings us out of sin and shame into holiness and righteousness before God, because He proclaims by His preachers the righteousness of Christ that has been credited to us by the Father. Through preaching we have the Holy Ghost poured into our ears, so that by hearing of our sinful state before God, and our utter hopelessness in saving ourselves, by our own means, and works, our ears can be opened to hear of our Savior + Jesus Christ, Who fulfilled the Law perfectly in our place, and sacrificed Himself on the holy Cross for our punishment. The Lord sends us preachers, in order that we might hear His word and receive the Holy Ghost into our hearts. Just as Psalm 68 says, *“The Lord gave the Word; Great was the company of those who proclaimed it.”* In other words, the Lord does not just send out His Word to the world through a handful men, but the Lord sends out a *“great company of preachers,”* so that the whole world will hear.

Just as it is today, the Apostles are sent out by the Holy Ghost in the Epistle reading from the Acts of the Apostles to preach Christ crucified to *“Parthians and Medes and Elamites, those dwelling in Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya adjoining Cyrene, visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabs.”* St. Peter and the Apostles preach to the whole world in Jerusalem on this day. God speaks His Word to the whole world through His preachers, and through His Church on Earth. We have the great task of proclaiming to a fallen world God’s grace through faith in Christ alone, even as St. Peter and the Apostles did on this day to the whole world of hearers in Jerusalem. Our concern is not who listens (or who does not listen), but to proclaim that Word in its truth and purity, and keep on doing it, so that the Holy Ghost can *“breathe”* into this fallen world the breath of life.

Through Christ’s Body and Blood given to us to eat and drink through bread and wine, we even have the Holy Ghost poured upon our lips here at this altar, and we are *“breathed”* into with the breath of life. We are sustained in our faith; having all doubts removed, because we hear once again God’s promises are for us. We are refreshed; given respite from the trials and tribulations of this life, and given a moment to relax and rest in God’s grace for us. We are given the spiritual food of eternal life; the food that keeps our faith in Christ alone alive. Without this food, our faith dies. Receiving this sacrament unworthily also will weaken us, and make us spiritually sick, so that we eventually die spiritually. For the Holy Ghost kills all that is unholy; all that is opposed to His nature. And that is what we are according to our sinfulness, we are unholy. We are poor, miserable sinners. We need desperately for the Holy Ghost to purify us and make us white as snow.

Wherever there is sin, we are unholy, we are impure, we are dead in our sins and trespasses to God. But, where the Holy Ghost speaks, we are brought out of death into eternal life. Where the Spirit lives and breathes, there is new life in us, for He gives us faith to believe the promises of God. We have persecution and trials, we all as Christians experience them because of sinfulness in this world, even our own sinfulness adds to this persecution and tries us for our entire life through guilt and shame of not living up to the standard of the world, our conscience, and least of all the Ten Commandments.

But today we have the Gospel, because we have the Absolution, that is, the proclamation of sins forgiven. And wherever we have forgiveness of sins, there is the Holy Ghost, the Helper, the Paraclete, the Comforter, Who has revealed to us the Church. This is why we call Pentecost *“the birth of the Church,”* because from Pentecost until Christ’s return the Church knows where it’s comfort and help is to be born—it is born out of the out-pouring of the Holy Ghost through the Means of Grace. So, what that means for us poor, miserable sinners is that wherever the Holy Ghost is revealed, we have peace, we have comfort, we have hope in our salvation, we have faith in God, and wherever we have those things we also have forgiveness of sins, eternal life, and salvation.

If the Holy Ghost is revealed to us, or we see His work in us we know that we have forgiveness. So, if we are such horrible sinners; if we are undeserving of grace; if we deserve God’s eternal wrath and condemnation, we can say with the whole Christian Church on Earth that we are forgiven by God, because we have received Christ’s forgiveness through His Holy Ghost. We can say we have been forgiven of God because of what He has done in us whenever we participate regularly in Christ’s gifts, through which He pours out upon us His Holy Ghost, and we receive from the Spirit the *“breath”* of life. The Holy Ghost works constantly to keep us in the Church, to keep us in the One, True Faith, until Life everlasting through the means of grace—through the preaching of God’s Word into our ears either through the spoken word, or through the external means. This includes preaching, and proclaiming to us that our sins are forgiven on account of Christ. It includes Holy Baptism, and the Lord’s Supper, and whenever and wherever two or three Christians are gathered in Christ’s Name to receive His gifts and promises as poor, miserable sinners in need of His grace and mercy, we are forgiven by God on account of the death of His Son Jesus Christ, through the work of the Holy Ghost.

Wherever the Holy Ghost is present through the means of grace, we have hope. We cannot have this hope apart from the Holy Ghost. Wherever the Holy Ghost is working, He is *“breathing”* into us the breath of Life, bringing us out of death into eternal life with God. Wherever the Holy Ghost is to be found, God is making His home with us. God makes His home with us through the Means of Grace. And where God makes His home among men, there is eternal peace.

This is why our Lord + Jesus tells His disciples in the Gospel reading that He is leaving them with *“peace.”* This *“peace”* that Christ leaves to His disciples is the same *“peace”* that is left to us. It is the *“peace”* that the Holy Ghost brings to our troubled souls. It is the *“peace”* of forgiveness from God, the *“peace”* of salvation, and the *“peace”* and comfort of the knowledge of eternal life, and the resurrection of the dead. And the Holy Ghost opens our ears to this *“peace”* wherever He works, wherever the means of grace are given out to us. By these means He *“teaches us all things, and brings back into our remembrance all the things that Christ preached to us.”* That is, that He alone is our Savior, and the only Savior of the world, Whose works alone can save mankind, and bring forgiveness of sins to all people. This is found wherever our Lord makes His home among us. Where He dwells among us, we have His eternal gifts.

So, let us join with the prayer of the Church this day, and pray that God would send out His Holy Ghost into the hearts of all people that they might have their ears opened, their mouths unstopped, and their hearts turned from stone to flesh, so that by the Holy Ghost *“breathing”* into them the breath of life through the Word and the Sacraments, the whole world might rejoice in Christ alone as their Savior, and they might come to believe that He dwells among them in His Word and Sacraments. In the Name of our Lord + Jesus Christ. Amen.

Prayer in Pulpit after Sermon:

Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto Thy Name give glory! I will extol Thee, O Lord, and I will praise Thy Name forever and ever. Amen.

The Votum:

The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Amen.