

John 14:23-31  
“The Half-Known God”  
Pentecost

Our Redeemer Lutheran Church  
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May 31, 2020

Grace, mercy, and peace be unto you from God, our Heavenly Father, and Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior. Our sermon will focus on John 14. Dear Christian friends:

**[Introduction]** If I say the phrase, “Happy little clouds.”  
Some of you know who I am talking about.

Bob Ross the PBS painter!  
He hasn’t broadcast a new show since the mid-90s  
But pop culture has made him as famous today as he has ever been.

His PBS show was called “The Joy of Painting.”  
And it ran from January of 1983 to May of 1994.  
Via broadcast and streaming channels, reruns still continue today.  
In fact, across college campuses and in nursing homes  
happy little painting parties happen while watching Bob Ross.

Unfortunately —at the young age of 52 he died,  
but his work – teaching the joy of painting – continues on today.

**[Holy Spirit!]**  
That is so true, but it is also true  
that the work of the Holy Spirit continues.  
Today is Pentecost. Pentecost Sunday...  
And for almost 2,000 years we have celebrated the work of God’s Holy Spirit on this day.  
It is the Holy Spirit who comes into our lives — like a master painter  
and He paints us poor, lost sinners into the people of God.

If you’re like many Christians,  
you’re a little bit fuzzy on a complete understanding of who,  
exactly who is the Holy Spirit.  
And what,  
exactly what the Holy Spirit does.

In fact, a book on the person and work of the Holy Spirit entitled *The Half-Known God*  
was published a number of years ago – 1963 (*St. Louis: CPH*)

By its title, the author, Professor Wunderlich,  
acknowledges the fact that many Christians only partially understand  
this Third Person of the Holy Trinity.

BUT of this much we can be certain: the Spirit comes to do his work!

Jesus said:

*"These things I have spoken to you while I am still with you.*

*But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name,  
he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have  
said to you.*

*Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you.*"<sup>(ESV John 14:25-27a)</sup>

And our reading today makes certain:

*"And all of them were filled with the Holy Spirit."* (Acts 2:4)

The Spirit Comes to Do His Work!

Call, gather, enlighten and sanctify.

Or you could say it this way: *Testify! Guide! And Convict!*

**A. The Holy Spirit comes to testify about Jesus (vv 25–26).**

This is the most important thing about the Holy Spirit.

He is the bearer of the truth about Jesus.

The Good News about Jesus,

who he is and what he has done for us.

And as a Christian — this should always be our central focus.

And the Holy Spirit makes sure of it.

The Holy Spirit aids us to bear witness about Jesus in our world.

*"You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you;*

*and you will be my witness in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria,  
and to the ends of the earth"* (Acts 1:8).

Yes, the Holy Spirit comes to *testify*.

**B. AND He comes to guide Christ's disciples (vv 4b–7).**

Up to this point Jesus had been the counselor to his disciples.

And now Jesus ascended into heaven.

Now he would be left them to return to the Father.

But He would not leave them as orphans.

He would send the Holy Spirit to guide them.

Furthermore,

Pentecost is a reminder to us, to Christians  
that we have the Holy Spirit to aid us in our Christian walk and life.

The Spirit is given to us as a gift in our Baptism.

***“Repent and be baptized, every one of you . . . for the forgiveness of your sins.***

***And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.***

***The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—  
for all whom the Lord our God will call”*** (Acts 2:38–39).

He comes not as he did to the first disciples and apostles,  
but He comes through the read, spoken, or preached Word,  
and through the Sacraments (Rom 10:17; Titus 3:5).

He works through the means of grace

to comfort us with the assurance that our sins are forgiven (Lk 24:47).

He works through the means of grace

to increase our faith, our hope, and our love

for our brothers and sisters in Christ,

and for all people in this world (Rom 10:17; 1 Thess 2:13).

He works so that we can be about

***“EQUIPPING DISCIPLES, TO MAKE DISCIPLES, FOR CHRIST”!***

The Holy Spirit comes to *testify and guide*.

***C. AND He comes to convict all people . . .***

He comes to convict them in their sin and guilt.

The Holy Spirit convicts us as the Law is preached.

Through the preaching of the Law

we come to know and are convicted of our sins (Rom 3:20).

You see . . .

All of man’s righteousness is “as filthy rags” or a “rusty tin can” in God’s sight.

To stand before our holy God, we need a perfect righteousness.

And that has been provided for us by Christ.

God imputes the righteousness of Christ to all through the Gospel.<sup>i</sup>

No longer is it my righteousness, but Christ’s!

The Holy Spirit comes to *testify and to guide and to convict*.

[*Conclusion*]

Yes, we focus on Jesus – Christ crucified and risen for you!

BUT the Spirit is still very much at work in our world.

And sometimes we become discouraged

because we think we don't see sufficient evidence of

— his witness to Jesus,

— his encouragement to his present-day disciples, or

— his convicting power.

Worry not!

Paint some happy little clouds!

The Holy Spirit is working—even now—in you who believe.

He comes— even now —

not with the sound of a mighty rushing wind or flashing tongues of fire,

*BUT*

with the soft-spoken words of this liturgy,

— in the words of a humble pastor,

— in the sound of water poured out over the candidate for Baptism

— in the blessed bestowal of the absolution following confession,

— in the bread and the wine of the Holy Supper, and

— in the Confirmation Rite as no one can say, “Jesus is Lord,”

except by the power of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 12)

Yes, he comes—the Holy Counselor, the Spirit of Truth—Comes!

He comes to you today.

He comes to you *Zach and Jalynn, Brice and Cade, Jordyn and Ava, Carson and Kendra*

And he comes to you moms and dads, and even you at home watching.

Through His Word, through His Sacraments the Holy Spirit comes to you today!

And he will continue to come to us day-by-day in this same way.

St. Paul says, “*If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit*” (Gal 5:25),

having our course and pace set by the God

who desires to be both well known and well used.

The Holy Spirit might be the half-known God

because He wants you to fully know Jesus. Amen!

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As followers of Christ, “Keep loving one another earnestly

And show hospitality to one another without grumbling.” AMEN! (1 Pt 4:8-9)

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<sup>i</sup>(2 Cor 5:21; Rom 4:5)