

May 23, 2021  
Pentecost Sunday

“You Lack Nothing”

John 15:26-27; 16:4b-15

Bridgette and I have been watching this new TV series “The Chosen” about the life of Jesus and we’re really enjoying it. The creators are certainly taking some artistic liberties with the characters and plot line, but overall they are making a decent attempt to depict the ministry of Jesus Christ according to Holy Scripture. Millions of Christians worldwide are loving it and I believe part of the reason for its popularity is that all believers would give their right arm to be able to be there at the feet of Christ when He walked the earth shoulder-to-shoulder with humanity, teaching and doing His miracles. The fact is, I think most of us wish He were still here.

How many of us when in the midst of a health crisis or perhaps watching a loved one decline towards death have prayed to Jesus for healing, wishing He was right there physically touching and healing like we read about in the Gospels? In the middle of relationship crises or afflictions from the world haven’t you wanted Him right there to explain a few things and answer your question “Why?”. We read about Jesus’ time on earth and we know that Immanuel—God with us—is a really good thing. We know that the world would be a better place if He were physically here with us now.

And apparently we’re wrong about that. Jesus says so. He tells His disciples, *“I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away.”* Jesus says that it is better, or more expedient, or beneficial—no matter how you translate the Greek it is a good thing for Jesus to leave as opposed to Him staying. Why? He says *“For if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you. And when he comes, he will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment: concerning sin, because they do not believe in me; concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father, and you will see me no longer; concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged.”*

Admittedly, that’s kind of a muddy explanation, even the scholars agree on this. But it is clear that in God’s plan of salvation it is best that Jesus leaves and the Helper/Paraclete/Comforter that we know as the Holy Spirit come and do His work. This coming of the Holy Spirit we celebrate at Pentecost because it was during this Jewish harvest festival that the disciples received the Spirit in power with the little flames and the speaking in tongues. But Jesus here isn’t concerned with the spiritual gifts and powers the apostles receive. He is talking about what the Spirit will do—convict the world concerning sin, righteousness and judgment—and it’s all good news.

He explains things in threefold fashion starting with convicting the world *“concerning sin, because they do not believe in me.”* This makes sense. I mean, once Jesus has lived, died, risen in victory and ascended to the Father’s right hand what is the root of sin—the sin that isn’t forgiven? It’s unbelief! And unbelief is the natural state of human beings in this fallen world. The Holy Spirit comes to instill saving faith in Christ. Convicted of our guilt by the law; be it our natural knowledge of sin or as revealed in Scripture, we look for a way out from under our guilt. The Spirit works through the Gospel and shows us Jesus, and by the faith the Spirit kindles and sustains we are saved! That’s how it works and it is best for us.

Jesus says the Spirit will convict the world *“concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father, and you will see me no longer.”* This one is a tougher to get one’s head around, but I

take it this way: If Jesus were here walking around, where would we look to find righteousness? It would be Jesus of course! He'd be righteous and we would not be. But He is gone so when we look around to find righteousness, where can we see it? Nowhere! As St. Paul quotes, "*None is righteous. No, not one.*" We stand convicted. Again, the Spirit speaks through the Word, revealing where righteousness is found—not in our pitiful good works, but in the full forgiveness of sins that is a gift of God's grace. Our conviction by the Holy Spirit leads to that which is best for us.

Jesus says the Holy Spirit will convict the world "*concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged.*" Satan stands judged and the whole world with Him. This is great news! The Holy Spirit reveals that our ancient foe, Satan, stands defeated. Rage as he will in this world, his end is a foregone conclusion. He and the fallen world will pass away into the abyss, banished by Christ to hellfire forevermore. This truth and the day of judgment strikes fear into the hearts of unbelievers, but those who receive the Spirit know the blessed truth—we are not of the world and our destination is Christ forever. Jesus is not physically here on earth and that's a very good thing, because the reason He isn't here is that He is reigning at the right hand of the Father and all things, especially the prince of this world, have been placed under His feet.

The simple fact is that Jesus was right—it was better for us that He ascend to the Father's right hand and send the Paraclete, the Comforter, the Holy Spirit to do the work of bringing us to faith through the preaching of the Gospel and through the active Word of God combined with plain water in the simple rite of Holy Baptism. Christ's work stands accomplished through His cross and empty tomb and now in this time of the church the Holy Spirit delivers all the benefits He won for us.

And although Jesus does not dwell among us shoulder to shoulder, He has honored His promise to always be with us, even to the end of the age. He has not left us as orphans. He comes to you in, with and under the bread and the wine serving up the kingdom of God in His body and blood. He still speaks to you as the living Word in your Bibles read and proclaimed by Pastors and shared among the fellowship of believers. And He promises this "separation", if you want to even call it that, is only a temporary state of affairs; He will come again bodily and then we will dwell in His perfect presence forever.

So in closing I guess my exhortation is this: Do not covet. Do not covet the experience of those who walked with Jesus during His earthly ministry. Do not covet those believers who experienced the Pentecost event with the sound of rushing wind and little floating flames and speaking in tongues. Do not covet the signs and wonders, dreams and visions, and fantastical experiences of others throughout Christians history.

You believe and are saved, so you have exactly what Jesus said was best for you—the Holy Spirit that has been sent, for you, to bring you and keep you in the kingdom. You lack nothing.

This Pentecost church season we are beginning is also known as "the time of the church." That's very appropriate. The Holy Spirit that Jesus sent and promised was best for has been working through the church for nearly 2000 years now, delivering forgiveness, life and salvation therein through Word and Sacrament. And here you are, in the church, receiving those gifts.

Again: you lack nothing. Trust in the plan of God that sent the Son to live a human life, die a human death, rise to life in victory, ascend to the Father's right hand to reign over all things...and send the Holy Spirit to convict the world in so many ways so that you would be convicted by the Gospel, and saved for eternity.

You lack nothing. This plan is God's plan, is the perfect plan, and despite the challenges, crises, hardships and fallenness we face in this life—this plan is best, for you.  
Amen.