

Pentecost

Text: John 14:23 - 31 (NIV)

²³Jesus replied, “If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. ²⁴He who does not love me will not obey my teaching. These words you hear are not my own; they belong to the Father who sent me. ²⁵“All this I have spoken while still with you. ²⁶But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you. ²⁷Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid. ²⁸“You heard me say, ‘I am going away and I am coming back to you.’ If you loved me, you would be glad that I am going to the Father, for the Father is greater than I. ²⁹I have told you now before it happens, so that when it does happen you will believe. ³⁰I will not speak with you much longer, for the prince of this world is coming. He has no hold on me, ³¹but the world must learn that I love the Father and that I do exactly what my Father has commanded me. “Come now; let us leave.



Theme: Our Helper to Confess Christ

Our legal system gives everyone the right to representation in court. You never have to stand alone to defend yourself. Even if you can't afford a lawyer, the state will provide one.

The word which describes the Holy Spirit as the “Counselor” in our text is actually a legal term in Greek. It is the word “Paraclete.” It actually means lawyer. It is a person who helps someone who is in trouble with the law. There are many times when it is used for Jesus as our advocate before God the Father. For instance 1 John 2:1 says, “*If anyone does sin, we have an advocate before the Father in our defense, Jesus Christ, the Righteous One.*”

Here the Holy Spirit is our Counselor. Jesus says, “*The Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, He will teach you all things.*” Jesus calls the Holy Spirit the “Counselor” four times in these three chapters of John’s Gospel. As I read these chapters, I realized that they show that the Holy Spirit is our Counselor before the world. The world often demands an answer for our faith. It is the Holy Spirit who stands by our side when we are called to confess Christ. He never leaves us to stand alone to defend our faith.

I. There are many times when the world demands a defense of our faith in Christ.

There are many examples of that in the Bible. In John 9 Jesus healed a man who had been born blind. The pharisees began to question the man after the miracle. They asked, “*What have you to say about Him?*” In the end he confessed, “*If this man were not from God, he could do nothing.*” Then they threw him out of the synagogue. After Jesus was arrested, Peter was asked, “*You are not one of his disciples, are you?*” As we know Peter denied his Savior with curses. (John 18:a5ff) In today’s second reading people were making fun of the apostles on Pentecost, saying that they were drunk, but Peter preached a sermon in which he showed that Jesus is the Christ. He ended the sermon by saying, “*Repent and be baptized everyone of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of*

your sins.” (Acts 2:38) After Peter and John healed a crippled man, they were asked by the Sanhedrin, *“By what power or what name did you do this?”* Peter confessed, *“It is by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified but God raised from the dead that this man stands before you healed.”* (Acts 4:7,9) Later Philip was sent to an Ethiopian Eunuch who was reading from Isaiah 53. He asked Philip, *“Who is the prophet talking about, himself or someone else?”* Philip began with that passage and told him the good news about Jesus. (Acts 8:34) Paul was often called on to give an account of his faith before the Jews, the Gentiles, the Sanhedrin, and even before kings. The disciples would often be called on to testify to Jesus Christ as their Savior, and Jesus promises them that when they testify to Christ, they will never stand alone. He says in John 15:26,27, *“When the Counselor comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father, He will testify about me. And you also must testify, for you have been with me from the beginning.”* The Holy Spirit would give His testimony to the world through the apostles.

There are many times today when the world calls on us to testify to our faith in Christ. Sometimes it is in a positive way. There are people who are curious about our faith or have noticed the hope that we have in us like the Ethiopian Eunuch. They want to know more about Jesus. They want to know about the forgiveness of sins that He has won for us. They want to know how we can have confidence and peace in any situation. They want to know about our sure hope of everlasting life. Even in these situations, it is not always easy to confess Christ. Sometimes we are worried that we won't say the right words. We are afraid that we will turn them from Christ rather than to Him. We often think that there must be someone more gifted than I am to share Christ with that person. But the Lord sent them to you. He will not leave you alone. The Holy Spirit stands as your counselor and helper at such times.

At other times the situation is much more negative. We are mocked for our faith. Our Savior is mocked. People ask us how we could believe such nonsense. We feel like Peter when he was standing alone in the courtyard of the High Priest. He was alone among those who were the Lord's enemies. It is tempting to deny our Savior at such times, but again the Holy Spirit is with us. He will not leave us or forsake us when we are mocked because of our faith. We never stand alone.

II. Jesus speaks us two gifts that the Holy Spirit gives to us at such times.

The first is His Word. Jesus says in verse 26, *“He will remind you of everything that I have said to you.”* Jesus spent three years teaching the disciples. There were many times when they didn't understand. When Jesus was arrested and crucified, it didn't make any sense to them even though Jesus told them many times exactly what was going to happen. Even at the Lord's ascension it didn't make sense. It was not until Pentecost that the disciples understood Jesus' words. Through the Holy Spirit the light went on. They were enlightened to remember Jesus' words and finally understand them.

It is so important that we learn God's word and take it to heart even when we don't understand it at first. It begins when we are small children. We come to church and don't understand very much, but those young brains are absorbing God's Word. There are times when we wonder how certain things apply to our lives when we are in confirmation class. We hear God's Word. Our hearts remember the hymns that we sing. There are favorite psalms. It gets tucked away in our minds and hearts. There are Bible verses that we haven't thought of for years, hymns and prayers that we have almost

forgotten. Then suddenly we are called on to give an answer for the hope that we have in Christ. A Bible verse comes to mind. There is a hymn or a prayer that we remember. If that were never there in the first place, the Holy Spirit couldn't remind us of that verse, but He brings our minds to remember things that we thought that we had long forgotten. His word gives us hope in Christ as our Savior and confidence to testify to Christ as our Savior.

He also gives us peace. Jesus says, *"Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you...Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid."* Peter and Paul were both able to confidently stand before the Sanhedrin and confess Christ. They even confessed Him when it meant that they would lose their lives for the sake of the Gospel. Philip and the apostles confidently shared their faith with those who desired to share their hope in Christ. Whenever they were called on to testify to Christ, they had peace, even when other people deserted them. Paul wrote to Timothy, *"¹⁶At my first defense, no one came to my support, but everyone deserted me. May it not be held against them. ¹⁷But the Lord stood at my side and gave me strength, so that through me the message might be fully proclaimed and all the Gentiles might hear it. And I was delivered from the lion's mouth."* (2 Tim 4) They knew that the Holy Spirit was with them, and that gave them peace in every situation.

The Spirit's presence gives us that same peace. He is with us. He will guard us and protect us. He reminds us that no one can take our inheritance in Christ from us. He puts our hearts at rest to know that we are not alone. He fills our hearts with His presence and peace.

In some ways our confession of Christ is not that much different from Jesus' confession before the Sanhedrin when he was asked, *"If you are the Christ, tell us plainly."* All of Jesus' followers had deserted him. Yet, He said, *"But I am not alone."* Through the strength of His Father, He was able to make the good confession of who He is. The Father has now sent His Spirit, the Counselor, to us. He is our advocate before the world. He gives us the words to say and peace when we are asked, "Who is Jesus?" He gives us both the faith and the confession that Jesus Christ is our Lord and Savior. It is by that confession that He saves us and that He uses us to bring His salvation into this world. May He fill our hearts with His Word and His peace that we may boldly confess Jesus Christ as our Savior.

Amen.

***Pastor Don Hougard
Benediction Lutheran Church
Milwaukee, WI
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