

Pentecost Sunday – Year A  
Lutheran, Radcliff, KY  
John 16:5-11

May 11, 2008

Faith

Pastor Paul Horn

## **Jesus Sends the Spirit**

### **I. To convince**

### **II. To comfort**

*<sup>5</sup> “Now I am going to him who sent me, yet none of you asks me, ‘Where are you going?’ <sup>6</sup> Because I have said these things, you are filled with grief. <sup>7</sup> But I tell you the truth: It is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. <sup>8</sup> When he comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment: <sup>9</sup> in regard to sin, because men do not believe in me; <sup>10</sup> in regard to righteousness, because I am going to the Father, where you can see me no longer; <sup>11</sup> and in regard to judgment, because the prince of this world now stands condemned.*

Let me begin by wishing all of you mothers a Happy Mother’s Day. I think it is important for us to be thankful to our mothers for all the things they have done for us. None of us would be the same today, if it weren’t for our mothers. So thank you, mothers.

I’d like to read something I wrote: *“To the one who gave me birth, who gave me life, who gave me love. You filled me with strength when I was weak. You filled me with hope when I was feeling low. When I was lost, you guided me. You taught me forgiveness. You taught me humility. You taught me right from wrong. Most of all, you taught me to believe in Jesus. Wherever I go, I know that you will always be with me, and that everything I do, everything I say, everything I am, is a result of your presence in my life.”*

This is not a poem for my mother. In fact, I wrote this as a Pentecost card to the Holy Spirit. Today is the Festival of Pentecost, one of the biggest festivals of the church year. Pentecost is a day when we focus on the work and activity of the Holy Spirit, who gave us new life through baptism. Pentecost is also the day when we focus on the Holy Spirit as he filled the disciples with his power so that the church began to grow and spread. But this morning we are not going to talk about the rushing wind, the little tongues of fire, or the Word of God being proclaimed in different languages. Our lesson from the apostle John takes us back to the time when Jesus had to share some sad news with his disciples. It was Maundy Thursday evening in the Upper Room. Jesus announced that he would be leaving his friends soon. He would leave them to carry the weight of the world’s sin all by himself. He would rise again, but after 40 brief days he would leave the earth to be with his Father. Although he would withdraw his physical presence from them, Jesus promised his overwhelmed pupils some help. Jesus promised them a Counselor.

**I. To Convince** (vs8-11) The Counselor of whom Jesus speaks in vs7 is none other than the third person of the trinity; God the Holy Spirit. The word that is used for Counselor

in the original Greek language is Paraclete; literally, someone who is called to stand by one's side for aid. The word was used for a defense attorney—one who would represent you in court and speak on your behalf. But in our text this morning, the Holy Spirit is described as the prosecuting attorney—trying to convince that someone is guilty.

This was reassuring news for the disciples. As they undertook the daunting task of proclaiming the Word to all nations, they had the promise from their Savior, that the Holy Spirit would do his prosecuting attorney work through their preaching. He would use the law to convince the hearts of the people of the world that they were guilty of sin, unrighteousness and deserved judgment. Through the preaching of the law, sinners would come to realize they need a Savior. In the first lesson from Acts 2 we heard a portion of Peter's Pentecost sermon to the people of Jerusalem. In that sermon the apostle told the people, "You are guilty of crucifying the Son of God!" Luke writes that the people were cut to the heart. The Holy Spirit had convinced them of their sin. He works the same way among us today.

Did you hear the news? On Saturday, April 26<sup>th</sup>, Ted Kemp knocked in two holes-in-one on back-to-back par 3s at the Muscatine Municipal Golf Course, in Muscatine, IA. He hit the first shot with a pitching wedge on a 130 yard hole and for the second he swung an 8 iron to make the 180 yard shot. I know not all of you appreciate golf, but consider this: *Golf Digest* said that the odds of hitting two holes-in-one in one round of golf are 67 million to one.

Let's go golfing with Jesus for a moment. For you to make it to heaven God demands that you hit a hole-in-one every time you step up to the tee. By nature the world, including us, says, "We're pretty good golfers." We're decent people. We try to do the right thing most of the time. We're better than most people in this world. I don't steal. I haven't murdered. I haven't cheated. God the Father demands perfection from his children on earth and we deliver worm burners, sand shots, balls plunking in the water hazards. And God doesn't allow mulligans: no free shots. One missed shot, one commandment broken, means that you get kicked off the course with no chance to go into the heavenly club house for drinks and air conditioning. God demands perfection – that's impossible for you and for me. You're a sinner, and so am I. According to God we're lousy golfers on the course of life.

God then holds up our scorecard and shows us how poorly we have lived according to his standard of perfection. But another big problem for us and for the world is that we want to ignore God's standard of living and play by our own rules. It's easy to do when we live in a world that embraces post modern thinking, which says, "What I believe is true is true. What I believe is wrong is wrong. You can't tell me otherwise." The prosecuting attorney pulls evidence from his briefcase and shares Jesus' words with us, "**Be holy, just as your Father in heaven is holy.**" (Matthew 5:48) Jesus is the standard of righteousness. All of your thoughts, every deed and every word everyday of your life must stand up to God's rules. We can try to convince ourselves that we know better how to live our lives. Again, the heavenly prosecuting attorney approaches the stand and says to us, "**There is a way that seems right to a man, but in the end it leads to death.**"

(Proverbs 14:12) The Holy Spirit then convinces the world and us that we deserve judgment.

You might not know who you are voting for, but come this November you will have to make a choice. Either vote Republican or Democratic. There is no in between, unless you're a registered independent. Jesus once said, "**Either you are for me or you are against me.**" (Luke 11:23) The heavenly prosecuting attorney has presented his evidence and convicted us as unrighteous sinners. If God is holy, and he is, and we are sinners, then we are not for God. We are against him, which means we are in league with Satan. Then, as Jesus said, we **stand condemned with the prince of this world**. Satan appears to be and poses as the ruler of this world. But Satan is a loser. Side with him and you lose. The Holy Spirit convinces us through his Word that we deserve eternal judgment with this big time loser.

There was once a carpet cleaner who specialized in pet stains. He went door to door and was met with "I don't need it. My pet's not that messy." But then he asked to take a black light to their carpets. The owners found stuff all over the carpet, the furniture and the walls. It was disgusting. The people begged him to clean the carpets. They saw the proof and were convinced.

The heavenly prosecuting attorney presents the proof. He convinces us that we are disgusting. He shows us how filthy we are. We see it and have no excuse. We must plead guilty. We have sinned. We aren't righteous. We do deserve to join Satan in hell forever. But the attorney isn't done. When he's convinced us of guilt, that is, when we've brought us to repent of our sin and unrighteousness, he comes to do the better part of his work, to comfort us...

**II. To Comfort** (vs5-7) That's what Jesus promised his disciples. The Holy Spirit worked through the preaching of the Word, specifically the Law, to convict the hearts of sinners. We witnessed this action in Peter's Pentecost sermon. "**The people were cut to the heart.**" They repented of their sin. They asked the apostles, "**Brothers, what must we do?**" Peter replied, "**Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins.**" The Holy Spirit then acted as the defense attorney. He comforted those people with the gospel message; the good news that this Jesus whom they crucified had actually removed the guilt of their sin by his death. They received the personal assurance of that forgiveness through their baptism. What comfort for the disciples! The Holy Spirit would not only convince the world of sin through their preaching, but also comfort repentant sinners through their preaching.

Jesus has sent that same Comforter to you and to me. Though we are sinful, lack righteousness, and rightly deserve to join Satan in hell, he doesn't want us to go there. He changes hats, so to speak, and once his job as prosecuting attorney is done, he becomes our defense attorney, our Advocate, our Comforter. He not only convinces us that we are sinful, but that Jesus really did take that sin away. Let's go back to the golf game of life. You thought you were pretty good. Obviously you're not a golfer. But Jesus shot the perfect game on the course of his life. Every time he stepped up to the tee

he shot a hole in one. He always lived according to his Heavenly Father's standards. He took his perfect scorecard, erased "Jesus of Nazareth" and according to John 3:16, wrote, "The World." He did this because *God so loved the world*. The Holy Spirit comforts you personally through your baptism, when your horrible scorecard of living according to your own ideas was washed clean, when Jesus provided his perfect scorecard with your name written on it. The Holy Spirit also comforts you when you stand at the Savior's altar to receive his body and blood. He reassures you through this heavenly supper that you no longer stand in judgment with the devil for all those times you've sided with him, but you stand before the Judge innocent, right in his sight, no more a sinner, but holy and sinless, worthy of eternal life.

*The Masters* golf tournament was recently played at Augusta National Golf Club in Georgia. The winner of this prestigious tournament receives the coveted Green Jacket, which is kept in the clubhouse, along with all the other Green Jacket winners of past years. The Paraclete stands by your side and comforts you through his Word and Sacraments that you will enjoy the amenities of the heavenly clubhouse, not with a green jacket, but as the prophet Isaiah describes, "**He has clothed me in a robe of righteousness.**" (Is 61:10) This heavenly clothing is not won by us, but won by Christ. And so, there we will stand in the clubhouse of heaven, enjoying the company of the other champions, our brothers and sisters in Christ, who won the victory through Jesus. What comfort the Spirit brings us!

Today I hope that you call your mothers and thank them for everything they have done for you. Today on this Pentecost celebration day, I hope that you also pray to the Holy Spirit, and thank him for giving you new life through baptism. Thank him for convincing you that you are a sinner. Thank him for comforting you with the good news that Christ has given you his righteousness and earned eternal life for you. May he give us the same resolve as the disciples to spread this message to the world. To him alone be the glory forever and ever! Amen.