

St. Luke's Evangelical Lutheran Church – Watertown, WI  
Pastor Mark Gartner  
Sermon for Pentecost – May 28<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup>, 2009

### **John 14:25-27**

**“All this I have spoken while still with you. But 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. Peace 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.”**

Dear members in Jesus' Church, Amen

What makes you feel a little afraid or maybe even very afraid? Each one of us must admit that there are certain things or certain people or certain places that just plain make us a little uneasy. There are many times when we get that feeling of uncertainty – that pit in our stomach. Maybe as a child it is that first day that you go off to school whether that is Preschool, Kindergarten, High School or even College. Maybe it is that first time that you try something that you have never tried before: like the first time we tried to ride our bikes with no training wheels, or we played a certain sport such as baseball, basketball or football. Maybe it was that first date or the day a child first gets their drivers license, which is a nervous time for you as well as your parents. Any of you remember the first time that you moved out of the house, whether that was for college to live in the dorm or moving out of your parent's house into your first apartment or maybe even buying your first place to live. What about your marriage day with all of the unknowns of the future laying before you. It could be the hours leading up to the birth of your first child and then the shock of actually being a parent with all the challenges that brings with it. A list like this could go on and on.

That leads me to ask another question. Why are there so many things that make us afraid.? One excuse is that we are not prepared to face these difficult times that are before us. In answer to that, I would like to point out something. I don't know if this a very excuse. We have been taught quite well. We have had our parents who have trained us to accomplish many of these activities we just listed. From little on they have been encouraging and teaching us about these physical things and spiritual things. We also have had faithful teachers and pastors who have took the time to teach us the wonderful and comforting words of God so that we know the spiritual answers for when our worries pop up. So I would think that I am pretty safe in saying that it isn't that we are not prepared well enough. I would say that it is the sin around us and in our hearts that leads us to forget the many promises that God gives us as we deal with life's problems.

In the words for our Pentecost Sunday text for today we see that Jesus was talking to his disciples about this same topic of fear. He recognized that his disciples needed some reassurance for their hearts and lives just as we do. It is with this in mind that I would like to let these words from the apostle John guide us this Pentecost Sunday as we are led by the power of the Holy Spirit to see that we:

**Theme: Do Not Be Afraid!**

**1. The Holy Spirit will teach us**

## 2. The Holy Spirit will give us true peace

The other day I was watching a program that took you behind the scenes of the Ringling Brothers and Barnum Bailey Circus – The Greatest Show on Earth. One of the groups of people that they were talking with was the flying trapeze act -- where you swing high off the ground hanging from just a little bar. They said that they practice about 4 hours a day to fine-tune their dangerous acts. They also said, that when they first started learning the trapeze, most of them were rather young and they had learned their act over a safety net with safety wires attached to keep them safe. Things are a lot easier when you have safety equipment. It must have been a quite a different feeling the first time that they take off that safety wire and removed the safety net.

That is kind of what it was like for the 12 disciples of Jesus. Jesus – their teacher- was like their safety net. He was teaching them and grooming them during those three years that he was doing his ministry on this earth. But gradually he was letting them know that he would be soon leaving this earth. The “safety net” would be gone. They would physically be on their own. They would not be able to turn around and ask Jesus questions when things weren’t going well or ask Jesus to calm the storm when their boat almost sank from the storm. They would have to take the lead, rather than be a follower as it had been most of their three-year training period. They were now getting afraid. There was that funny feeling in that their stomach as they thought about going forward without Jesus physically leading them.

As we live our life on this earth, we many times are like the disciples. We are OK when we are comfortable doing something, but as soon as the routine is broken, then we get afraid. We get that “deer in the headlights” look and cannot function as well as we should. That is why the words of Jesus are so important, **“All this I have spoken while still with you. <sup>26</sup>But 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.”** Jesus’ words of comfort and assurance are plain and simple. He promised the disciples that the Holy Spirit also called the Counselor would still be at work, even when Jesus left this earth.. In the same way, we need to remember that we are not on our own. The Holy Spirit will **“teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.”**

What does that exactly mean? To the disciples, it meant that the words that they had heard from Jesus himself would not leave when Jesus physically left this earth. The Holy Spirit would fill their hearts of faith with the words that he wanted them to speak and write. He would give them the wisdom that really counts. The wisdom that comes from God’s perfect Word – the Bible. It took the disciples a little while to figure this all out, but God kept working in the their hearts and at Pentecost he opened their hearts to fully understand the wisdom that Jesus was talking about. They then knew very well why they didn’t need to be afraid anymore. Jesus was with them and the Holy Spirit was daily reminding them of the words of strength and comfort that Jesus has given them.

How about us? What does it mean that the Holy Spirit will teach us all things and remind us of what Jesus said? Does Jesus’ promise of the Holy Spirit coming that he spoke to the disciples apply to us living in the year 2009? It certainly does! The Holy Spirit is at work to help each and every one of us in our faith. He daily is at work in our hearts to make sure that the wisdom of God is growing in us. How does he accomplish this? The Holy Spirit works through God’s Word and the Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord’s Supper. It is in these places that we are finding the strength to conquer all our

fears. We are not on our own. We don't have to wonder if it is all going to work out. The Holy Spirit fills our heart with the knowledge and wisdom of God's saving Gospel, which reminds us that all things work for the good of those who love God.

## 2. Holy Spirit will give us true peace

But what about the really big problems in this world that make us afraid all the time. What about the thought of death or physical hurt or harm to someone we know and love? What if I lost my job or didn't have the money to support my family? Then where would I turn? How are we going to deal with these big problems? Jesus had an answer for this also when he was talking to his disciples, **"Peace 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."** Jesus wants us all to know that there is something greater than any evil or hurt that this world can bring into our lives. It is peace. It is the peace that is grounded entirely on Jesus' death. It is the peace of knowing that Jesus in love gave his life to take away all my sins. It is the peace of knowing that something as terrible as death itself is conquered and defeated by the work Jesus did 2000 years ago. It is the peace of knowing that we will be with Jesus forever in heaven one day when Jesus calls us home. This is something that most of us have been taught since we were very little. Jesus in his perfect love came and brought us spiritual peace by living a perfect life and dying a perfect death for us. This peace is not swayed back and forth by human wisdom and human thought. This peace is not changed by the evil of this world. This peace remains constant.

This is the peace that overcomes all of our fears. This is a peace that overcomes all of our shortcomings. This is a peace that overcomes all of our sins. This is the peace that guides us as Christians. This peace is ours through our faith in Jesus. We don't have to be afraid or troubled. We are not left alone to fight Satan and his evil forces. We are firmly rooted in God's Word and have the wisdom and knowledge that Jesus' peace will not leave us.

When we look at the world we live in and the many things this sinful world brings into our lives, we might just want to throw up our hands and say to God, I can't take it anymore. That is the feeling that we will get if we try to handle all these things on our own. We praise and thank our God that he has sent the Holy Spirit into our hearts to teach us all that God has done for us and will continue to do for us for our whole lives on this earth. We also thank and praise God for sending the Holy Spirit into our hearts so that we know what true peace is and why it will always take away any fear or doubt or worry that this sinful world might bring into our lives. To God be all praise and thanks. Amen.