

Sunday, May 21, 2017

I Peter 3: 13-22

John 14:15-31

The SPIRIT will Come!

The season of Easter continues and so we can say: Christ is risen. Christ is risen indeed! As we continue in our celebration of Christ's resurrection in this season of Easter let us rejoice for Jesus is alive and His Spirit is with us now!

Jesus is continuing to speak to the disciples about what will happen after he returns to heaven. He tells his disciples, "...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 shared with you. He then blessed them and shared peace. "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 told them that the Spirit would be with them forever and that they have no reason to be afraid of what life will bring them. But the disciples did not fully understand who the Holy Spirit was, is and could be in their lives. And sometimes we too do not understand the third person of the Trinity—the Spirit.

There was a student from Lubbock, TX named Steve Winger who was taking a challenging class in Logic. This course and teacher were known for exacting and demanding and challenging exams and often many of the students failing or barely passing this required course for many disciplines. The final exam was looming, and the professor mercifully told the class that each student would be permitted to bring in a single 8 x 11 ½ inch sheet with as much information as they could put on that one sheet for help during the exam.

The day came and each student came to class holding on to their precious piece of paper with as much information crammed on it as possible. On some of the sheets the font was so tiny but filled with important data that it was difficult to read. And of course like many exam rooms, the stress and anxiety of what was to be completed was in the air. But our student Steve walked in with a single blank sheet of paper. He found a seat sat down and then he bent down and placed that single, blank sheet of paper on the floor. A friend who was a senior student and had received an 'A' in the class then stood upon the paper.

The professor noticed the extra person in the room and asked what he was doing. Steve piped up, "You said we could bring in whatever we could fit on a single piece of paper for help

on this test, well, this is my help and he can fit on the paper!" He had followed the instructions of the professor and of course the professor could not deny the logic of Steve the student in bringing in his friend. After all it was a logical solution to his situation. It turned out that Steve was the only student in that class to score an 'A' since he had logically responded to the questions by having his expert friend standing alongside him.

The Holy Spirit is like that friend, standing alongside us, supporting us, and guiding us not only when we need to write exams in logic, but as we facing situations which need the help of another.

As Jesus pointed out to the disciples the Holy Spirit will come and when this happens they will live more fully as they will have a purpose and they will know again that they have not been abandoned. The Spirit will teach them more about what it means to live as God's people and will prepare them for anything and everything which is to come. They will be prepared because Christ also blessed them in peace not of the world- but the peace which abides or within those who believe.

What does this mean for us? We are people of the Spirit- we live knowing that the Spirit is here yet coming to us again; we believe that the Holy Spirit moves upon the hearts of people inciting them to do good. (Article 2.3.8) This same Spirit is creatively and redemptively active in the world and challenges us to celebrate the holy not only in what is familiar but also in that which seems foreign. The Spirit also receives our prayers and enfolds them transforming us and the world. (A Song of Faith) This Spirit never leaves us and is always ready to help us and guide us- we just need to receive it and follow.

Jesus promised the disciples that the Spirit would come. After his death and resurrection he was with his disciples for a little while and then he ascended into heaven where he remains with the Father. In two weeks we will celebrate Pentecost- the day of the Spirit coming to the disciples and to all people who believe. But in the meantime let us remind ourselves of what we are doing as we live this life.

One cartoon of Calvin and Hobbes shows the boy and his dog marching into the living room early one morning. His mother is seated there in her favorite chair and sipping her morning coffee. She looks up at young Calvin. She is amused and amazed at how he is dressed. Calvin's head is encased in a large space helmet. A cape is draped around his neck, across his shoulders, down his back and is dragging on the floor. One hand is holding a flashlight and the other a baseball bat. The mother asks, "What's up today?"

"Nothing, so far," answers Calvin. "So far?" she questions. "Well, you never know," Calvin says, "Something could happen today." Then Calvin marches off, "And if anything does, by golly, I'm going to be ready for it!"

Calvin's mom looks out at the reading audience and she says, "I need a suit like that!"

Maybe that's the way many of us feel as we hear the news from around the world and deal with life. A suit like that would help, so we can say with Calvin, "Whatever may come my way, I'm going to be ready for it! Bring it on!"

I don't have a suit like Calvin's to give you this morning, but the words of Jesus remind us that have been blessed as his followers: 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."

Let us be reminded that the Spirit has come and will come again as we share as the body of Christ in this place. Let us rejoice as one that the Holy Spirit will suit us up and prepare us for whatever comes our way. Thanks be to God—the Spirit will come!