

Sunday, October 17, 2021
The 21st Sunday after Pentecost

Theology, the Science of Simplicity-Part V

Some of you might remember that TV show The O'Reilly Factor and remember how it began: "You are about to enter the no spin zone." And that's where we are today, as we come to the conclusion of our sermon series on the Creeds, I believe that the last is the most powerful, a very powerful conclusion. We've seen that the creeds were written to educate the people in the one true faith that leads to salvation through Jesus Christ. As a result of this education, it united the people in that one true faith. But they were also written to confront, to destroy, false teachings that came through the logic and the greed of men. We saw in the first article of the Creeds that God is truly God the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth. When He says it, He means it!

We saw in the second article that Jesus is God's only begotten Son, true God, true man, the Savior, the Redeemer of all the world. And He is for us, our Prophet, our Priest, and our King.

Which leads us to the third article and I'm going to use the Nicene Creed which we use today on communion Sunday. "I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and giver of life." Boy, that's a loaded statement, isn't it? We see the word Lord; He's God, He's the Lord, and He gives life. Now you might say, 'wait a second Pastor Matt, I thought that God through the Son created mankind, and that it's Jesus who gives us eternal life through His death and resurrection?'

True, but consider what Paul writes to the people of Thessalonica in 2nd Thessalonians 2 verse 14, the Holy Spirit calls us through the gospel. It's why we have such an emphasis here, and really all the church should have such an emphasis on God's Word. Because it is what the Holy Spirit uses. He moves through that Word and so we lead with God's Word. It's why the prophet Isaiah writes in Isaiah 55; my Word will not return to me void. Why won't God's word return to Him void? Because it is what the Holy Spirit uses. Really? Absolutely! Consider Saint Paul, a highly educated pharisee. As a pharisee, he was required to memorize

what we would call the Old Testament. What does Saint Paul say about himself? First Corinthians 2:4 “My speech and my message were not with implausible words and wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit of power, that your faith might not rest in man but in the power of God.” The interpretation of that; Saint Paul is saying, if anything I have said makes sense to you and draws you closer to God, it's not because of my wisdom, it's not because of my knowledge; it's because of the Holy Spirit working through the Word of God.

Really? Absolutely! Consider what he says after that. We impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual. Spirit, the Holy Spirit leads and led Paul and Christians to use spirit filled words that spirit filled people can understand. Really? Yes! this is so biblical and explains so much of what we see in the day today.

Paul writes again, first Corinthians chapter two. Listen carefully to this. The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned. So, when we speak the Word of God which is what the Holy Spirit uses to work within our lives; when we speak those words to those who don't have the Holy Spirit or are rejecting the Holy Spirit; they're folly to them. That's why when we talk about God creating the world, their response is oh that's stupid, that's ridiculous. They're not Spirit filled. When we step out and we say, ‘you know homosexuality, and homosexual marriage it's wrong. That's from God's Word. It's folly to them, it makes no sense. A man, a woman, whatever, they should be able to do whatever they want to do. They don't understand because they don't have the Holy Spirit.

But those who are filled with the Holy Spirit are led to understand, and we are led through the Holy Spirit to understand that you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of God. Yes, Jesus is the One who did the action to wash us, as we read in revelation 7 verse 14. “They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.” But how does that justification work? Through the Holy Spirit. Yes, it's through Christ dying on the cross, rising from the dead, that we are sanctified; or

set apart. We read in Hebrews 10:10 “We have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.” And yet if we continue on in Hebrews 10, we read, “if we go on sinning after receiving the knowledge of the truth, we have outraged the Spirit of Grace.” And then that leads to one of the scariest passages in the Bible, verse 31. “It is a fearful thing to be found in the hands of the living God.”

Yes, it is through Christ, His death, His resurrection, that we are justified or made right with God. And yet, when we look at Romans 5, verse 1 we read; “we have been justified by faith.” And where does that faith come from? Again, the book of Romans 10:17; “faith comes from hearing the Word.” And where did we start this sermon? It is the Holy Spirit who moves through the Word of God and calls people to faith and works faith in their hearts.

So important is the work of the Holy Spirit, that we read in Romans 8, verse 6 “To set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace.” If we set our mind on the spiritual things, we see that we are saved through the work of Jesus Christ not our work we are saved by grace through faith, and this gives us life eternal life. Dear brothers and sisters in Christ you have that life right now! Oh, but pastor Matt, were going to die. No you're not! The tent, as the Bible speaks about our human bodies. It's going to wear out. It's going to stop working. It's going to be trashed, shall we say, but we will continue living with God. That's why Jesus said to those Sadducees who were skeptical about heaven and life after death; “Why did God say He is I am? “I am the God of Abraham of Isaac and of Jacob.” It's a present tense. They're alive! We have life, eternal life now. And these bodies, yes, they're going to be trashed. But they're going to be raised and perfected and they too will live forever.

This is life and this is what brings peace. Who can take that away from us? No one. It's ours. So, the world can look like it's going somewhere in a handbasket, but we can be at peace. We know the final outcome. It's why Paul also writes in Romans 8:11, “If the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead, dwells in you; He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to our mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.” There's the resurrection! And then in Romans 8 verse 9 “Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong

to Him. End of story! Without the Holy Spirit, we are nothing, He's the culmination! And Jesus knows this, God the Father knows this. That's why we read in John 14:26; this is Jesus with His disciples right before He's arrested; His last words. "The helper, the Holy Spirit whom the Father will send..." Why will the Father send the Holy Spirit? We go to the very next chapter as Jesus is continuing this discourse with his disciples. But when the helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father... Jesus is telling His disciples, "I'm going to ascend to heaven I'm going to tell my Father, send the Holy Spirit, and He's going to send the Holy Spirit.'

And that's why in Acts, in our reading this morning, He tells His disciples, right before He ascends into heaven, He reminds them, "you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now." And in verse eight, "You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you." What kind of power? Well, if we go back to John 14, John 15, Luke 12, we find out what that power looks like. Power to teach all things, He's going to teach you all things my dear disciples. He will bring to your remembrance everything I have said to you. He will give you the words to speak. And you will speak starting in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and to the very ends of the earth.

Really? The Holy Spirit will give us the very words to speak? You bet! In fact, if we think back to last week's sermon, where we looked at the prophecies about Jesus; prophecies like from Isaiah and the Psalms, 700 plus years before Jesus, describing that He is going to be crucified, before crucifixion was even invented. How did those prophets know to put those words to paper, to share those things with the people? Because they, ordinary, sinful men, were filled with the Holy Spirit and they became extraordinary. And they spoke spiritual truths.

When you consider that the Son asks the Father, the Father sends the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit comes, and He washes, He sanctifies, He justifies, and He empowers; how can we not help but to say what we see in the Creed? "Who with the Father and the Son is glorified," because He's the third part of the Trinity. And He's the One, He's the closer. He closes the deal. All of which leads to the formation and the sustaining of "and I believe in the holy Christian Church." Holy, like sanctified, means

set apart, set apart to bring glory to God; set apart for service to expand his Kingdom.

“And I believe in the communion of Saints.” Oh, dear brothers and sisters in Christ, if you are at home, and you are watching this at home, consider what the communion of Saints is. To commune is to come together. We've come together each week, just as Jesus did. It was His custom to do this. We come together to glorify God, to praise God, to thank God, to worship God, for what He has done. And then, together we serve Him, and we go out with the purpose of expanding His Kingdom. It is again why the author to the Hebrews talks about not forsaking the gathering, the public gathering as some are in the habit of doing; because the Holy Spirit does not call us to sit at home. He calls us to come together. Ordinary, sinful people, each and every one of us, so that through the power of the Spirit, we may become extraordinary. Because through the Father, the Son, and the working of the Holy Spirit, we are the begotten children of God.

And now together as that holy Christian Church, as the communion of Saints, communing with each other with the purpose of praising God, thanking God, glorifying God, we also come to His table to commune with Him; right here right now in this church on this earth with father son and Holy Spirit. May this communion, this day, the communion of Saints communing with their living God, strengthen us and preserve us in the one true faith through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen