

Sermon Notes on Jn. 15: 9-17, Easter IV

1. Jesus' farewell address to the disciples, Jn. 13:31-17:26, is one of the grandest passages in the Gospels. Mt. 5-7 is called the Sermon on the Mount. This passage in John could be called Jesus' last sermon to His disciples. This passage is remarkably serene although Judas was about to betray Jesus, the other disciples were about to abandon Him, and He was about to be arrested unjustly as a criminal. Jesus truly trusted in His Father.
2. Jn. 15:1-8 is the passage about Jesus the Vine and Christians who are His branches. Christians are already clean because of Jesus' Word. And by abiding in Jesus they bear much fruit. He says in vs. 5: "Without Me you can do nothing." Our good works are Jesus' gift to us. He prepared these works long ago. Eph. 2:10.
3. In vss. 9-17 Jesus dwells on a threefold relationship: a) That of the Father for the incarnate Son of God; b) That of the incarnate Son for the disciples, and c) That of the disciples for each other. This could be called the family of God.
4. In these vss. the verb for "to love" occurs five times and the noun "love" occurs four times. It is the verb and noun (in Greek) which is used only of God, of Christ and of Christians. We like people because they please us. We like our friends because we enjoy them. But Christian love is more than that. Jn. 3:16 does not say that God liked the world. It did not please Him. But He loved the world. He saved it in all its misery. Jn. 13:1 tells us that Jesus loved His disciples to the end. He did not always like what they did. They did not always please Him. But He always did, said and thought what was best for them. Christians are told to love one another. They love each other even though they are not personal friends. They love each other even though they do not always please each other. They do, say and think what is best for others. Husbands are told to love their wives. Eph. 5:28. They must do more than to like them. Husbands and wives do not always please each other. But they must always love each other. They must do, say and think what is best for each other. Husbands are to love their wives as Christ loved the church. He gave Himself for the church. Eph. 5:25. Christians are even told to love their enemies. They need not be their friends. The enemies surely do not please them. But Christians must love their enemies. How do they do that? Read Lk. 6:27-35. When enemies curse Christians, they must bless them. When enemies insult them, they must pray for them. Christians return good for evil. They are merciful as is their heavenly Father. Christ prayed for His enemies while He was being crucified. Lk. 23:34. He is our model. Our text today is about the love of God in the family of God.
5. Three times our text says "just as--so also", vss. 9, 10 and 12. Jesus loved us just as the Father loved Him. We are to keep His Word and abide in His love just as Jesus kept His Father's Word and abode in His love. And, we are to love one another just as Christ loved us. The love of God, Christ and Christians is as high as the heavens.
6. The word "commandments" in vss. 10 and 12, in Greek, is not the same word as "commandments" in the ten commandments. The commandments in the ten commandments tell us what we are to do, not to do and how we are to be. But the Gospel tells us what God has done and still does for our salvation. The word "commandments" in vss. 10 and 12 (entolai in Greek) covers both law and Gospel. It means God's Word which tells us to believe in what God did for us and to do what God wills. Vs. 10 clearly shows that God wants us to do His will and to remain in His love, the Gospel which tells us what God has done for us.
7. From eternity Christ chose us to go for Him, bear fruit to Him, and to pray the Father in Jesus' name. Vs. 16. We are Jesus' friends. Vs. 15. He keeps nothing from us. He told us all that the Father told Him.

Theme: THE FAMILY OF GOD, A FAMILY OF LOVE

Introduction: The noun "love" in John's Gospel occurs only in 13:31-17:26, Jesus' final words to His disciples. See 13:35; 15:9.10.10.11. The verb "to love" occurs with highest frequency in this section. See 13:1.23.34; 14:15.21.23.24.28.31; 15:9.12.17; 17:23.24.26. See also 3:16.34.8:42; 10:17. The Father loved the Son. He saved Him from sin, death and the devil. The Son loved all men. As their substitute He saved them from sin, death and the devil. Christians love each other. They do, say and think what is best for each other. Christians love God by trusting in Him. See 14:28; 8:42; The love of the Father equipped Christ and saved Him. The love of Christ for the world redeemed the world. And the love of Christian for Christian is a gift of God whereby they serve each other.

I-THE FATHER LOVES THE SON OF GOD. He calls Him His beloved Son. See Mt. 3:17 and 17:5. It was even prophesied by Isaiah. See 12:18-20. He equipped Him for His work. That love is mentioned at Jn. 15:9 and 17:23.24.26. The Father loved the Son from eternity. This love sent the Son into the world as a human being. Jn. 3:16. Jn. 3:35 tells us that the Father loved the Son, namely He put everything into the power and hands of the God-man. That's why Jesus could forgive sins. That's why Jesus could perform miracles. That's why He could die and rise again, conqueror over sin, death and the devil. Jesus was often in extreme danger both as a baby and as an adult. Satan tried to kill Him. The Jews hated Him because He showed them their sins and said that He was God's Son. But the Father protected, strengthened and saved the Son in these great dangers. Jesus says: "For this reason the Father loves Me because I lay down My life in order that I might take it again." The world is blind to this love. They called Jesus' Words the words of a demon. Jn. 10:19-20. But others disagreed. They had witnessed a miracle. Vs. 21. This love of the Father unites believers and Christ. Jn. 17:26.

II-THE SON OF GOD LOVES THE FATHER. Ps. 22:8 says about the God-man, Christ "He trusted in the Lord, let Him rescue Him; let Him deliver Him, since He delights in Him." Jesus' enemies quoted this vs. when He was on the cross but they added: "If He is the King of Israel, let Him come down now from the cross and we will believe Him." These enemies could plainly see that Jesus trusted the Father, loved Him unto death. But they rejected it. Read all of Ps. 22 and 69, prophecies of Christ. Vs. 10 of our text says that Jesus remained in the Father's love. He trusted the Father's love and protection. The love of the Father and the love of Jesus caused Jesus to keep the Father's Word and to lay down His life for all people. In that sense He is My Friend. Vs. 13. He sacrificed His life to forgive me and to give me eternal life. He is my friend because He has told me all that the Father told Him to tell me. Vs. 15. There are no secrets between Jesus and me. That's real love. He chose me before I was born (vs. 16) so that I might bear fruit which will endure in all eternity. That's real love.

III-CHILDREN OF GOD LOVE GOD AND EACH OTHER. Jesus says: "Remain in My love Vs. 9. That means: "Trust in Me for your salvation." I love God by believing in Him and His Word. This relationship bears joy, everlasting joy. Jesus says: "I have spoken to you so that My joy might be in you and so that your joy be complete." We find complete joy only by believing in Jesus and His Word. We have already mentioned that God's love in Christ causes us to bear fruit, vs. 16, the works which He prepared and gave to us, Eph. 2:10. And now He tells us to ask anything we want in His name. That is prayer, talking to Jesus. Finally, we are love one another. We cannot produce true love. Only the Gospel can do that. That is why Jesus says: "If you keep my commandments, remain in My love." We must remain in the Gospel which causes us to love one another. Jesus commands us to love. Vs. 17. The world recognizes Christians by the way they treat each other. They are a family of love with Father and Son.

Sermon Notes on Jn. 16:5-15, Easter IV

1. The text consists of three parts: a) Vss. 5-7, Jesus stresses the fact that He must go to Him Who sent Him (suffering, death, resurrection, ascension). If He does not go, the Holy Spirit will not come to mankind; b) Vss. 8-11, the Holy Spirit prosecutes the sin and sinfulness of man, especially unbelief, comforts repentant sinners with the righteousness of Christ, and protects Christians from the devil, the ruler of this world; c) The Holy Spirit harmoniously comes, guides, speaks, hears, announces, glorifies and receives *from Jesus*. These vss. speak of the Holy Spirit's part in the reciprocal glorification of the members of the Trinity. All three are the true and whole God. All three lead mankind into all Truth, the very opposite of the devil who is nothing but lies, Jn. 8:44. Truth can be found only in the Word of God.
2. Jesus' departure made the disciples sad. Even though they are believers their dull selfishness shows itself. All of us are like them. But, He says, unless He goes away the Comforter, the Holy Spirit, will not come. When Jesus went away He sent the Spirit on Pentecost, the writing of the New Testament and He is still coming to us today.
3. The work of the Holy Spirit through God's Word is remarkable. Through the Law He convicts and convinces us of our sin, vs. 9. The mother of all sins is unbelief, the rejection of Jesus Christ. "He that believeth not shall be damned." Mk. 16. But, Holy Spirit, through the Gospel, comforts us with the righteousness of Christ. Christ attained righteousness for us by going to the Father, by suffering and dying. Read Rom. 4:25 and 5:12-21. In Adam all men sinned and died. In Christ all men gained the righteousness of God by faith. The fall of man was total. The justification of man was total. All has been done. It only needs to be proclaimed. Thirdly, vs. 11, the Holy Spirit convinces us that the ruler of this world has been judged, defeated, conquered. At Jn. 12:31 Jesus said that through His suffering and death the ruler of this world is thrown out. Satan, the father of lies and murder, is a nothing because of what Christ did. What a comfort!!
4. In vss. 12-15 Jesus speaks of Pentecost, the Spirit's guidance of the Apostles in Acts, the composition of the N.T. by inspiration and the activity of the Church throughout the N.T. era until the end.
5. A Lutheran scholar wrote: "The work of the Spirit, when He comes upon them from on high, shall be to shed a new light upon all things and to guide them into the fulness of divine truth. And we have the fruit of this work of the Spirit in the apostolic writings, in which the Church possesses all that is required for the present and for the future. But if the apostolic witnesses have been guided by the Spirit 'into all truth' according to this express promise, then we are the possessors of God's infallible Word in the written instructions which they have left." Cf. I Cor. 2:9ff.
6. Meditate on the importance of this text. In the four Gospels the Spirit recalled for all time what Jesus had said and done. In Acts we can see how the Spirit guided Peter, Paul, John, James, Barnabas, etc., in all necessary Truth. Think how He guided them at the Jerusalem Conference (Acts 15) when the Judaizers maintained that Gentiles would have to become Jews before they were worthy recipients of the Gospel. Think of how the Spirit guided Paul to teach the article of justification in Romans, of faith alone apart from the deeds of the Law in Galatians, of the Una Sancta in Ephesians, of the deadly heresy which attacked the church at Colosse which heresy could be combatted only by the correct teaching about Christ (Colossians), of the manifold problems presented by the congregation in Corinth and how Paul handled these problems. The Triune God revealed all this to Apostles who recorded it for us in the N.T.
7. The humanity and divinity of Jesus are very plain in this text. He has everything that the Father has, vs. 15, and yet He is going to the Father, Divinity and humanity. The "future things" vs. 13 are *the* activity of God's Kingdom on earth until the end of the world.

Vss. 12-15

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Sermon Outline # 1 on Jn. 16:5-11, Easter IV

Theme: THE THREEFOLD WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

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Introduction: In Jn. 15:26-27 Jesus had spoken of the Holy Spirit Who would come and testify of Christ. Then in 16:1-4, He tells the disciples why He has spoken Jn. 13-15, to prepare them for the persecutions which were coming. Then in 16:5-11 He bids them farewell and tells them of the threefold work of the Holy Spirit. The Father sent the Son into the world. When the Son ascended He sent the Holy Spirit.

I-WHY THIS THREEFOLD WORK OF THE SPIRIT IS NECESSARY

A-Grief fills the heart of mankind. Vss. 5-6. The world is a valley of sorrows and tears. Mankind acts happy but is not really happy. Even the disciples, who had been with Jesus three years, on this occasion were sorrowful. Even though Jesus was doing what was necessary for them the disciples were sad. Even though they were believers they were full of pain. Isn't that the way it is with us? We so easily give way to sorrow, to sadness, to grief. And that is why the threefold work of the Spirit is so necessary for us.

B-Mankind does not understand the dealings of God with man. Jesus says: "If I do not go away the Comforter (the Holy Spirit) will not come to you. But if I go I will send Him to you." Jesus was explaining what was necessary for their salvation. It is easy for us to criticize the disciples for their dullness, unhappiness and grief. But are we not the same way? One time Luther's wife dressed in black and wore a black headdress. Luther asked her why she did that. She said: "The way you act, God is dead. I'm getting ready for the funeral." That made Luther aware of his sinful grief. He was not letting the Gospel comfort him in God's dealings with Luther.

II-WHAT THIS THREEFOLD WORK OF THE SPIRIT IS. Vs. 8. He will convict and convince the world, all men, of three things.

A-He will convict the world of sin, mainly unbelief. Vs. 9. The greatest sin is to refuse to believe in Jesus. Mk. 16 says: "He that believeth not shall be damned." He doesn't say: "He that sins shall be damned." All have sinned. But not all have believed on Jesus and what He did for mankind. At Heb. 9:8 we are told that through the ceremonial law the Holy Spirit convicted the people of their sin. At Gen. 6:3 the Lord said: "My Spirit shall not strive with man forever." Before the flood the majority were rejecting God in unbelief. They would not listen to the Holy Spirit. In Ps. 51:11 David said: "Do not take your Holy Spirit from me." The goodness of God leads us to repentance. Rom. 2:4. The Holy Spirit, through the Word, constantly warns us of the danger of refusing to confess our sins and the danger of unbelief. On Pentecost Day Peter's audience were convicted of their sin. Acts 2:37. But at Acts 7:51-53 Stephen describes the hearts and ways of those who refuse this work of the Spirit. I Thess. 5:19 warns us: "Do not quench the Spirit."

B-He will convince the world of righteousness because Jesus goes to the Father. Vs. 9. This is exactly what happened to Peter's audience at Acts 2:28: "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." What was this gift? The righteousness of Jesus Christ. See Rom. 4:25 and 5:12-21 and Php. 3:9. They were sinners dressed in the righteousness of Christ. This is what happened to the Samaritans. Acts 7:14-17. This is what happened to St. Paul. I Tim. 1:12-17. This is what happens to us today when we hear the Gospel preached to us.

C-He will convince mankind that the devil, the ruler of this world, has been judged. At Jn. 12:31 Jesus said that through His suffering and death the ruler of this world is thrown out. At Lk. 10:18 He said: "I saw Satan fall from heaven like lightning." As Luther said of Satan: "He's judged, the deed is done. One little word can fell him." Satan cannot accuse me of sin which has been forgiven.

Theme: JESUS FORETELLS THE SENDING AND WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Introduction: The Father sent His Son to save the world. When this had been accomplished the Son ascended to heaven to ask the Father to send the Holy Spirit to guide and inspire the Apostles to write the N.T. and preach the Gospel. The Spirit says only what Father and Son instruct Him to say. Through the written Word the Spirit still guides, leads and comforts the Church until the end of time.

I-THE SPIRIT'S WORK IS CLEARLY APPARENT IN THE BOOK OF ACTS

A-His work on Pentecost. Acts 2 describes this occasion. To a large audience of Jews, who had come from all parts of the Roman Empire, Peter preached a sermon based on Joel 3:1-5. About 3000 became Christians.

B-His work through Peter, Paul, John, Barnabas and others. First we have Peter and John, chapter 3, preach on the basis of Ex. 3:6 and Gen. 22:18. In chapters 4-5 we have persecution because of the preaching of the Gospel. In chapter 7 we have the testimony of Stephen who was stoned to death. In chapter 8 we have the conversion of the Samaritans and Philip converting the Eunuch on the basis of Is. 53:7. In chapter 9 we have the wonderful conversion of St. Paul. In 10-11 we have the account of Peter preaching to Cornelius, the Gentile centurion. In 13-14 we have the first sermons of Paul, based on O.T. texts. In 15 the Holy Spirit guides the Apostles to speak to a convention in Jerusalem concerning salvation by grace alone through faith in Jesus Christ. The remainder of Acts is centered in Paul's missionary journeys, his trials in Jerusalem and Rome. To the very end we can hear the Spirit speaking the Word through the Apostles.

II-THE SPIRIT'S WORK IS CLEARLY APPARENT IN THE WRITING OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

In vs. 12 of our text Jesus says: "I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now." The disciples were believers but they still had much to learn. But then in vs. 13 Jesus continues: "But that one (the Spirit) will come, the Spirit of Truth, He will guide you in all Truth. He will not speak on His own but whatever He hears He will speak and will announce things which are to come." That promise was fulfilled. In the recording of the four Gospels the Spirit recalled for all time what Jesus had said and done. In the recording of Acts we can see how the Spirit guided Peter, Paul, John, James, Barnabas, etc. In the recording of the thirteen Epistles of Paul the Holy Spirit gave mankind everything that is necessary for our faith and living. No problem is left unsolved. Then we also have the writings of Peter, John, James and Jude. Finally, in the book of Revelation the Spirit tells us of things to come in the Kingdom of God on earth, especially the war between the armies of Jesus and those of Satan.

III-THE SPIRIT'S WORK IS CLEARLY APPARENT AFTER THE RECORDING OF THE

NEW TESTAMENT. Think of the three great creeds, Apostles, Nicean and Athanasian, products of the Spirit. Think of how the early theologians settled the controversies about the Trinity and the Person of Christ. Think of the writings of St. Augustine. Think of the Reformation of the Church in the 1500's. The Holy Spirit cleansed the Church of its false teachings. Think of the wonderful hymns which the Spirit has given to the Church. Think of the Christian Festivals: Christmas, Easter, Pentecost. At Jn. 7:37-39 we read: "Jesus cried out saying: 'If anyone thirsts let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, just as the Scripture says, rivers of living water shall flow from his belly.' This He said about the Spirit Whom those who had come to faith in Him (Christ) were about to receive For the Spirit had not yet come because Jesus had not yet been glorified." Verily, we see the rivers of living water everywhere, coming from the mouths and lives of Christians throughout the world. The Spirit is glorifying Jesus just as our text says in vs. 14. He is receiving from Jesus and passing it on to you and me. ALL PRAISE TO GOD!

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