

Jesus Sends to You the Holy Spirit

THE DAY OF PENTECOST

May 24, 2015

(The Confirmation of the Catechumens)

JOHN 15:26-27, 16:4b-15

[Jesus said,]²⁶ “But when the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness about me.²⁷ And you also will bear witness, because you have been with me from the beginning.

^{5b} “I did not say these things to you from the beginning, because I was with you. ⁵ But now I am going to him who sent me, and none of you asks me, ‘Where are you going?’ ⁶ But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your heart. ⁷ Nevertheless, I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you. ⁸ And when he comes, he will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment: ⁹ concerning sin, because they do not believe in me; ¹⁰ concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father, and you will see me no longer; ¹¹ concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged. ¹² “I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. ¹³ **When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. ¹⁴ He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you. ¹⁵ All that the Father has is mine; therefore I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you.**

IN THE NAME OF JESUS.

It starts out with a valley of dry bones. Not even corpses. Bones can do nothing. Even the vultures have no use for them. With bones, that’s all you’ve got. Ezekiel 37:1:

The hand of the LORD was upon me, and he brought me out in the Spirit of the LORD and set me down in the middle of the valley; it was full of bones. ² And he led me around among them, and behold, there were very many on the surface of the valley, and behold, they were very dry. ³ And he said to me, “Son of man, can these bones live?”

Who would answer “yes” to that? Bones have nothing to give to anyone, much less to the Lord of life. Ezekiel 37:5:

⁵ Thus says the Lord GOD to these bones: Behold, I will cause breath to enter you, and you shall live. ⁶ And I will lay sinews upon you, and will cause flesh to come upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and you shall live, and you shall know that I am the LORD.”

The Lord looks at the sinner and sees a pile of bones. All the sinners together, our world, all the people trying to act alive and trying to improve life, it's a valley full of dead bones.

But he's the Lord of the living, not the dead. When he shows up, that which was dead is now given life—***Behold, I will cause breath to enter you, and you will live.***

Dead bones will live, or he's not the Lord. The breath to be caused to enter, this isn't just the mixture of nitrogen and oxygen and other gases we take into our lungs, it's the Holy Spirit, the breath of life—it's the breath that only the Image of God on Earth, man and woman, is given to breath. The Lord isn't hitting these bones with C.P.R.; he's breathing into them the Holy Spirit. It's not just the biological life of the lungs pumping; it's the eternal life of the dead sinner being in-breathed with the Spirit of life.

Ezekiel 37:9:

Then [the Lord] said to me, “Prophecy to the breath; prophecy, son of man, and say to the breath, Thus says the Lord GOD: Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe on these slain, that they may live.” ¹⁰ So I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived and stood on their feet, an exceedingly great army.

The Son of Man is who stands in for all men. The arrogance of man, the sin of mankind, your sin and mine, the shame of every person—it all belongs to him, he's the One standing in for all: the Son of Man.

Son of Man, prophecy to the breath, says the Lord God. To prophecy is to speak; it's to use the Lord's words to bring forgiveness; it's to speak life into the Lord's people. To prophecy to the breath is to speak God's word to the breath of life, to send forth the Holy Spirit to bring life into people who have no life.

Ezekiel 37:10:

And the breath came into them, and they lived and stood on their feet, an exceedingly great

army.

And so Ezekiel prophesies how the Son of Man will come to sinners with the Father's word of Gospel, will by that Gospel forgive their sins and breathe into them the Holy Spirit, and those sinners, now cleansed of all sin, will stand up righteous before the Father, an exceedingly great army.

John 15:26:

[Jesus said,] But when the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness of me.

Jesus, the Son of Man, the One who stood in for mankind, who took upon himself what belonged to every sinner, including you and me, the One who stands in for us even now, interceding to his Father on our behalf, in order that his Father would count to us not our sins, but his own righteousness—Jesus, sends forth to us from the Father, the Holy Spirit. He names the Holy Spirit as our Helper, our Counselor, our Advocate, our Intercessor—this Holy Spirit, this Breath of Life, proceeding from the Father, is sent forth to us by the Son: ***I will send forth to you from the Father the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness of me.***

This Spirit of truth will speak to us not of his own authority, says Jesus, but he will speak to us the words given him by Jesus.

In the proclamation the Holy Spirit brings to us, he glorifies Jesus, the Son of Man standing in our place. He takes the words of Jesus and declares them to us. John 16:15: *Therefore, [said Jesus,] I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you.*

Catechumens, that's what your study of the Catechism is about.

Catechism class is not some sort of church initiation rite where everyone goes through the same social experience, not some sort of boot camp to see if you have what it takes; Catechism is nothing more and

nothing less than hearing and learning the words of Jesus, the Son of Man, who stands in for you. It's nothing more than hearing the teaching Jesus reveals in Scripture, of learning the doctrine of his Law and his Gospel, of hearing the proclamation of his death on the cross to shed the atoning blood.

Because it is the doctrine of Jesus, Catechism is nothing more than the Holy Spirit bringing to you the words of Jesus, and by those words, forgiving your sin and breathing into you life—life eternal—so that you are made to stand up before God the Father, as Ezekiel gives it, as an exceedingly great army, that is, as the church of Jesus Christ.

This breath of Life given to you, this forgiveness of all your sin, this heart of faith, this is, as you know, the work and the gift of the Holy Spirit, who by the Gospel calls, gathers, and enlightens you, gathering you into the holy fellowship of the church. By this gift of the Holy Spirit,

You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for [God's] own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.

1 Peter 2:9. And Benjamin, that is your confirmation verse.

And, as you know, none of this, from beginning to end, none is your work or your decision. It is all, from beginning to end, the work and the gift of your Father in Heaven, who has mercy upon the sinner, who has sent his Son for your salvation, and who even now listens to his Son's intercession on your behalf:

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

1 Peter 1:3. And that, Makenna, is your confirmation verse.

But when the Helper, [the Comforter, the Intercessor,] comes, [said Jesus,] whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness of me.

The Holy Spirit bears witness to you of Jesus, and gives to you all the gifts of Jesus, by having the Gospel preached and the Sacraments administered to you. By this, the Holy Spirit is cleansing you of all sin, gathering you into the holy church, and making you a people for God's own possession, all according to his great mercy.

IN THE NAME OF JESUS.