

5/23/21 Pentecost – “The Holy Spirit Helps Us” St. Peter, Doss, TX

Gen.4:6-7 *6 So the Lord said to Cain, “Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen? 7 If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin lies at the door. And its desire is for you, but you should rule over it.”* (NRSV) Or the RSV, says *but you must master it.”*

He did not and we know what happened. He killed his brother, Abel. He didn't master or rule over his anger. *We all sin and fall short of the glory of God* as Paul says in Romans (3:23) and goes further saying: (Rom.3) *10 as it is written: “None is righteous, no, not one; 11 no one understands, no one seeks for God. 12 All have turned aside, together they have gone wrong; no one does good, not even one.” 13 “Their throat is an open grave, they use their tongues to deceive.” “The venom of asps is under their lips.” 14 “Their mouth is full of curses and bitterness.” 15 “Their feet are swift to shed blood, 16 in their paths are ruin and misery, 17 and the way of peace they do not know.” 18 “There is no fear of God before their eyes.”*

The fact is that we cannot, on our own, master ourselves to avoid sin. We need Jesus Christ, Whose blood washes away our sin and a repentant heart, one that determines with God's help not to fall into the same trap again. Consider all of the commandments. They all help us to avoid traps. Breaking the killing, stealing, and bearing false witness commandments can put you in prison since they are reflected in our laws. The first three commandments can place you in the idolatry trap. Dishonoring marriage and caring for parents can result in broken relationship traps. Finally, coveting what you don't have can put you in an unhappiness trap. The Holy Spirit helps us to avoid these traps if we let Him.

The fact is that we can't be entirely faithful to God without His help. That means not just knowing about him, but knowing Him like you any other person. The difficulty is opening up our spirits, making ourselves vulnerable and taking the position toward God that we are to take for one another. That is asking: what can I do for You, God, and not what can You do for me. God is not a genie in our Christian bottle where we can turn to when we can't get what we want. God is Creator, Redeemer and Sanctifier. When we say that God is our potter and we are the clay, we are asking God to melt us and mold us and make us vessels to pour out His Spirit, to bring joy and gladness to those who have sorrow. That is the opposite of being a consumer which our culture tries to teach us. When you look at the breakdown of sin that Paul talks about, you might say, "Wait, I seek God. I try to do what's good and right. I don't lie, curse or live by anger." We see a lot of that around us in our nation right now. It's easy to see that we as a nation are under God's judgement. But when you seek God's face, truly seek Him, you shouldn't live your life seeking and never finding. Knowing about God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit from the scriptures, sermons you've heard, devotionals you've read, conversations you've had with other Christians about the Triune God is a way of not just knowing about but knowing Him as you address Him in prayer from the heart, as you look for what God wants for your life. Paul said to the Philippians (4:8-9a) *Yes, everything else is worthless when compared with the infinite value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have discarded everything else, counting it all as garbage, so that I could gain Christ and become one with him.* A hymn echoes that. The words go:

1) All I once held dear built my life upon All this world reveres, and wars to own  
All I once thought gain I have counted loss Spent and worthless now, compared to  
this.

(Chorus:) Knowing you, Jesus knowing you There is no greater thing. You're my  
all you're the best; You're my joy, my righteousness and I love you, Lord

2) Now my heart's desire is to know you more, to be found in you, and known as  
yours, to possess by faith what I could not earn- all surpassing gift of righteousness.

3) Oh, to know the power of your risen life and to know you in your suffering, to  
become like you in your death my Lord so with You to live and never die. (Chorus)

The text says: 7 *“If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do  
well, sin lies at the door. And its desire is for you, but you should master it.”*

Seekers can do so with God’s help and forgiveness when we fail. Seekers who  
come to know God, or who then become disciples, have the advantage of not  
wanting to disappoint Him Who loves them more than life. For *“God so loved the  
world that He gave His only begotten Son that Whoever believes in Him will not  
perish but have eternal life.* Never question if you’re saved for Paul told the  
Romans (10:9) *if you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your  
heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.*

Life is not easy. We all have our struggles but do not face them alone. The  
Holy Spirit walks with us through the valley of the shadow of death, the shadow of  
sorrow, the shadow of disappointment, the shadow of ill health, the shadow of  
financial setback, the shadow of fear. Jesus said in our Gospel today: 5 *“But now I  
am going away to the one who sent me, and not one of you is asking where I am  
going. 6 Instead, you grieve because of what I’ve told you. 7 But in fact, it is best  
for you that I go away, because if I don’t, the Advocate won’t come. If I do go away,*

*then I will send him to you. 8 And when he comes, he will convict the world of its sin, and of God's righteousness, and of the coming judgment. 9 The world's sin is that it refuses to believe in me. 10 Righteousness is available because I go to the Father, and you will see me no more. 11 Judgment will come because the ruler of this world has already been judged. 12 "There is so much more I want to tell you, but you can't bear it now. 13 When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own but will tell you what he has heard. He will tell you about the future. 14 He will bring me glory by telling you whatever he receives from me. 15 All that belongs to the Father is mine; this is why I said, 'The Spirit will tell you whatever he receives from me.'* God knows our past and forgives us. He knows our future because He's already been there and because He loves us, we do not have to be afraid. He knows our today and is with us to guide, help, comfort, strengthen, forgive and we can trust Him if we will look at our pasts and how He has done so there. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you to know Jesus in your prayers. St. Paul said: Eph.3:16 *I pray that from his glorious, unlimited resources he will empower you with inner strength through his Spirit. 17 Then Christ will make his home in your hearts as you trust in him. Your roots will grow down into God's love and keep you strong. 18 And may you have the power to understand, as all God's people should, how wide, how long, how high, and how deep his love is. 19 May you experience the love of Christ, though it is too great to understand fully. Then you will be made complete with all the fullness of life and power that comes from God. And may God bless you as you seek to get to know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His suffering. Amen*