

6-12-22 St. Peter Lutheran Church, Doss, TX

*Matthew 28: 18 Jesus came and told his disciples, “I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth. 19 Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations,[b] baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. 20 Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”*

He had spent three years with them, teaching by word and example what it means to be a child of God. Now after suffering and dying on the cross to gain our salvation and rising from the dead to assure our resurrection, he shares these words before He ascended to heaven. At the beginning of the book of Acts, we read: *9 After saying this, he was taken up into a cloud while they were watching, and they could no longer see him. 10 As they strained to see him rising into heaven, two white-robed men suddenly stood among them. 11 “Men of Galilee,” they said, “why are you standing here staring into heaven? Jesus has been taken from you into heaven, but someday he will return from heaven in the same way you saw him go!”*

Before this, that same chapter records: *4 Once when he was eating with them, he commanded them, “Do not leave Jerusalem until the Father sends you the gift he promised, as I told you before. 5 John baptized with water, but in just a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.”*

In our text, Jesus says that we are to baptize in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. We have here on this Trinity Sunday, the mystery of the nature of God. He is not three gods but one. Take a look at page 54 in the green book. Let’s look at how the church struggled with trying to understand the three expressions of the God-head.

It says things like: For the Father is one person; the Son is another and the Spirit is still another. But the deity of the Father, Son and Holy spirit is one, equal in glory, coeternal in majesty. What the Father is, he Son is, and so is the Holy Spirit.

Uncreated is the Father, uncreated is the Son; uncreated is the Spirit. The Father is infinite; the Son is infinite; the Holy spirit is infinite. Eternal is the Father; eternal is the Son; eternal is the Spirit; and yet there are not three eternal beings, but one who is eternal as there are not three uncreated and unlimited beings but one Who is uncreated and unlimited.

You can read through it if you want when you meditate between the bells. What the Athanasian Creed does is help us to see the difficulty of trying to understand mystery.

Now if you were Moses, you would have seen the back of the Lord God. If you were Peter, you would have walked with Jesus and learned with him. But we are neither Moses nor Peter. Whom Jesus sent for us is the Holy Spirit. “I am with you always to the end of the age” is the Holy Spirit.

What Peter and Moses didn't have that we have is the New Testament or Gospel. We have that advantage in seeking to know God through His Word with the help of the Holy Spirit. We have the advantage of having God with us all the time through the Holy Spirit. Before He ascended to heaven, Jesus said, “*5 John baptized with water, but in just a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.*”

Some of Jesus' disciples were baptized by John the Baptist as was Jesus. John called that a baptism of repentance as part of preparing the way for the Lord. Does that mean when we are baptized it is both water and the Spirit? Jesus said to Nicodemus (John 3), “*3 Jesus replied, “I tell you the truth, unless you are born again, (or born from above) you cannot see the Kingdom of God.” 4 “What do you mean?” exclaimed Nicodemus. “How can an old man go back into his mother's womb and be born again?” 5 Jesus replied, “I assure you; no one can enter the Kingdom of God without being born of water and the Spirit. 6 Humans can reproduce only human life, but the Holy Spirit gives birth to spiritual life. 7 So don't be surprised when I say, ‘You must be born again.’ 8 The wind blows*

*wherever it wants. Just as you can hear the wind but can't tell where it comes from or where it is going, so you can't explain how people are born of the Spirit."*

He went on to say in John 14, "16 And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate,[e] who will never leave you. 17 He is the Holy Spirit, who leads into all truth. The world cannot receive him, because it isn't looking for him and doesn't recognize him. But you know him, because he lives with you now and later will be in you." "You know Him" is with your inner knowledge of experience. And then Jesus says the Spirit 'will be in you.' That is an inner spiritual union with the Spirit in your very hearts and souls. What it means to know the Spirit is one Who is ever at our side to guide, help, teach and bless with the Word. He is One Who is actually in our very hearts to mold our minds and our wills with his Word, him we cannot help but know with deepest intimacy. Every bit of faith, love, obedience, every holy motion, delight in God and His Word, its promises and comfort is both a mark of the Spirit's presence in us and of our knowledge of Who he really is.

(Lenski, John's Gospel, p.1001)

My brother is a charismatic Christian and when I asked him in a few words say what 'baptism in the Holy Spirit, he said, "1 Cor. 12 lists the gifts of the Spirit available to one (as The Lord wills) who is baptized in the Holy Spirit. Galatians 5:22 lists the fruits of the Spirit that manifests in the life of one who is baptized in the Holy Spirit. The only gift of the Spirit that can be operated by one who is baptized in the Spirit is that of the speaking in a language not their own, often called "Praying In The Spirit." (1Cor. 14:15) He noted that," I was prayed for multiple times for the Baptism and was seeing the Fruits of The Spirit manifesting in my life, but it was several months before, as I was singing, "Alleluia" that I suddenly was singing with words I did not know. I had read books about not manifesting a prayer language and what to do if I received even one word, so I did and before long a small trickle became a river."

Not everyone's experience is the same, but the goal is to be more open to the Holy Spirit to work in your life.

Where do you go from here? It starts with your desire to know the Holy Spirit more deeply. Second, you pray for that knowing. The answer to that prayer for me has always been an incredibly humble feeling. In Dennis Bennett's book, 9 O'clock in the Morning, he speaks of the reaction of those filled with the Spirit as one of joyful celebration. For me, it is humbling. What amazes me is that I will be working on a sermon or another writing project and the words just come. When in the hospital in an emergency, speaking with a family, many times, the words just come. And I am thankful for that gift.

In Bennett's book, he tells the story of a Presbyterian family that had received the Holy Spirit. To receive the Holy Spirit means to be open to the Spirit. When a person confirms their faith, the following blessing is given by the pastor: "The Father in heaven for Jesus' sake, increase in you the gift of the Holy Spirit, to your strengthen in faith, to your growth in grace, to your patience in suffering and to the blessed hope of everlasting life." This family had joined an interfaith prayer group. One of the group's members was a Lutheran who was an airline pilot. Let me read you this story. (pp 109-110)

I mentioned desiring to be closer to the Holy Spirit, know God through Him better; secondly, praying for just that and third, to use God's Word daily. The Spirit will lead you if you allow Him to do so.

At the end of Walks to Emmaus, the participants are asked, "What are you going to do because of your retreat experience?" Many answer that they want to become more active in their church. Others speak about being a better witness, always looking for opportunities. What about you? What do you plan to do since God through His Holy Spirit is with you and in you? Amen