

Cantate, A&D 2009

John 16:5-15 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 the Father and of the ☩ Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

1 What does the Holy Spirit do? Where can you find Him? Lutherans don't seem to spend a lot of time talking about the Holy Spirit. If you want the Holy Spirit, it seems, you should check a church that advertises its spirit-filled worship, a church with self-declared spirit-led leaders, or a Pentecostal church, where the Holy Spirit can give you the second, and more desirable, baptism of the spirit. The Spirit will confirm this baptism and your special standing as a Christian with the gift of speaking in otherwise incomprehensible languages. On those rare occasions that Lutherans get to talking about the Holy Spirit, it's on the Sunday of Pentecost, and then only briefly.

2 Gathered with His disciples in the upper room the night before His crucifixion, Jesus gave His disciples this word of warning and comfort: "But now I am going to Him who sent me, and none of you asks me, 'Where are you going?' But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your heart. 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."

The departure of Jesus is not for your disadvantage. He goes to the Heavenly Father in order to send the Holy Spirit. When He comes, He will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment. When the Spirit of truth comes, He will guide you into all truth. Without the Holy Spirit, there is no knowledge of truth. But when He came at Pentecost, a mere fifty-three days after Jesus spoke these words, He came convicting the world of sin and righteousness and judgment.

3 The Holy Spirit convicts the world concerning sin because they do not believe in Christ. Apart from faith in Christ, everything is sin. The world has little tolerance for this work of the Holy Spirit. Before you even began, you were damned. Surely you were sinful from before birth, sinful from the time your mother conceived you. Your human nature is spoiled with sin. Worse, not only are you damned by original sin, but you're

damned by the sin you commit every hour. You sin by doing what you should not and by not doing what you should. Your wicked thoughts are no different from wicked actions in their power to damn.

4 To be popular, preachers will want to avoid this work of the Holy Spirit. Talk of sin evokes hostile reactions from sinners. To be well-liked, friends will want to steer clear of pointing out others' sins. To be successful, employees will want to dodge taking a stand on matters of morality. Most of all, to be temporarily comfortable and eternally damned, you will want to evade repentance and Godly sorrow over your own sins. Repent. The Holy Spirit wants to convict you of sin and lead you to repentance. This is to your advantage.

5 That's not the end. The Holy Spirit comes convicting the world of righteousness: concerning righteousness because Jesus has departed to His Father, and you no longer see Him. He comes to convict of righteousness, but not your righteousness. He already convicted you of sin. This righteousness is Christ's, and the Holy Spirit comes to make it yours. The righteousness of God comes through faith in Jesus Christ. You cannot by your own reason or strength believe in your Lord Jesus Christ or come to Him. But the Holy Spirit was sent to guide you into all truth. He has called you by the Gospel, enlightened you with His gifts, sanctified and kept you in the true Christian faith.

6 That's the work of the Holy Spirit—to point you to Christ. Jesus promised, "When the Spirit of truth comes, He will guide you into all 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. He will glorify me, for He will take what is mine and declare it to you. All that the Father has is mine; therefore I said that He will take what is mine and declare it to you." His role is not to point you to Himself but to the One who died for your sins. The role of the Holy Spirit is to deliver the gift of faith, to call, gather, enlighten, sanctify, and keep you and the whole Christian Church in Jesus Christ.

7 Lastly, the Holy Spirit comes convicting the world of judgment. Sin and righteousness are opposites and require judgment between them. The sin was yours, and the righteousness was Christ's. The judgment was rightfully yours, except you were not judged. In your place, Jesus Christ, the sinless Son of God has been judged. He has removed your sin and given you His righteousness. So the Holy Spirit convicts the world concerning judgment because this prince of this world has been judged. The death and resurrection of Jesus delivered you from judgment. Instead, your enemies are judged and condemned. The devil is convicted; you are acquitted. Sin is bound, and you are released. Death is defeated, and you are promised life.

8 Christ has departed, but you are not left alone. The Helper, the Holy Spirit has come and revealed to you the truth: Jesus Christ crucified for you. He takes what is Christ's—namely His righteousness—and declares it to you. Not because you have some elusive Spirit baptism with the sign of speaking in tongues can you be certain that the righteousness of Christ belongs to you but because of the true Baptism and the signs of water and the Word of God.

9 The Holy Spirit works to deliver faith and forgiveness, not by calling attention to Himself but by pointing you to Christ. The less He has you thinking or talking about Himself, the better job He has done. He works through means—Word preached and Sacraments delivered. He gives you certainty by calling your attention away from yourself and what you have done to your Lord and what He has done and continues to do. As certainly as sound waves vibrate the air, the Holy Spirit works to deliver faith. As certainly as the water is wet, He has made you a child of God. As certainly as the pastor's hand rests upon your head, your sins are forgiven. As certainly as the bread is baked and the wine is fermented, the death and resurrection of Jesus delivers to you the forgiveness of your sins. The Holy Spirit takes what is Christ's and delivers it to you.

In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Soli Deo Gloria
Pastor Jeff Hemmer
Hope, Jerseyville, IL