

**Grace Lutheran Church  
Trinity Lutheran Church**  
Wichita, Kansas  
**The Seventh Sunday of Easter**  
*Exaudi* — “Hear, O Lord, ...”  
May 24, 2020

Text: **St. John 15:26–16:4 & I Peter 4:7-14**

*LSB, One-Year Series*

+ *Jesu Juva*: Jesus, help me! +

**The Spirit of Truth will Bear Witness to Christ—  
and You also will Bear Witness because You have been with Him**

In the name of the Father, and of the (+) Son, and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen**

Having witnessed their Lord Jesus ascend into heaven, Jesus’ Disciples were filled with anxiety and wonder as they returned from the Mount of Olives on the road from Bethany to Jerusalem. Perhaps they began by asking one another the question that Christians have been asking ever since that day, “By faith, how ought we to live?” Jesus anticipated their concern, and answered that question in today’s Gospel.

Jesus told them in advance—He gave them warning—that they would be facing troubles, in order “that [they] may be kept from stumbling.” Three years they had spent following Him, and during that time He had shielded them from such dangers and troubles. But as His Apostles, they would face troubles directly, without seeing His comforting presence.

Yet Jesus would not leave them alone. Before departing to heaven, Jesus promised that He would send the Spirit of truth from His Father.

**I. The Spirit of truth will bear witness to Jesus the Christ**

The coming of the Spirit fulfills Jesus’ promise to send us a Helper—the only-going divine witness to all that is true. Indeed, since the day of Pentecost He has continually sent us the Holy Spirit, to remain with us forever.

The Spirit of truth continues to bear witness to Jesus the Christ—the Son of God the Father—to all who believe. The Holy Spirit, through the Word of God, continues to verify that Jesus is the Christ, the I AM, the true and only God, just as He said that He and the Father are one!

In the Gospel of John alone there are at least eleven distinct times that Jesus testified to His identity as God, the I AM. He said,

I AM [the Christ] (4:25,26);

I AM the bread of life (6:35,48);

I AM the light of the world (8:12; 8:24; 9:5);

“When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am He.” (8:28);

“... before Abraham was, I AM.” (8:58);

I AM the door of the sheep (10:7,9);

I AM the good shepherd (10:11,14);

I AM the resurrection and the life (11:25; 13:19);

I AM the way, the truth, and the life (14:6);

I AM the true vine (15:1-5);

I AM He [Jesus of Nazareth] (18:5,6,8).

## II. Christ Jesus has spoken these words of promise and comfort

Making full use of the His divine power, knowing all that would occur, Jesus spoke these words of promise and comfort.

*<sup>1</sup>I have said all these things to you to keep you from falling away. <sup>2</sup>They will put you out of the synagogues. Indeed, the hour is coming when whoever kills you will think he is offering service to God. <sup>3</sup>And they will do these things because they have not known the Father, nor Me. <sup>4</sup>But I have said these things to you, that when their hour comes you may remember that I told them to you.*

What this means is that the end of all created things, also the end of times and of seasons, is near. You may wonder, when will that time occur? Dear believers in Christ, that time is now here. We are even now living in the end times. Truly, we don't know the day nor the hour, for these things belong only to the hidden knowledge of God, who alone possesses the specific knowledge of when the end of these end times will come. Our God has not appointed for us to know His hidden knowledge. Yet we may take comfort in knowing that our Father in heaven and Jesus Christ, the Victor over sin, death and the devil, is in full control of the times and seasons of His creation.

How do we know that we are living in the end times? We know, because just as Jesus had warned us, even now people in the world voice and demonstrate great hostility towards us and all who remain faithful to Christ. Even five months ago, who among us would have believed that not only would our worship services be banned by governing authorities, but that they would also barricade church doors and even the parking lots where we go to worship the Lord, threatening to arrest or at least to fine us pastors who defy their injunctions? Even in the face of such persecution, we share in Christ's suffering. Therefore we are to always be self-controlled, sober minded, and devoted to prayer.

The Apostle Peter, who endured persecution and was martyred for his faith, was moved by the Holy Spirit to write, "If you are insulted for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you." (*I Peter 4:14*)

Many holders of the true faith in Christ Jesus have been killed by those who think that they have done the will of God—and still many more will be killed for the name of Jesus.

Questions has always been asked: Why does the world do such horrible things? Why do they hate us so? Their brutality and hatred is the result of having never known Jesus. Indeed they actually hate Jesus by name, as well as that of our Heavenly Father. For the same reason, Jesus was mocked, beaten and crucified by those who rejected and hated Him.

Saint Peter was inspired to write, "Do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you." (*I Peter 4:12*)

Jesus has spoken these things to keep us from falling away from Him. He has spoken these things so that when His words come to pass you may remember that He told them to you, and that you and I may remain steadfast in the one, true faith. Jesus said, "*I did not say these things to you from the beginning, because I was with you.*"

"Rejoice insofar as you share Christ's sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when His glory is revealed." (*I Peter 4:13*)

## III. You also will bear witness to Jesus Christ

All Christians must live by faith in Christ, and living by faith involves bearing witness to Christ in everything we say, and all that we do, and don't do. Pastor Boyle, last Sunday reminded us that we bear witness to our faith in Christ even by the parking of our cars in the church parking lot. In

the face of even this health crisis, this epidemic, we come here before God, to call upon Him in prayer, praise, and thanksgiving for even this suffering.

The Apostles who were with Christ from the beginning, even after His ascension continued to bear witness to Him—attesting that Jesus was crucified, suffered & died, was buried, and rose again on the third day. They preached and they wrote that Christ the LORD then ascended to heaven to rule over all, did I say all?, His creation. Yes, Christ Jesus rules over even persecution and life ending disease!

Likewise, the Holy Apostolic Ministry continues in the unbroken proclamation of the Gospel.

- By the sacramental water of Holy Baptism, the Holy Spirit washes us sinners both young and old of our sins, clothing us with the righteousness of Christ, and making us children of God.
- In the same way, He continues to feed us the true Body and Blood of Christ, strengthening us in the one true faith, and preparing us for their eternal wedding feast in the kingdom of heaven.

The Holy Spirit also makes us witnesses of the things that Jesus did and said from the beginning until now.

- Keep loving and showing love to one another—because of your sins and in spite of theirs! (*I Peter 4:8*)
- Show hospitality to one another, and to those who are strangers too, with no bitterness nor resentment. (*I Peter 4:9*)
- As good stewards of God’s varied grace, use the gifts that you have received from God as a means to serve both our Lord and one another. (*I Peter 4:10*)
- However you have been given to serve, whether by speaking or teaching the Word of God or by performing deeds of service to others by the strength that God supplies, do everything so that God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. (*I Peter 4:11*)

We see with eyes of faith that God has been glorified through Jesus Christ, that He has purchased us at a tremendous price, and that He has sought us out and called each one of us by name. He has made us to be His people, and forgiven us all of our sins. We are His glory, and we show that glory forth when we live as His people, talk as His people, pray as His people, love as His people—loving others as Jesus loved us—and when we trust Him. Let us live as those who know that the end is not just near, but happening all around us.

Lord, empower us by Your Holy Spirit to live always by faith, and in everything to bear witness to Christ.

To Jesus Christ belong all glory and dominion forever and ever. **Amen**

*Alleluia! Christ is risen!*

***He is risen, indeed! Alleluia!***

*And ascended on high! Alleluia!*

+ *Soli Deo Gloria* +