**May 19th 2024 Pentecost Sunday**

**Text: John 14:15-17** 0722

**Theme: The Temple of the Holy Ghost.**

May the grace of the Lord Jesus and the comfort of the Holy Spirit ever be with you all. Amen. Dear sanctified children of God: There are many times when the Christian life is difficult during this life, in this present evil world. One of the many things that a Christian must face is the terrifying thought: ‘Am I a Christian at all? Do I even believe in God?’ These thoughts proceed from within for we know what we are and we know what we have done, and what sins and evil deeds still proceed from us. For example, I know what I am, I know that I am an adulterer, a liar, a manifest sinner. Because of this I spend much time with the torturous thought that I do not have salvation, I cannot be received to dwell with the holy God, I cannot and will not be saved. This thought very much aligns with the thoughts of many Christians throughout history. Each one has wrestled with the horrific notion that I have simply deceived myself into thinking that I am a Christian, but in reality I am nothing but a hypocrite. Yet, it must be known by all those who confess the name of Christ, as their Savior from sin, death, and the devil, that these thought and notions are nothing but our old man, ruled by sin and Satan, attempting to convince us that we sinned too much or too grievously to be forgiven and saved. Is anything too hard for the Lord? Is there any sin which will not be forgiven? Is God’s grace of so little worth that it cannot impart forgiveness to every contrite and humble soul of man? Indeed God’s grace is greater than any sin, and no sin is too great to forgive, and nothing is too hard for the Lord. *“Moreover the Law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.” (Rom. 5:20)* We, then, are taught in Scripture not to succumb to these threats of the Law, for by faith we no longer dwell under the Law or the curse of the Law, but we live by faith through grace. (Rom. 6:14)

However, these thoughts persist, and certain passages of Scripture terrify us, like the parable of Jesus concerning time believers, and hypocrites. Yet, it is important that we understand that those passages are given and intended for our flesh, and for those yet living in unbelief. Many Christians also see a passage like that which speaks of the unforgivable sin against the Holy Spirit, and worry that they have committed that very sin. However, the sin against the Holy Ghost is not a sin that will not be forgiven because it is too great a sin, but because it is a sin of unbelief, and as we know it is the gift of faith which saves and unbelief which damns. Now no true Christian is in unbelief, but we have now come full circle back to our original thought: Am I a Christian at all? The is the question that is answered by our text, and the intent of the theme of this morning. We are to learn about the Christian as a temple of the Holy Ghost. We will find the truth concerning faith and the witness of the faith that dwells in our hearts. Today being Pentecost Sunday, the day we recognize and remember the outpouring of the Spirit to the disciples, we will see this same thing done throughout the New Testament Church. For many of us our text, the words of Jesus Himself, grant comfort to the heart terrified by sin, and terrified by the thoughts of eternal damnation on account of sin. Let us then see our text for today, learning of the temple of the Holy Ghost. Our text is found in the fourteenth chapter of the Gospel according to John beginning at verse fifteen.

**Quote text here.**

Let us pray, O glorious and eternal Father in heaven we praise and bless Thee for Thy many wonderful works unto us, but we especially thank Thee for the sending of Thy Son into the flesh to redeem us from sin and death. Help us to recognize Thy great sacrifice for our many sins, and evermore to thank Thee. O Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, Thou Son of God and Son of man, Thy saving work is our greatest treasure and only hope for salvation. Do Thou grant that we may ever remember Thy work, and the great sacrifice Thou didst offer in our behalf. Teach us to praise Thee and thank Thee. Remove from our hearts all bitterness and thanklessness, and cause our faith to sing out in grateful song to Thee. O Holy Spirit, who dost proceed from the Father and the Son, grant that we be brought to a sincere faith in the work of Jesus Christ. Remove from our hearts the old man with all sin and evil lust, and cause a new man to come forth and arise created in righteousness and holiness. Dwell Thou in our hearts, making our bodies Thy temple, a fit dwelling place for eternal God. Comfort our hearts this day with the assurance that we are truly Thy people, and that we are forgiven and saved through the shed blood of Christ of which Thou dost testify. Strengthen and sustain through life’s rough ways, and bring us safely to our eternal rest at Thy throne. Prepare us to fight the good fight of faith; cause us to lay hold onto eternal life. O Triune God, the only true and living God, grant all these things unto us for the sake of our Savior, in whose name we pray. Amen.

Guided then by the Spirit of God let us learn that the temple of the Holy Ghost:

1. **Is your body.** We read verse seventeen of our text: **read verse here.** The Savior of the world here addresses the concern of the disciples about the prophecy of Jesus that He would be crucified, resurrected, and ascend into heaven, to be taken from them in physical form. They would no longer see Him, and were fearful that without Him they would lose the promise, the hope, and the comfort that they had by His presence with them. Jesus here tells them that He will send another Comforter, even the Spirit of truth, and that this Spirit will dwell within them. He would make their bodies His temple. The indwelling of the Spirit in our bodies, cannot happen unless that body is a fit dwelling place for almighty God Himself. Now when we are talking about sinful people, who are corrupt in their bodies and souls, we come to the realization that we are in no wise fit dwelling places for God Himself. And it is here that our flesh along with Satan begin to accuse us and attack us, affirming each other with the idea that YOU cannot be a dwelling place for the Spirit, because YOU are a sinner. This is pone of the tricks of Satan, one which he uses to overthrow faith, attempting to convince us of our own unworthiness. And indeed we are unworthy, but here is where we find the beauty of the Gospel. The Gospel is not for perfect people, but for sinners, and in the Gospel sinners are made to be worthy dwelling places for the Spirit of God to dwell. This is done not by works of penance, not by some righteous character within ourselves, but through in the person and work of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins. Seeing this shows us that we are not talking about physical characteristics of the Christian’s body as many imagine to be the case here. This has nothing to do with healthy eating, refraining from smoking or drinking alcohol, it has nothing to do with your skin being free from tattoos, and the like, but that a person is made whole and cleansed from sin by the blood of Christ through faith. Now certainly physical sins, which are being performed in impenitence, do drive the Holy Sprit from the heart, or prevent Him from dwelling there to begin with because impenitence is unbelief, they are one and the same thing, that does not mean that sins of weakness drive Him from the heart. This is an important distinction because Also Christians sin out of weakness, but are in a constant state of penitence, which sins are constantly forgiven for the sake of the shed blood of Christ.

Now all of this shows to us that the indwelling of the Spirit has nothing to do with conduct and everything to do with the work of the Holy Spirit in converting and indwelling a heart. In other words it is all about the work of God and giving glory to Him alone. And this is really nothing more than the very heart of Christianity, for it holds forth the chief article of justification by grace through faith without the deeds of the Law. It quiets the conscience of sincere Christians and gives answer to all those accusations of the devil and our own flesh. This is confirmed by our text, when Jesus says that the world cannot receive the Spirit of truth. We see then that the only difference between the world and the non-world, is faith in Christ. Thus, the Spirit of truth is received by those who have faith. *“But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.” (1 Cor. 2:14)* Now what we have seen so far is a general explanation of our bodies being the temple of the Holy Spirit who dwells there by faith. However, many would still worry if they are Christians at all. This, too, is addressed by our Lord in our text. We have seen that the temple of the Holy Ghost is your body:

1. **Given to comfort and sustain you.** We read verses fifteen and sixteen of the text: **read verses here.** The Holy Spirit is here called ‘the Comforter’ by Jesus, and for good reason. Those that have received the Spirit are thereby shown that they have faith which takes hold of the forgiveness of sins. *“In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the Word of truth, the Gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise. Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of His glory.” (Eph. 1:13-14)* Here Paul describes the giving of the Spirit as connected intimately with the Word of truth, for therein does He work, creating and sustaining faith. The comfort then is the testimony of the Spirit to ourselves that we are, in fact, children of God. Without that testimony we cannot have hope, because we could never be sure of our standing before God, but with it we are assured that we are forgiven and saved despite the fact that we are sinners. Now this is manifest in a very tangible way in our very lives. The fruit of the Spirit will come pouring forth from a heart that is indwelt by the Spirit of God and it can be no other way. This is further, though secondary, witness that we are truly the children and people of God. This is the reason why Jesus opens our text by declaring that if we love Him, keep His commandments. A Christian’s life is spent in service to his Savior, not necessarily in grand philanthropic works, but in everyday service to Him. Jesus told a parable which perfectly aligns with this teaching. Let us turn to the book of Matthew, chapter 25, reading verses 31-46: **read passages here.** You see Christians, having come to a knowledge of their own sin, being humbled according to the Law, and learning that their salvation was sent from above will very often not look upon their own deeds and think of any good whatsoever, but will rather ask what these asked in the parable: “when did we do those things, Lord?” Now Jesus is, of course, not teaching that we will be judged by works, but by works as an indication of faith being present in the heart by the indwelling Spirit of truth. However, very often those everyday services are overlooked because they are mundane, unrecognized, and uncelebrated. However, giving a cup of cold water to a thirsty person in Jesus’ name is held in regard by God as the same as giving it to Jesus Himself. Thus in our everyday lives when we put in a good, honest day’s work for our employer as to Christ it is a fruit of faith and of the Spirit. When we pray with our children, or when we faithfully perform our chores, or when we listen attentively in church, these are all fruits of the Spirit and are evidence of the faith which dwells in our heart.

Now, it may be that you still are worried whether you believe or whether your works are actually good works at all. And this is what Martin Luther addressing election saying in effect: If you wonder whether you are one of the elect, simply look to the cross of Christ, and find there the payment for all your sins, and your complete and final redemption. Thus whenever we wonder about our own forgiveness or our own faith, the answer is not, nor ever shall be, ‘I have sinned too great or too much; but, rather, the answer is: ‘Jesus gave His body and shed His blood for the remission of my sin, and has purchased for me eternal salvation.’ Going back to the basics is the place to begin, for as McLaughlin said: ‘if you believe it you have it.’ There we find the converting power of the Spirit, assuring us that Jesus did, indeed, die for you and that the Spirit has brought you to faith and works in you all manner of good. Now this, of course, is not an excuse for impenitent sin to continue, but an exhortation to love Him because He first loved us, and if we love Him we will keep His commandments and repent of sin. Let us then rejoice in the giving of the Spirit, and the witness of our faith and hope, giving our hearts the comfort we need to strengthen our faith. May He ever dwell within us unto eternal life. Amen.