

The Message Of The Christians' Pentecost.

Text: John 14:23-31

Suggested Hymns:

128, 131, 187, 294, 134

- 1) A message of love
- 2) A message of light
- 3) A message of peace
- 4) A message of joy

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all. Amen.

The text for our sermon today is John 14:23-31, ²³ *Jesus answered and said to him, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him. ²⁴ "He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine but the Father's who sent Me.*

²⁵ *"These things I have spoken to you while being present with you. ²⁶ "But the [Comforter], the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you. ²⁷ "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.*

²⁸ *"You have heard Me say to you, 'I am going away and coming back to you.' If you loved Me, you would rejoice because I said, 'I am going to the Father,' for My Father is greater than I. ²⁹ "And now I have told you before it comes, that when it does come to pass, you may believe. ³⁰ "I will no longer talk much with you, for the ruler of this world is coming, and he has nothing in Me. ³¹ "But that the world may know that I love the Father, and as the Father gave Me commandment, so I do. (NKJV)*

Lord God, heavenly Father, sanctify us through Your truth. Your Word is truth. Amen.

Dear friends in Christ,

The origin of Pentecost dates back to the time when the children of Israel entered the Promised Land.¹ It was known at first as the *Festival of Weeks* because it was celebrated seven full weeks, or fifty days, after the Passover.²

It was also known as the *Feast of the Harvest*, because it concluded the harvest of the later grain.³ Furthermore, it was also known as the *Day of First-Fruits*, because the first loaves made from the new grain were then offered on the altar.⁴

Christians observe Pentecost, the fiftieth day after Easter, which is the Lord's resurrection, and the tenth day after His ascension, because of the fact that on this day, according to Christ's promises and a number of prophecies from the Old Testament, the Holy Spirit was poured out upon the disciples of Christ at Jerusalem, and because on that day the Christian Church was born.⁵

Pentecost not only has a history, but also a message. Of old the message of Pentecost was chiefly one of the Law. It was kept according to Ceremonial Law. Today, the message of Pentecost is a Gospel-message. Let us therefore consider *The Message of the Christians' Pentecost*. May the Lord bless our meditation.

1. A Message Of Love

Our Gospel-lesson for Pentecost contains a message of love. Firstly, it is the *Love of Jesus for His disciples*. The parting Saviour is engaged in comforting His sorrowing disciples, who are "***not of the world,***" but must continue in the world, although the world hates them for Jesus' sake.⁶

The comfort of His visible presence is about to be withdrawn from them, but Jesus promises His disciples not to leave them "comfortless," fatherless, or orphaned,⁷ but to send them "***another Comforter***" and Helper who was to abide with them "***forever.***" Jesus promises them that He and His Father (and the Holy Spirit; for where the Father and the Son are, the Holy Spirit will also be) will come and make their abode with them, if they love Him and keep His words.⁸

Jesus promises to send them the Comforter, who was to open their understanding,⁹ in order that Jesus' words might no longer be "proverbs,"¹⁰ that is, dark, mystical sayings, to them. Jesus also bestows upon them, in order to calm their troubled hearts, the benediction of His peace.¹¹

This is a peace which the world cannot give. It speaks of the joy that will be theirs if they love Him,¹² and understand the meaning of His going to the Father, both for Himself and for them. See how the Master loved His disciples in spite

of all their shortcomings. What loving concern Jesus shows in behalf of their welfare!

Secondly, it is *Love of the Father for Christ's disciples*. "***And My Father will love him.***" Christ's disciples are all those people who love Him and keep His words. Jesus does not deny that His apostles are such. He is merely stating a fact which people are so apt to forget and which therefore must be stated again and again.

And what a love, the Father's love for the followers of Christ! A love like that of the Saviour. It moves Him and His Son Jesus Christ to do what Jesus here says, ***We will come to him and make Our home with him***, that is, with him whom We love.

Our home — this is not a mere temporary visit, but an abiding stay. ***Come to him*** — through the means of grace, the Word and the Sacraments. ***Make Our home with him*** means with, and in him. "***We***" refers to the Holy Trinity.¹³ Marvellous love, the love of the Holy Trinity for those who love Christ and keep His words!

Such love for Christ, of course, presupposes saving faith in Christ. "***For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.***"¹⁴ Such faith works by love.

The Triune God is with them always and within them. Jesus says it, and He adds, ***and the word which you hear is not Mine but the Father's who sent Me***. That is true of everything that Jesus ever told them. It is true of what He has said to them just now. And this is the Christians' Pentecost Gospel, a message of the love of God for the followers of Christ, and yes, for all people.¹⁵

Love begets love. God's love for man cannot fail to find a response in the hearts of men, especially in the hearts of those who know Him, the Father, and Jesus Christ, whom He has sent.

Therefore our Pentecost Gospel speaks of *disciple-love for Christ*. ***If anyone loves Me. If you loved Me***. Christ desires to be loved by all people for He has redeemed them all. The Father desires to be loved by all people for He so loved them all that He gave His only-begotten Son to be their Saviour. The Holy Spirit

loves them all so much that He wants to sanctify them all through faith in the Gospel which He inspired the apostles to write. This is illustrated by the command in Mark 16:15, ***“Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.”***

However, love of God on the part of man demands knowledge of God, that knowledge upon which saving faith rests, that faith the fruit of which is love, the love of God and man.¹⁶

Yes, there must be love of man for all people also. Christians for one another,¹⁷ for their neighbour,¹⁸ and even for their enemies.¹⁹ Scripture says in 1 John 4:20, ***he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen?***

On Pentecost the Christian Church was born. By the grace of God we are members of it and enjoy its glorious blessings. These are the reasons to love God and our Saviour Jesus Christ! These are the reasons to show our love for our fellow-men by bringing them the saving message of love, the glad tidings of the grace of God in Jesus Christ! The Christians' Pentecost-message is a message of love.

2. A Message Of Light

The Christians' Pentecost-message is also a message of light.

Christ's disciples needed light at the time when Jesus spoke His farewell words to them. They were in the dark concerning many things that He spoke to them.²⁰ To us who know all that happened later Jesus' words about His death, resurrection and ascension are plain; but to the disciples who were filled with Jewish prejudices, they appeared exceedingly obscure.

The light is promised. Our text says, ***the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.*** The “Comforter,” “Helper,” “the Spirit of Truth,” would come. The Father would send Him in Christ's name, and He would enlighten them. He would *“serve as their teacher, giving them the understanding of all things which they still had in memory and recalling to their minds such things as they had forgotten.”*²¹

The promise is fulfilled.²² The apostles were enlightened. Now they understood what Christ's death and resurrection meant.²³

The light which came to the apostles on Pentecost is still shining in the world. Look for it in the New Testament. The apostles were guided "*into all truth,*" not into new truths, but into the truth of "*all things that Christ said to you* by the Holy Spirit.²⁴

This occurred when they wrote as well as when they spoke. Here is an indisputable proof for the inspiration of the New Testament, through which the Holy Spirit even today enlightens all who come to Christ, having called them by the very Gospel which it, together with the Old Testament, also inspired by the Holy Spirit.²⁵

Through *the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ,*²⁶ He has *shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.*²⁷ That excellency of knowledge St. Paul treasures. We read in Philippians 3:8, ⁸ *Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ.*

Who, then, will deny that the message of the Christians' Pentecost is one of light? *You are the light of the world.*²⁸ We read in Isaiah 60:1, ¹ *Arise, shine; For your light has come! And the glory of the LORD is risen upon you.*

3. A Message Of Peace.

Christ's disciples were in need of peace. "*In the world you shall have tribulation,*" says the Master to them.²⁹ They were no longer of the world and could therefore expect no favours of the world.³⁰

Christ gives them peace. Our text says, *Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you.* Peace is the opposite of being "troubled" at heart and being "afraid." The latter was the condition their hearts because the Master had told them He was going away. Nothing this world has to offer could make up for their loss of Jesus, they thought.

It is true: Christ lost, everything lost; Christ gained, everything gained. In view of their great sorrow at His going, the Lord, seeking to quiet their troubled hearts, said: "*I will not leave you comfortless [or orphans]; I will come to*

you,”³¹ *I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also.*³²

Jesus promises the coming of the Holy Trinity to them in the words of our text with the term *“our.”* But they admittedly do not understand, and therefore the Lord promises them the Comforter who will help them. By these truths and promises Jesus provided for their peace in the time of His approaching departure.

But the expression refers also to the peace which is given to all people who love the Saviour. The Law condemns them because of their sins, and they are troubled; but by faith in Jesus they are reconciled to God, their conscience is at ease because of the forgiveness of their sins, eternal life is assured to them, and thus the peace of God which passes all understanding rests upon them. That, primarily, is the peace Jesus bequeaths to His followers.

Jesus calls it *“My peace”* because He procured it for all sinners on Calvary. He gives, offers, conveys, and seals peace to men through the means of grace. Of such a peace the world knows nothing.

The enjoyment of Christ’s peace came to the disciples fully on the day of Pentecost and continued with them through life. Realising the preciousness of it, they also wanted others to have it and at once proclaimed it to the multitude; and through their message and the blessing and power of the Holy Spirit the same peace descended upon three thousand of their hearers that very day.³³

Christ’s peace is offered to all people in the Gospel which Christians are commissioned to preach the world over. Blessed are those who search the Scriptures for it, who hear the Word of God and keep it; blessed are those who proclaim it. Truly, the message of the Christians’ Pentecost is one of peace.

4. A Message Of Joy.

This joy is not the pleasures of sin,³⁴ worldly lusts,³⁵ the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, or the pride of life.³⁶ Such pleasures are vain.³⁷ Moreover, they war against the soul.³⁸ The Lord very emphatically warns against them.³⁹

This joy is Heavenly joy. Our text says, *If you loved Me, you would rejoice.* How true! As surely as those who love Christ will keep His words,⁴⁰ just as surely will those who love Christ be full of joy, and that joy will be kindled in their hearts through His words.

Could there be a more joy-enkindling message than Christ's words, the Gospel? Think of the Christmas-message, "*For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.*"⁴¹ Think of the Easter-message, *He is risen, as He said;*⁴² and the Pentecost-message of our text: ²⁶ "*But the Comforter, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.*" ²⁷ "*Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.*"

What joy also to hear of Christ's going to the Father,⁴³ knowing what it means for the Saviour, namely, the end of His deep humiliation; and for a sin-cursed world, namely, the completion of His redemptive work, the overthrow of the kingdom of Satan,⁴⁴ the establishment on the earth of the Christian Church and light, peace, and joy for its members knowing that it is also a proof of His love for the Father, with all that it implies,⁴⁵ and of His willing obedience!

Let us be joyful on Pentecost. Its message is unmistakably the purest and sweetest Gospel, a message of love, light, peace, and joy.

Let us conclude with the words of the hymnist,⁴⁶

Saviour, since of Zion's city
I through grace a member am,
Let the world deride or pity,
I will glory in Thy name.
Fading is the worldling's pleasure,
All his boasted pomp and show:
Solid joys and lasting treasure
None but Zion's children know. Amen.

The peace of God, which passes all understanding, will keep our hearts and minds, in Christ Jesus. Amen.

¹ Lev. 23:10, 15-16

² Exodus 34:22; Deut. 16:10, 16; Lev. 23:15-16; 2 Chron. 8:13

³ Exodus 23:16

⁴ Lev. 23:17

⁵ Acts 2:1-41

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- 6 John 15:18-19; 17:14
7 John 14:18
8 v. 23
9 v. 26
10 John 16:24
11 v. 27
12 v. 28
13 1 Cor. 3:16; 6:19; 2 Cor. 6:16
14 John 3:16
15 Matthew 18:11
16 Gal. 5:6
17 John 15:35; Heb. 13:1; 1 Pet. 2:17b
18 Mark 12:31
19 Matt. 5:44; Luke 6:27
20 John 16:18, 25
21 Kretzmann, Pop. Com., Vol. I, 492
22 Acts 2
23 Compare Acts 2:22-36, especially in connection, with Matt. 16:22; Luke 9:44-45; 18:31-34
24 John 16:13
25 2 Tim. 3:16
26 2 Corinthians 4:4
27 2 Cor. 4:6
28 Matthew 5:14
29 John 16:33
30 John 15:19
31 John 14:18
32 John 14:3
33 Acts 2:37-47
34 Heb. 11:25
35 Titus 2:12
36 1 John 2:16
37 1 John 2:17; Ecel. 2
38 1 Pet. 2:11
39 1 John 2:15-16; Rom. 12:2
40 v. 23
41 Luke 2:11
42 Matthew 28:6
43 v. 28
44 v. 30b

⁴⁵ v. 31

⁴⁶ Hymn 187 v3