

The Spirit-Filled Church

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[0:00] We will be speaking on John 14, the gospel reading this morning, John 14, chapter 15, chapter 15, John 14, chapter 15 to 31, primarily focusing on verses 21 to 29.

It's on page 1071 of your Pew Bible. If I invite you to open along and follow along. The result of the resurrection and ascension of Christ is what?

New life. It is new life for all those who are found in Christ. This new life is that of communion with the triune God.

The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. It is communion with the Father through the Son brought about by the Holy Spirit. That is the promise of God in the preceding verses of chapter 14.

That because of Christ's resurrection, because he had died and he had risen, because he lived, because death could not hold him captive, all those who love him will also live.

[1:44] His resurrection life is ours as well. And Jesus articulates this in his farewell discourse to his disciples. Jesus then articulates what this love for him looks like.

Notice in verse 15, he says, If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And he repeats that throughout this section that we read.

Jesus tells us what love looks like to him. Whoever has my commandments, Jesus continues, and keeps them.

That is, guards them. The word there to keep is to God. God's commandments. Those people, them, are the people who love me, Jesus says.

And he who loves me will be loved by my Father. And I will love him and manifest myself to him. In John's writings, both in his gospel and in his epistles, love for God and obedience to God are intimately connected.

[2:51] The beloved disciple knows no other way to love the Lord than to obey the Lord.

Love is shown in obedience to Christ's commands. Our obedience to Christ's commands is conditioned by our love for him.

It's sort of intertwining. The Holy Spirit is the one who brings us to Christ and helps us to love him. And in turn, such a person is loved by the Father, as Jesus promised.

And it is to such people that Christ will manifest himself. What does that mean? To manifest, as Jesus says. To manifest means to reveal.

To show himself. And Jesus is essentially saying to us, He will show himself to us. He is leaving after all. And he's saying to his disciples, I'm leaving.

[3:50] But yet he still says, I will manifest myself to you. I will show myself to you. This is not a promise to the apostles alone. This is a promise that he makes to the old church.

The faithful assembly of saints. This is a promise he makes to me and you. Christ manifests himself to us. Even though he's not with us bodily, he manifests himself to us through the power of the Spirit.

How can you manifest yourself to your disciples and not to the world? Judas asked. If Jesus reveals himself as he says. Because Judas is thinking, if you manifest yourself, I think this means that you will show your power and your glory.

How can you do that just to us? And the world doesn't see it. And the world doesn't know it. Well, if Jesus reveals himself as he says, it must be in power and splendor. How can this be done without the world knowing?

How is he going to limit this manifestation to just his disciples alone? And by his disciples, I mean all who believe in Jesus Christ, not just the apostles now. And why wouldn't you reveal yourself?

[5:01] Judas seems to be asking Jesus. Why wouldn't you reveal yourself and your kingdom in overwhelming power to the world anyway? And Judas is yet to understand that the time that we are

in is the church age.

This is the age where God manifests himself in the power of the Holy Spirit. Where God's power is displayed in the world through you and me.

Through the church. That's how God displays his power. By the agency of God the Holy Spirit. Now God's promise to us is sure and trustworthy.

God says, I will remain with you. He remains with us. And he relates to us in an intimate and mystical union. The Son and the Father in the power of the Holy Spirit are in communion with believers.

You can't even wrap your head around that statement. God, the triune God, communes with you and me.

[6:16] Here is a wonderful promise that our Lord makes. That those who keep his commandments. That those who guard his words in their hearts as fruits of their love for him.

Will have ongoing fellowship with the triune God. Now let's see to whom this promise is made in verse 23. Jesus says, if anyone loves me, he will keep my word.

And my word will, and my father will love him. And he will come to him and make our home. And we will make our home with him. It is to anyone who hears. Jesus seems to be saying.

It is to anyone who hears and believes and guards and treasures the word of God. Those are the people Jesus is speaking of.

To such people, God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit promise to dwell with them. God promises that you will be the very temple of God.

[7:16] This is the present reality of the church of God today. This is our present reality, brothers and sisters. It is the reality of every individual believer. Your very body, as Paul says in 1 Corinthians 6, is the temple of the Holy Spirit.

No longer do you need to go to Jerusalem to worship the Lord. This is the fulfillment of God's promise, even to that Samaritan woman. This is the well-spring living water that never runs dry. That's never quenched. That you will never thirst again. It is the promised Holy Spirit. Pentecost is the fulfillment of that. But note the inseparable connection between being spirit-filled and word-centered.

The spirit-filled church is a word-centered church. By spirit, I mean the Holy Spirit. And by word-centered, I mean God's word. We cannot claim to have the spirit of truth, which is the Holy Spirit, who proceeds from the Father and the Son without guarding, that is holding unto, and treasuring, and keeping the word of God.

The spirit-filled church is a word-centered church. It is the spirit of Christ that enables us to love Christ. And to keep his word in our hearts. It is the spirit that draws us to God's word and makes God's word alive in us.

[8:52] You see the sort of the sickle commotion of how God illumines God's word to us in the power of the Holy Spirit. Paul talks about this in 1 Corinthians. It is the spirit of Christ that makes the words of Christ known.

And he goes on in verse 24. Whoever does not love me does not keep my words. And the word that you hear is not mine, but the Father's who sent me. Without the Holy Spirit, we cannot rightly grasp the word of God.

And we cannot keep it either. This is not a matter of human effort and striving. When God says, if you love me, you will keep my words, it is not meaning that you need to gin up the energy and the power in yourself.

You cannot do that. It is the spirit that enables us, empowers us to do it. It is the spirit that gives life. The flesh is no help at all.

Jesus says in John 6, we are meant to see that verse 23 and 24 are descriptive, not prescriptive.

[9:54] This is what it looks like for those who are in Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit. That is, they describe those who are truly loved by God and those who truly love God.

Those who really keep his word. And those who are not, cannot keep his word. And do not truly love him. That is the conclusion. And so Jesus promised this promised helper.

The word there is paraclete in the Greek. This helper. You know what paraclete means? Advocate. It means lawyer.

Karen is a lawyer. You can call her a paraclete. But it is not that kind of, I mean, I know that Karen is a very good lawyer. But this is incomparable to the kind of lawyer that Jesus is saying there.

And look at what Jesus says. I will send another. That word another is doing a lot. What Jesus is saying to us and to the apostles is, I will send another helper, another advocate, just like me. [11:04] That's why it's another. Another similar to me. I will send, and where is he coming from? He's coming from God. I will send this helper who will empower us to do that which Christ describes here.

In John chapter 14. Would empower us to love God and to obey his word. Jesus continues. These things I have spoken to you while I am still with you.

But the helper, this paraclete, this advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things. And bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.

In these words, Jesus shows us that the word-centered church will be apostolic. Because in these verses 25 and 26, Jesus promises what?

What is the Holy Spirit going to do? He will bring to remembrance all that I have said to you. Now we must be careful. Because this promise, this particular promise in verse 25, is to whom?

[12:06] Not to us. It is for us, but it's not to us. The promise to bring to remembrance everything that he said to us, everything I have said to you, that promise is to the apostles.

He guarantees them that his words will be brought to their remembrance. The Holy Spirit is the one who will do this. This promise is for the apostles alone.

Those who have seen the risen Lord and are expressly commissioned by him. And that's why Jesus says in verse 25, These words I have spoken to you while I am still with you.

That's why we know he's not talking about us here. It is for us, but not to us, this promise. Because we have not seen him face to face. We have not heard him audibly speaking to us.

He says, while I'm still with you, he's speaking to the people in the room with him, the apostles.

Jesus is referring now to those who are in the upper room with him. And the promise of our Lord is this.

[13:11] To the apostles. He's saying to them, The helper, the advocate, the Holy Spirit, will do what to you? Will complete and fill out and bring to your remembrance everything I have spoken to you.

Now, when I say this promise, it's not to us, but it's for us. What do I mean by that? Because this promise to lead into all truth is for the authentic and authorized eyewitnesses of the gospel in the earthly ministry of Jesus.

And so we have confidence because Jesus has promised, I will lead you, the apostles, into all truth. I will bring to your remembrance everything I have said to you. Imagine, just for a second, this is a bit of an aside, remember what the apostles were like when Jesus was on earth.

Do they seem to you like people who are, whose words are trustworthy, who you will follow, who you have confidence?

Do they inspire confidence, the apostles, while Jesus was on earth? No. I mean, they were very much like us. You think of these bumbling fools following Jesus, just like we are.

[14:23] They didn't truly get it. They didn't fully get it. They didn't completely get it. Even after, as we saw last week, even as, before Christ ascended, even after the resurrection, they still didn't fully get it.

Because what were they asking the Lord? Is it now that you will restore Israel? The kingdom. They haven't fully grasped the whole, all of it. But when did they fully get it?

Pentecost. When the Holy Spirit came in power. Look at the shift in the apostles. Look at the fulfillment of God's promise here in John 14.

They stood up, all of them, proclaiming the gospel in different languages and tongues of the people who were gathered from all the nations in Jerusalem for the Feast of Pentapots, for the Feast of Shavuot.

They were saying, preaching the gospel in their languages. And the people came. And here is, where were they before when Jesus died?

[15:29] They're hiding. Afraid for their lives. And now, on Pentecost, on the Feast Day, in Jerusalem, when there's political fever, and you don't want to run afoul of either the temple authorities or the Roman authorities, because they don't want to riot, because there's a lot of people in Jerusalem, and you want to keep quiet and keep unnoticed and go unnoticed, that is the kind of time those same people who were before hiding now comes out and they proclaim Jesus Christ crucified.

Peter stood in front of thousands and said, you crucified him, the Lord of life. He is risen. He calls them to faith in Jesus Christ. That kind of boldness, that kind of assurance, even that kind of recollection of God's word, it's not by mere power.

It is the power of the Holy Spirit at work in the Apostle Peter and all the apostles. This is the fulfillment of Jesus' promise. This is why I say that the promise that Jesus makes in verse 25 is not to us, but it is for us.

Because it is on that basis of that promise that Jesus makes, I will bring to remind your remembrance everything I've spoken, that we can trust this word that we read, the Bible.

We trust it. Because the Lord has promised that the apostles, to whom he has deposited this word, are true eyewitnesses, true testifiers, true witnesses of what has happened in the gospel of Jesus Christ.

[17 : 06] That's why the promise is true for us, even though it's not to us. it is a comfort to us. It assures us, the apostles, upon whom the foundation of the church was laid, once and for all, are accurate interpreters of God's word.

So we can trust their word because it is God's word. It is inspired by the Holy Spirit. Not only that, but they were also to, they're going to, look at the words Jesus, they will have accuracy as they're inspired by the Holy Spirit.

What then, what then does this mean for us? It means that we're an apostolic church. we confess this, that the church of Christ is holy, catholic, catholic means universal, that's the word, that's what the word means, and apostolic.

Jude, soon enough, will be baptized into Christ and into his church, this church, that is, I don't mean just Holy Trinity here in Onondaga Hill, I mean the church that is holy, universal, that is catholic, and apostolic.

That word apostolic is important because that's what makes a true church. It is a church that is dependent on the words of Christ through these apostles. When we depart from this word, brothers and sisters in Christ, we cease to be apostolic and we cease to be the church of Christ.

[18 : 51] that's what it means for us to be an apostle. It means to hold unswervingly to the teaching of God's word that we have received in the Holy Scriptures. Jesus continues in verse 27 to 29, peace I live with you, my peace I give to you, not as the world gives, do I give it to you.

Let not your heart be troubled, neither let them be afraid. You heard me say to you, I'm going away and will come to you. If you loved me, you would have rejoiced because I am going to the Father. Greater is he.

The Father is greater than I. And now I have told you before it takes place so that when it does take place, you may believe. In these verses, we see that the apostolic church is also a cruciform church.

That is, it is cross-shaped. It is cross-proclaiming. The peace we talked of here is the peace that was secured by Jesus himself on the cross.

The peace that Christ leaves to us is that peace. It is the peace that it was long hoped for in the Old Testament and fulfilled in the New by the once for all sacrifice of the Lamb who was slain.

[20 : 04] This peace is lasting peace. This is true peace. And it is given to you and me. Given. We don't have to work for it.

We don't have to earn it. It is given to us. And we're not to go and try to secure it at the tip of a sword like the Mohammedans.

We're not to try to keep that peace by feeling like we have to perfectly obey God's law like the Judaizers of Paul's day. We are just to believe and owe to Christ who has secured our peace. many Christians today have brought into the lie that it depends on us to secure peace with God or even to usher that peace into the world.

That's not what Jesus says here. He says, I've given it to you. And this is how D.A. Carson describes it. He says, at the individual level, this peace secures composure in the midst of trouble.

[21 : 08] And you find yourself, if you have the Holy Spirit, if you come to Christ, that is sort of an otherworldly peace that comes with knowing Jesus. peace. It gives you composure in the midst of trouble.

It dissolves fear. It's not that you're not afraid, but it dissolves fear. This is the peace which garrisons, strengthens our hearts and minds against the invasion of anxiety and rules in the hearts of God's people to maintain harmony amongst us.

Why are we brothers and sisters? We will come from all works of life, from every background, every demographic. Why are we gathered? As God's people in Christ's church, it's because the peace of Christ binds us together.

It is the harmony that we have. It is Christ. He is giving this to us as a gift. Now, I'm sure you know that there is no such thing as peace in this world. There's no true lasting peace in this world as we know it.

In Jesus' day, there was something called the Pax Romana. It just means the peace of the Roman Empire. But how was that peace maintained? By the sword. The peace of the Roman Empire was not peaceful if you were being conquered by the Roman Empire.

[22 : 20] It means annihilation and subjugation. And yet they call it Pax Romana. But that's not true peace. Neither today is their peace anywhere else.

The UN does not accomplish any peace, do they? They're toothless and ineffective. That's just being put in a country.

there is war all over the world as we know it. There is no cessation of war. Yet, Jesus says, I'll give you my peace.

Because this peace that he gives transcends the turmoil of the world around us. Even transcends the turmoil of our own hearts. The peace that Christ gives is not as the world gives.

It's true lasting peace that rules our hearts and commands our words and actions. Jesus Christ secures this peace for us at the cross. That's why the church of Christ has to be a crucifixion.

[23 : 19] Because as we look to the cross, we remember the peace that he has wrought and accomplished there. So lastly, in these verses, we see the person and work of Jesus. That's why Pentecost is about Jesus.

And because it is about him, it is then about the Father and the Holy Spirit. perhaps you find it strange for me to say that, that Pentecost is about Jesus. But we must see that it is about him. Because the coming of the Holy Spirit upon every believer in the power, that coming of the Holy Spirit upon you and me and upon the apostles on the day of Pentecost is the ongoing work of Jesus Christ.

The Holy Spirit doesn't do anything apart from revealing Jesus Christ to us. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Christ, as Jesus, as Paul mentions them in 1 Corinthians.

So, as we remember this day, brothers and sisters, and we commemorate and remember the words of Christ and the person of Christ and the advocate that he sent to us who points us to him, I want to leave you with three words of invitation and a word of confrontation and a word of consolation.

[24 : 44] The word of invitation is this. I want to invite you to come and love Jesus and obey his commands. Come and know his peace that he gives.

Jude, who is about to be baptized this morning, has heard that word of Jesus and he has received it into his heart. And loving his Lord, he is obeyed by coming to be baptized in obedience to his word. That's an invitation that is for all of us and it's for the world out there. If you're here this morning and you don't know what it means to have that peace, the invitation is now.

Come, hear, receive the peace of Christ. There's a word of confrontation in these words as well. the word of confrontation is this.

Let us, brothers and sisters, stop redefining and limiting Christ's word to us. Look at the promises he made to us in this text of John's Gospel.

[25 : 46] Let us live in the power of the Holy Spirit and in the peace that he's brought to us. When you're feeling anxious, when you're feeling weighed down by the world, turn to Christ, who makes promises to you.

Who makes promises to us as we gather as his people. He will make promises at the baptism, the sacrament of baptism. He makes promises to us at the sacrament of the Holy Eucharist. Grab hold of those words of promises.

As you witness the baptism of Jude, remember your baptism and the promises the Lord made to you there. And then there's a word of consolation. Be comforted, brothers and sisters, that Jesus and the Father love you and have come to dwell with you through the Holy Spirit.

Because of Jesus' work for you, you have been brought into an intimate family relationship with the triune God. Rest in peace, the peace he gives to all who love it.

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. We will now go to the baptism.