



## **Pentecost 7**

**July 23, 2017 – 9:30 a.m.**

**Rev. Todd Goldschmidt, Pastor**

**Theme: Jesus Is “the Light of the World”**

**Sermon Text: John 14:1-17 (NIV)**

<sup>14</sup> “Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God<sup>[a]</sup>; believe also in me. <sup>2</sup> My Father’s house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you?<sup>3</sup> And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. <sup>4</sup> You know the way to the place where I am going.”

<sup>5</sup> Thomas said to him, “Lord, we don’t know where you are going, so how can we know the way?”

<sup>6</sup> Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. <sup>7</sup> If you really know me, you will know<sup>[b]</sup> my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him.”

<sup>8</sup> Philip said, “Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us.”

<sup>9</sup> Jesus answered: “Don’t you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? <sup>10</sup> Don’t you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? The words I say to you I do not speak on my own authority. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work. <sup>11</sup> Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; or at least believe on the evidence of the works themselves. <sup>12</sup> Very truly I tell you, whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father. <sup>13</sup> And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. <sup>14</sup> You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it.

<sup>15</sup> “If you love me, keep my commands. <sup>16</sup> And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever—<sup>17</sup> the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you.

**Sunday Worship Service: 10:15 A.M. (Sunday School/Adult Bible Study 9 am)**

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Words spoken from one's deathbed usually carry a lot of weight. People who know they are dying often choose their words carefully, because they realize that they may very well be the last words they speak before they pass from this world to the next. Jesus knew what lay ahead of Him as He spent Holy Thursday evening with His disciples. He chose His words carefully. So, we must consider them with care as His modern-day disciples. Jesus' original disciples knew their Friend was about to die. Their dreams of a glorious earthly utopia would die with Him. Fear flooded their hearts. Jesus knew; He understood. So, He addressed their fears with tender, encouraging words. Hope-filled words of comfort and strength.

**“Stop letting your hearts be upset,”** He tells them, essentially. But how were they to do that? The last part of the verse explains: **“Keep on trusting in God; keep on trusting in Me.”** While they could see Jesus, while He walked and talked and taught them, trust wouldn't be too tough. But one He was crucified, once He died, once He arose and ascended into heaven, they would see Him no longer. Would they continue to trust Him even then—even when it looked like He'd left them on their own? Yes, they would. Yes, as by the power of the Holy Spirit they kept their focus on Jesus and on the heavenly Father whom Jesus had revealed to them. What upsets or worries you today? You needn't let your heart be troubled or afraid. Focus on Jesus, on His Word, on His death and resurrection *for you*. Throw yourself into the Father's arms—arms Jesus opened wide for *you* by His redeeming work in *your* behalf! Your loving Lord will keep you safe here on earth until He returns or until He calls you home to heaven through death's doorway.

Jesus told His disciples: **“It is the Father, living in me, who is doing His work”** (v. 10). Philip asked to see the Father, and Jesus replied that since Philip has been witnessing His words and actions—the words and actions of the Son of God—he has, in fact, been seeing the Father all along. Once again, Jesus affirms His divinity as the Christ—God's oft-promised “Chosen One.” That's good to know, but what does it mean for us, practically speaking? As followers of Christ, we may have trouble separating the attributes our Savior is modelling for us from the ones that are unique to Him. This attribute—the work of God in Him—is an example for us to learn from. Jesus clearly says so. In **verse 12** of our text, he states, **“Anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing.”** He also promises in the final verse of today's sermon text that the Holy Spirit will be in those who trust in Him as the Lord of their life and their Savior from sin and death (v. 17).

We gratefully accept this wonderful promise in principle, but we know that we continue to sin nonetheless. We're still feeble in faith and weak in our service to God. We persist in our own agendas and foolishness. We sometimes see a huge discrepancy between the glory of the promise and the reality of our experience. What accounts for such a huge inconsistency—such a massive disconnect between the good that we would and the evil we keep on doing?

On one hand, we should be wonderfully encouraged by this verse. God, the Architect of incomprehensibly vast expanses and amazingly intricate complexities, intends to dwell

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within us in the same power of the Spirit with which He indwelt Christ. Meditate for a moment or two on that.

It's a glorious truth, of which the Apostle Paul was well aware, for he proclaimed to the Philippians: **"It is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose"** (2:13). On the other hand, this verse should greatly unsettle us. We know, deep down in our hearts, that we don't experience it as often as we'd like—as often as we should. Friends, let it do its unsettling work. Be bothered. Be persistent in prayer toward this end. Ask God to satisfy this truth in you, and don't rest until He does. His promises aren't false advertising; they are there to be fulfilled completely in you!

Jesus promises His disciples of every age that they'll be filled by the Holy Spirit. Such an extravagant promise should lead to a very natural question, though few Christians ever think to ask it: If His Spirit lives in us, what'll we be like? The answer is that we'll be like Jesus! So, how is it that many of us study the Holy Spirit in Scripture and yet never get around to relating the Spirit to the character of Christ—or, to our own character? We Lutherans give high praise to the Father and to the Son—and rightly so—but how often do we afford the Spirit the same level of praise and honor? We look for signs of the clearly supernatural, and certainly they may be present if we open the eyes of our faith wide enough. But above all, the highly visible manifestations of the Spirit is this more subtle supernatural work: the Holy Spirit makes us like Jesus! In our character and in our will, we grow to be like Him as the Spirit does His work in us and through us.

Let's take a deeper look at the work of God's Spirit to make us more Christlike. Jesus calls His Spirit, **"the Spirit of truth."** What does that mean for us that **"truth"** is part of one of the Spirit's revealed names? It means that He will remind us of Jesus' teaching; He'll guide us into all truth when we're addled and lack the wisdom we need from God; and we'll be known by our truthfulness, because the Spirit will infuse us with His pure, uncompromising nature. There are some things in life that we can only know by divine revelation. Human wisdom isn't enough for our understanding of God or for our daily decisions. But God reveals Himself and His will for us in the pages and promises of Holy Scripture. The Bible says that **"faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word about Christ"** (Rom. 10:17). The Spirit works thru that gospel message to bring us to faith in Christ and to equip us to do the **"good works, which God has prepared in advance for us to do"** (Eph. 2:10). So, if we want the Spirit to transform us, we must spend time studying God's Word!

You and I aren't limited by our finite thinking, praise God! He works by His Spirit through His revealed Word to lead us into all truth! So, when Jesus states, **"I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me,"** we rejoice that He graciously reveals Himself to us in the sacred Scriptures. As stewards of truth, we can't grow casual in our portrayal of it—not in the minor details of life or in our proclamation of the eternal gospel. We need to walk our talk, if we want non-believers to take our witness seriously. We can't fudge the facts a little to make ourselves look better or to get us out of difficult jams; and we can't soften the truths of the gospel for a low-tolerance culture. Those

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who are filled with God's Spirit—like we are—will be guided by, and always known for, uncompromising truth. After all, we represent **“the way, the truth and the life”!**

So, what does that look like for us? We often read about Jesus having compassion on others. The sick, the hungry, the prodigals of this world are all objects of His concern. In Jesus, we see the compassion of an infinite God in the heart of a human body. We're amazed at the implications of boundless love incarnate! But what's most amazing is that Jesus' emotions are also expressed thru us when His Spirit rules in our hearts. We have access to a love beyond ourselves.

When we come across the truly unlovable, we may ask Jesus to love them thru us. When our human nature recoils at the offensiveness of others, we may trust the Holy Spirit to minister to them despite our own impulses. Jesus' compassion reaches into leper's wounds. It goes to the side of the road where victims lie helpless to help themselves. It sees needs and seeks to meet them whatever the cost. It welcomes rebellious prodigal sons and daughters back home. If Jesus is love incarnate—and He is—and His Spirit is in us—and it is—we will love with His kind of non-judgmental compassion and grace. Both come from beyond ourselves. All we need to do is ask Him, and He'll give us His kind of love!

Jesus spoke to His disciples as a storm began to swell around Him. He knew their world would be rocked. He knew that the very next day after He spoke to His disciples about the Holy Spirit, everything they'd invested their lives in for the last three years would collapse like a house of cards. And this is what He told them as that storm began to brew: **“Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me. My Father's house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.”** When we're upset, we ask a lot of “why” questions. “Why did this happen to me?” “Why does God seem so absent?” “Why doesn't God *do* something?” During such times, we must recall the pledge of the Holy Spirit, a pledge from a sovereign and gracious God, who is **“an ever-present help in trouble”** (Ps. 46:1). Faith will make His presence—with all His peace and comfort—real to us.

But what if this same Spirit lives within us? Not only will we have comfort and peace, but we'll also be equipped to minister to others in their trials, too. We'll be comforting counselors and/or counseling comforters. We'll represent **“the God of all comfort”** (2 Cor. 1:3), and He will minister through us to other needy souls when we point them to Jesus, **“the way, the truth and the life”!** Amen.

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