

John 15:26,27

²⁶ "When the Counselor comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father, he will testify about me. ²⁷ And you also must testify, for you have been with me from the beginning.

Take courage the Holy Spirit has come!

In prideful arrogance they stood on the plain in the region of Shinar. They eyes looked up into the heavens envisioning what their mighty tower would like when it was finished. Those who were commanded by God to fill and repopulate the post-flood world were recklessly determined to stay right where they were. People gathered together in this place to make a name for themselves. They gathered together in direct opposition to the Word of God. As they looked up and saw the work being done no doubt the people cheered, or at the very least they found great pride in this tower that they were building for themselves. As their idolatrous structure stretched to the heavens they turned up their noses at God and ignored his word. In their sinful pride they were thinking that they knew better than the Almighty LORD.

Much has happened since God came down and confused the languages of the people at a place that would be called Babel. Much has happened since then, but it appears the sin of human pride is still very much alive and well. On Tuesday of this past week the governor of Minnesota signed a bill to legalize gay "marriage". Minnesota became the 12th state to sign such a bill and upon its signing the governor declared, "What a day for Minnesota!" The governor thanked the legislators for their "political courage" and thousands of people cheered.

Thousands of people cheered for a law that is in open opposition to what the Bible says about sexuality and marriage. People cheered as they made for themselves a place in the history books. People cheered as they seemed to declare that they knew better than God. That which was labeled political courage was nothing more than sinful human pride.

The sin of human pride is alive and well. We see it rear its ugly head not just on this one issue that is grabbing so many headlines recently (and garnering so much attention in sermons in this church and others) but human pride is found in a

whole slew of other issues across our society that touch and effect our lives in varying ways. Advocates for abortion wave their human theories on what is right and what is wrong. They ignore the word of God. They influence the minds of young people all across our land. They say and do what they feel is right with blatant disregard for God's Word. Evolution is taught in our public schools because certain human scientists came up with and passed down their own theories of how we got here. This is the case even though God's Word tells us clearly how we were created. God's Word of truth describes for us how the earth was formed and how God formed man out of the earth as the crown of his creation. Unfortunately these issues are just the beginning, the tip of the iceberg so to speak. There are a plenty of other similar examples of this sin of human pride that regularly flies in the face of basic Christianity.

As one Christian writer recently said, *"secular culture today views orthodox Christians churches as troublesome... and that society will be best served if Christians are limited in their influence on public life."* He then went on to illustrate his point by saying. *"We are in the midst climate change – one that's getting colder and colder toward religion."* (Hillsdale College Imprimis – www.hillsdale.edu)

When surrounded by such a harsh and coldly immoral climate we have to also ask ourselves: Are our hearts starting to cool as well? There is the temptation for us as believers to lose our fire for the gospel. There is the temptation to pour cold water on our beliefs and to just accept that this is how things are now. There is the temptation to do nothing, say nothing, give in, wise up and get with the times. And our sinful pride lunges at the chance to gain acceptance and respect with the world. Our sinful pride lunges for and latches on to rational theory, even when it contradicts God's Word, because we yearn to make a name for ourselves among our peers, our neighbors, and our co-workers.

When surrounded by sinful human influence that is filled and fueled by human pride we must remember that God has set our hearts on fire by his gift of the Holy Spirit. He has enkindled in us the fire of his love. He has given us the gift that he promised to the disciples, the gift of the Counselor, the gift of the Holy Spirit. We are to take courage for the Holy Spirit has come. He is the Spirit of truth. He is the counselor.

When Jesus gave his disciples this promise of the Holy Spirit in John chapter 15 he had also just warned them that the world would hate them. As they hated Jesus the world would hate those who carried his message. However, in and among his warnings of trouble and persecution Jesus also offers a wonderful promise of comfort to his disciples. He promises to send the Holy Spirit. ²⁶ ***"When the Counselor comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth***

who goes out from the Father, he will testify about me. ²⁷ *And you also must testify, for you have been with me from the beginning.* The Spirit would be a gift from the Father. He would come and give them courage to speak, for the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father. These disciples gifted with the Holy Spirit would testify and share the message of Jesus and many others would in turn be given the gift of the Holy Spirit.

So it is that we have been given this same Spirit of truth. The Word of God written down and shared by the apostles has been passed down through the centuries, and the Spirit working in the Word has graciously brought us to faith. He has reached into our lives and saved us through the waters of baptism. He dwells within us, making a home in our hearts. He comforts us with his precious promises. As the world around us continues to buy into the towering lies that sinful society has constructed we have this comfort: **We have the Spirit of truth.**

God is all wise. He is all powerful. The Spirit of God was before time was. He knows how the earth was made, he knows how we are formed, most importantly of all, Jesus promises this spirit will “testify about me”. We have the Spirit of Truth who has brought to faith through the power of the Word, which are the very words the Spirit gave to the writers to record. In this word he comforts us with the good news that we have a God who loves us so much that he died to save us for all eternity. In his word he tells us of a God who does not forsake us, but comes to us through word and sacrament so that we too may overcome the world.

This good news daily rekindles our faith so that we may willingly serve our Lord. This good news daily sets our hearts on fire so that we may hold firmly to all of God’s Word because it is His Word of truth. God’s Word strips us of our own sinful pride as it leads us to look to Jesus our only Savior. The Spirit of God comforts us with his presence and this Spirit of truth gives us the courage to speak out against sin. The Spirit of God gives us the courage to gladly share the message of repentance and forgiveness that we have through faith in Jesus.

You might not be called to speak to thousands upon thousands of people at a time like the apostles were. You might not be called by God to stand and testify on the steps of the state capital, but the Spirit of truth gives you and me the confidence to speak to a neighbor (perhaps over a cup of coffee, perhaps while sitting on a lawn mower) about what the Bible really says. As we get into the Word and as we are fed and nourished in our faith the Spirit gives us the strength, the courage, to speak to a relative: a brother, a son or daughter, to speak to a friend or co-worker about sin and grace. The Holy Spirit, this comforter, and counselor, this Spirit of Truth, gives us the burning desire to share God’s Word with the next generation that they too

may know how we are saved through Jesus and how we gladly follow God's will in our life for God's Word is truth.

In spirit-filled confidence the disciples stood all together in one place on that day of Pentecost and brought glory to Jesus Christ and to God the Father. God had suddenly undone what he did at Babel and the disciples could speak in different languages. The message of repentance was preached by those who had been taught by Christ himself. This message tore down prideful arrogance and showed the people their need for a Savior. Peter, who had at one time denied even knowing Jesus, now boldly told the very people responsible for Jesus' death to repent. He confidently spoke for all to listen to this message of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. Those disciples, who for a time met behind closed doors because of the fear of the Jews, now boldly and public spoke and thousands listened and thousands were baptized and thousands came to faith. We are told 3,000 were added to their number on that day of Pentecost. Thousands of people were baptized, were brought to faith, and praised the name of the Lord. Now that is a wonderful piece of history! Now that was a wonderful day!

Today we rejoice that one more has been added to that number. Today we rejoice as Lexi Breitreutz has been baptized and brought into the family of God. Today we rejoice that God pours out his blessings upon his children through this cleansing bath! What a wonderful day!

Take courage the Spirit has come. He is the Spirit of Truth. He has brought to us the gift of faith. He has lit that fire inside of us and he daily rekindles in us the fire of his love. He will help us hold on to the faith that we confess. He will help us to testify to others about what God has done. He will help us speak with confidence as we defend the Word of God and share the message of Jesus with those around us and with future generations. Take courage the Spirit has come. He is the Spirit of Truth, he is the counselor, the comforter that we need. And with his help we can do amazing things as we bring glory to his name. Amen.