**John 15:26** “When the Counselor comes, whom I will send to you from the Father—the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father—he will testify about me.

Today is the day of Pentecost. It is really such an important day for the Christian church and always has been. I say it always has been because if we turn our attention to the Old Testament we find that the Day of Pentecost or the 50th day after Passover, was also known as the Feast of Weeks. For the Jewish people the Feast of Weeks was a kind of “conclusion” to the Passover. A conclusion because it was also a Festival of the Harvest.

Let me explain. It was called the Festival of the Weeks because it was celebrated 7 weeks after the Passover or on the 50th day after the Passover, counting Passover as the first day. Remember, Passover was the celebration of the freedom of the people from the slavery of Egypt, how the Lord delivered them and brought them out. Then 50 days later they celebrated again, only the focus has changed. The focus is now on the blessings and wonder the Lord has brought.

Those blessings were acknowledge in two ways by the Old Testament law. The first way was in the acknowledgment that the harvest of the crops was being brought in and that the land was producing for the people. This was a big celebration with all sorts of special offerings taking place on that day. These offerings were about the harvest, so you will find that this festival is also known as the Feast of the Harvest. The new crops were in and people on this day were bringing their tithes of grain, grapes, and whatever else the law demanded of them. It was a joyous day celebrating how God had blessed in the harvest through all the first fruits that the people brought in.

But there was a second purpose behind this celebration. It truth it was the original reason for the celebration, lost to many people over the years. It is this second purpose that brought so many people to Jerusalem and the Temple. This festival was also known as the anniversary of the giving of the Law. I ran across that little piece of information as I was reading Edersheim’s book The Temple. He states this in the section speaking of Pentecost. *“The ‘Feast of the Unleavened Bread’ may be said not to have quite passed till fifty days after its commencement, when it merged in that of Pentecost, or ‘of Weeks.’ According to unanimous Jewish tradition, which was universally received at the time of Christ, the day of Pentecost was the anniversary of the giving of the Law on Mount Sinai, which the Feast of Weeks was intended to commemorate.’*

Do you know why this is so important to grasp? Because it marks Pentecost as the Jewish celebration of the beginning of the Old Testament church. It was the law that established the Jewish people as the people of God. It was the Law that was to make them separate from the world and a people set aside for service to the Lord. Think about that, Pentecost marked the beginning of the Old Testament church!

It is no surprise then that we find the Lord using Pentecost as the very day to establish and affirm the beginning of the New Testament church too! Yep, that is what Pentecost is all about! The difference? It is found in the new covenant of God. The church goes from following the Old covenant, the Law, to following the new covenant, the Gospel message of Jesus. The new covenant is the fulfillment of the Old. The new covenant is a message of hope, joy and salvation. God had made it clear in his prophecies that when all things had been accomplished in the salvation of man, then this great day would come announced by the formal coming of the Holy Spirit of God. That’s what our thoughts are about today, about Pentecost and what it all means. Our theme: **Pentecost!**

Please note that our text is really a portion of the discourse that Jesus shared with his disciples on the night of Maundy Thursday. Jesus was trying to prepare his disciples for all that was coming in the next few days. Sadly, even though Jesus is the perfect Son of God and gave perfect lessons, the disciples didn’t quite get all that he had said. It made the days of his being on the cross and in the grave much harder for them, but at least we know that Jesus tried to help them grasp what was going on. The comforting part of what Jesus told them was that in essence he did understand what their problem was. So Jesus gives them information about the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit who would come to be their help and guide in all that was yet to come.

Our verse is from chapter 15. There are a few times before this verse where Jesus spoke of the Holy Spirit. Let me share some of what Jesus said would be the work of the Holy Spirit. In chapter 14 we hear these words: **“I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever. He is the Spirit of truth…The Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and remind you of everything I told you.”** Our words in chapter 15 are the next words on the Spirit. Then chapter 16 and its words. **“But if I go, I will send *the Counselor* to you. When he comes, he will convict the world about sin, about righteousness, and about judgment…he will guide you into all truth. For he will not speak on his own, but whatever he hears he will speak. He will also declare to you what is to come. He will glorify me, because he will take from what is mine and declare it to you.”**

So on the basis of those words, what will the Holy Spirit do? Miracles? Signs and wonders? Our verse puts what he will do in the simplest of language: **“He will testify about me.”** The work of the Holy Spirit is to reveal, to remind of, to guide in, to witness to, yes, to bring people to the work and wonder of Jesus Christ the Savior of the world!

And isn’t that what happened on Pentecost? It is true, the event of Pentecost was highlighted by the sound of a mighty rushing wind and by the appearance of tongues of fire that rested on each disciple. It is true that the Holy Spirit allowed the disciples to speak in the languages of the people who were gathered in Jerusalem for this festival of God. And it is true, that down the line, as the disciples went out to preach and teach Jesus, the Holy Spirit allowed for miracles to verify and highlight their message. But none of those things is the important thing! None of those things is the heart and core of the Spirit’s work. Those things are secondary. The most important thing going on at Pentecost is the fact that the disciples preached the message of Jesus Christ, Savior of the world. They preached a message of forgiveness and eternal life because of Jesus.

If you would, let me highlight for you the whole point of the sermon that Peter and the others preached on Pentecost. It is a sermon that declares a prophecy of God fulfilled. That section ends with the words: **“And this will happen; “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”** From there Peter speaks of the life of Jesus and how that life of Jesus fulfilled the promises of God’s Word and was put to death by the people. What was especially important is highlighted in the words: **“This Jesus is the one God has raised up. We are all witnesses of that.”** Peter tells the whole crowd they know the truth of the resurrection of Jesus. They were all witnesses! Think about that! You can’t so confidently proclaim that unless you know it is the truth. The whole town knew the report that Jesus had been raised from the dead! And the conclusion to the sermon that day: **“Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.”**

The whole day was about proclaiming Jesus. The whole sermon was to get people, the people who had heard Jesus teach, saw the miracles of Jesus, more than likely shouted for the Crucifixion of Jesus, and watched Jesus die were now the people who are being brought to faith in Jesus. Brought to faith because of the resurrection and the work of the Holy Spirit of God.

By the way, here is something that I have been fascinated by for a number of years. On the day of Pentecost we are told that because of the message of the disciples and the work of the Holy Spirit about three thousand people were baptized into the Christian faith, that is, three thousand people came to believe that Jesus is indeed the Christ, the Son of God who because of His work of redemption proven through his resurrection from the dead, is now God and Lord! Three thousand people!

Did you know or do you remember that when the Law of God was given a similar number was used? After God initially spoke his commands the people were filled with terror and asked that God not speak to them again. That’s when Moses went up on the mountain and for the next forty days got further directions and commands of God to share with the people. One of the highlights of that 40 days was the stone tablets with God’s Ten Commandments written by the finger of God.

Yet, while Moses was up there getting the Law of God what were the people doing? That’s right, they decided to make the golden calf and worship it as God. The very people who heard the voice of God, who had in their lives seen visible proofs of God that you and I can only imagine, these people make a false god and worship it as God! God is not happy with this. The end result is that the Levites go through the camp and those people who are found in godless revelry in accord with the golden calf are killed. Do you know that the number reported as killed was three thousand! What a contrast we find in that. The giving of the Law ends with three thousand dead. The giving of the Gospel, the message of Jesus as Lord and Savior, ends with three thousand saved! Right there is the very difference and point between Law and Gospel. The Law kills but the Gospel saves! A fact foretold in the very history of the giving of the Law.

So let’s go back and just hammer away at what the Holy Spirit does and will do.

The name the Holy Spirit is given here is “Counselor.” In the Greek text that is the word “paraclete.” I quote from the book, Sermon Studies on the Gospels, Series C, page195-196. *“The Greek word* parakletos *which is used as the official title for the Holy Spirit has been translated in different ways. …”Comforter”…”Counselor”…”Helper.” Some versions simply transliterate the Greek into the word “Paraclete.” The original meaning of the word is ‘someone who calls to give aid.’ From this meaning is derived ‘one who speaks in another’s behalf, mediator, intercessor, advocate…The word is masculine indicating a person. The meaning is explained by Jesus in the passage itself (Jn. 14): ‘[a person who] will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.’”*The name given to the Holy Spirit is the name that tells us exactly what he will do. He will lead to Jesus. He will speak of Jesus, teach about Jesus, remind about everything Jesus. If in the process of speaking of the Holy Spirit your church doesn’t highlight and hammer away at Jesus and his work, then they are not being guided by the Holy Spirit! The focus is never you or what you need or what you do or what you feel or what you experience…the Holy Spirit always counsels in Jesus and what Jesus has done!

Our text says the Holy Spirit is sent from Jesus and proceeds from the Father. Here is the unity and work of the Godhead in action. The Spirit’s task is vital and the Spirit does only what the Father and Son desire. The Spirit does not work on his own but only by and with the power of the Son and Father.

Finally, this Spirit is called **“The Spirit of truth.”** What is revealed by him and from him is truth. It is truth because it is based on Jesus and the Father. It is truth because it is the wisdom and marvel of God. It is truth and is absolutely reliable because it is of God.

So, the words of Jesus the disciples would write are truth. The Words given to us in the New Testament concerning life and salvation, sin and death, being lost and saved are truth. Not because I say so, but because that is what Jesus proclaimed, what God the Father proclaimed and the Holy Spirit testified to. God’s truth is what we have in the Bible. God’s truth for the saving of souls.

That saving of souls is in and through the awesome wonder of Jesus and what He has done for us. We know and we believe that Jesus is both Lord and Christ. The miracle of the Holy Spirit, the wonder of that testimony about Jesus is still going on. We have faith in Jesus because the Holy Spirit has brought us the message of Jesus. Thank you Lord, for this awesome day, Pentecost. Thank you Lord that we still hear the message of Jesus as Lord and Christ. Amen.