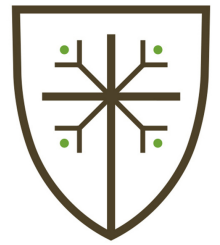


Easter tide

April 9 – May 28

SERMON NOTES



May 14, 2023

SERMON INFO

TITLE

An Unexpected Help

PREACHER

Rev. Brent Baker

TEXTS

Acts 17:22-29

Romans 8:9-17

John 14:15-21; 16:7

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Brent talked about both the scientific post-enlightenment mind that rejects anything it cannot see and understand as well as the modern sociology perspective that sees truth as a personal construct, whatever you believe inside. What do both these views have in common?
2. While often the gut reaction is to fear that which is bigger and more powerful than ourselves, how is the reality of the presence and power of the Holy Spirit actually comforting to the Christian?

SERMON IN SUMMARY

This week, Brent lead us in looking at a topic that we often acknowledge and then from which we move on quickly – the Holy Spirit. In our gospel reading, Jesus tells his disciples that he's leaving them, but that it's for their good. Because he can only send "the Helper" once he has left them. This leaves us asking, as it must have left the disciples, "why is having the Holy Spirit the greater gain?" Brent responds to this question with two points – help and home.

Help

We don't like to think of ourselves as helpless. Humans today, particularly in our culture, tend toward the idea that man created God for our pleasure, instead of the reverse. But the reality of your helplessness is actually the beginning of life-transformation. It is the first step in realizing there must be a power greater than you to which you can cry out for help. In the gospel reading, Jesus promises to cry out on behalf of the disciples. And he promises not just to send help, but to send "the Helper."

One point we can often overlook is that Jesus, in his humanity, was dependent on the Spirit. And everything Jesus had done would now be carried out by the Spirit. He will be another helper like Jesus and as he was to Jesus.

We often give passing, fleeting comments to the Holy Spirit but don't give him much attention. By the standards of a science-minded modern world, there is potential embarrassment in believing in an invisible spirit. It can begin to sound like the stuff of children's stories and fairytales. And the resulting absence of the Spirit leaves us living in a helpless reality – a place of utmost despair.

But this is not the spirit Jesus talks of. This Spirit is a divine person with personality – personhood. He is to be worshipped, adored, obeyed just as the Father and the Son. He is the Helper, the "Paraclete," one who comes alongside to help and to aid. He is not the spirit of chaos and hysteria but of order, of peace, and of truth.

Home

Last week, Tim talked about Jesus' promise to prepare a future home for his disciples. But instead of making a future home *for* them, why couldn't he make his home *with* them now? Jesus answers this. The Spirit is making in them a home. The Spirit is shaping them, and us, to be a dwelling place for God.

The Holy Spirit's presence and power are not mere ethereal, fantastic ideas. They are real and he is the power of God at work in you to raise you to new life. And there is nothing too far-fetched, too far gone, for the Spirit to bring it back to life.