

THE FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

CANTATE

Sing You All

Study Notes for the Christian Layperson

by: Rev. Travis Loeslie



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John 16: 5-15 ESV

Author and Date:

The Holy Spirit caused the Apostle John to write the precious words of this Gospel in AD 90. These words were compiled in the great farewell discourse of Jesus to His sorrowful disciples in John 14-16. These words were uttered on Holy Thursday, the night Jesus was betrayed. This great farewell discourse is the heart of the preaching in the one year lectionary from Easter 4-6. The theme is the sorrow of the disciples at Jesus' departure and the promises Jesus has for His Church, namely, the Person of the Holy Spirit.

⁵ “But now I am going to him who sent me, and none of you asks me, ‘Where are you going?’ ⁶ But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your heart.”

- Jesus spoke of “going to the Father.” This departure to the Father is the disciples’ salvation. It includes the culmination of Jesus’ work for sinners: His death on the cross, His resurrection from the grave and even His ascension to the right hand of the Father. Sorrow fills the heart of Jesus’ disciples at the difficulties He must go through to go to the Father. They grieve as those who lose a loved one.

⁷ Nevertheless, I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you.

- Jesus will not leave His disciples friendless orphans in the world. It is for their good that He departs. Jesus promises to send the ‘Helper’ (KJV:

‘Comforter,’ ‘Advocate’). The Greek word for Helper is “Paraclete.” The Paraclete is the One who pleads and intercedes for His disciples, thus becoming their necessary help and comfort. This is the promise of the Holy Spirit, the Paraclete.

- Jesus continues to fulfill the outline of the history set in motion in His incarnation. In the age of the Messiah, the gift of the Spirit was richly promised (e.g. Isaiah 11:1-10; 42:1-4; 44:1-5; Ezekiel 36:24-27; Joel 2:28-32). This promise will culminate with the tongues of fire and the boldness of a confession of Christ on Pentecost.

⁸ “And when he comes, he will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment: ⁹ concerning sin, because they do not believe in me; ¹⁰ concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father, and you will see me no longer; ¹¹ concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged.”

- Jesus describes what the Paraclete’s work will be. Verses 8-11 are Jesus’ clearest single statements (*sedes doctrina*) of the Holy Spirit’s office. Every Christian should memorize these verses to understand the work of the Holy Spirit in the world. The Paraclete convicts, or reproves, the world concerning three things: sin, righteousness, and judgment.

- Spannenberg notes: “Christ says that when the Holy Spirit comes, “He will reprove the world” — not hack away with sword and armor, not make new ordinances and laws, but cause the Word of God and the Gospel to be preached. In Christ’s

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kingdom there is to be no office of administration, but an office of correction. All men are to submit to correction through the Gospel if they would at all have God's favor and grace and finally be saved." (Spannenberg, *The Christian Year of Grace*, 192).

- The Paraclete will reprove the world of sin. This is his first work. The externals sins and vices display the inner sins of the heart. The Paraclete cuts through externalities to the chief sin, original sin. He convicts everyone of this. If one rejects being called a sinner or sinful, they are rejecting this first convicting work of the Paraclete. This sin is ultimately unbelief. The world sets up false saviors to cover this unbelief: "the Jews Moses, the Turks Mohammed, the Gentiles their false gods, false Christians their own works and little inventions, the rich mammon, the wise their fallible wisdom, the powerful their power, the heretics and factions their opinions. The Holy Spirit reproves these." (Spannenberg, 193).
- The Paraclete convicts of righteousness. This righteousness is not fleshly righteousness or the virtue of men called "justice." The righteousness here is "the righteousness that avails before God, namely, that Christ died for our sins and rose again and ascended into heaven to the Father, and regained for us the righteousness and innocence which Adam lost in the fall" (Spannenberg, 193).
- The Paraclete convicts of judgment – "because the ruler of this world is judged." The Paraclete cuts through the arrogance of man's sin. He attacks the very point where the devil has convinced men of his reign. This is spiritual judgment of the soul and conscience. Christ has conquered the devil in His saving work. The Holy Spirit preaches this truth until the last day when Satan and all his hoard will be cast into the lake of fire. All demonic activity, all the lies of the devil have been conquered in the blood of Jesus Christ, the Lord of all truth. "This means that...Christ alone through His Word...is to be the only measure, standard, and norm, indeed reprove and judge of all things." (Spannenberg, 194).

¹² "I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. ¹³ When the Spirit of truth

comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. ¹⁴ He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you. ¹⁵ All that the Father has is mine; therefore I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you."

- The disciples are too grief-stricken to hear everything Jesus has to say. Later, when they can bear it, the Paraclete, the "Spirit of Truth" will guide the disciples into the truth. The Paraclete declares what He hears. He does not draw attention to Himself. He does not make disciples for His own glory. The Paraclete declares what is happening in the end times. The Paraclete glorifies Christ. It is His work to take Jesus' words and declare them to the Church. Jesus has all the authority of the Father given to Him. The Paraclete points back to what Jesus did and said for the salvation of the world. The Paraclete reminds the believer that Christ alone is our righteousness.
- "We have (God be praised!) the Holy Gospel and Holy Scripture, which Christ calls "all truth," and the true doctrine for children, the Catechism, namely, the Ten Commandments, the Articles of the Creed, the Daily Prayers, and the Our Father; along with the true Christian ceremonies: Baptism, the Absolution, and the Sacrament of Christ's body and blood; and in addition, the Table of Duties, questions from divine Holy Scripture in which we are to exercise and improve ourselves daily; that the Holy Spirit, whom Christ obtained for us, may here strengthen us in the faith, sustain us in all trials, recall and explain for us Christ's words, and so guide us into all truth, and finally bring us to the heavenly fatherland of eternal life. Amen." (Spannenberg, 194).



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