

Grace, Mercy, and Peace to you from God our Father and our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

Next week in the Athanasius creed we will confess along with many other statements regarding the trinity; 'The Father is God; the Son is God; the Holy Spirit is God - and yet there are not three gods but one God'. And 'so that in all things the Trinity in unity and the Unity in trinity must be worshipped'.

Yet at different times, we focus on different members of the Trinity, Christ has his festivals and is the main focus of our worship, but today at Pentecost we acknowledge that when Christ ascended into heaven things changed for the church and the change was the visible presence of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, at Pentecost, we focus to a degree on the Holy Spirit and his work. Today we are going to discuss 10 actions of the Holy Spirit that fit under one heading; The Holy Spirit speaks!

The Holy Spirit speaks!

We are going to work through the 10 promised and continuing actions of the Holy Spirit, point by point, occasionally you'll see they overlap, that's because Jesus, his inspired prophets and apostles used various phrases to say the same things.

On the day of Pentecost, 10 days after Jesus' ascension, 50 days after the Passover and Jesus' resurrection, the Holy Spirit comes with great power and causes the Apostles to speak, and speak they did in whatever way the Spirit gave them utterance. But this is not the first speaking of the Holy Spirit for:

1. The Holy Spirit speaks creation. The Spirit creates, The Spirit gives life.

Our Psalmist highlights this to great effect for us when he prays; 'when you send forth your Spirit, they are created and you renew the face of the earth'. God's word, his Spirit gives life, it creates. The Psalm talks about animals, plants, and humanity being created by God's Spirit, for he knows that the Spirit is eternal and has been with the Father and the Son before time and was hovering over the waters at creation as we learn in Genesis 1.

But creation is not the only word the Spirit speaks, for just as Ezekiel was called to prophesy the Spirit into dry bones, to give them new life, the Spirit has always re-created.

2. The Spirit recreates, The Spirit gives new life, resurrection!

The Spirit is at work even in the resurrection of Jesus for the Trinity always operates together, they are one after all. Therefore, all of Jesus' miracles are works of the Holy Spirit, but especially his resurrection. When we read Ezekiel and the Valley of Dry Bones, the explanation tells us it is about Israel, their feeling of spiritual and physical desertification (death) and their restoration to their promised land. But we must also consider that this text is also regarding Jesus and the new life that he will bring by the power of the Spirit.

The Spirit brings new life by Baptism into Christ, (the washing of regeneration as Paul calls it) to those sinners who desperately need to be re-created.

The Spirit brings new life by granting faith in the giver of all life as God promised through Ezekiel that the restoration of the nation was a return from unbelief to faith in him. Therefore, the Spirit brings new life to us because he speaks and:

3. The Spirit bears witness to Jesus.

No one can say Jesus is Lord except by the Holy Spirit! Therefore, it stands to reason that the primary action of the Holy Spirit is to bear witness regarding Jesus, this is what Jesus promised to the

Apostles in John and their first action on reception of the Holy Spirit as he made them speak was to preach about Jesus. That is the chief work that we observe of the Holy Spirit, he points to Jesus.

We confess this in our creed we when we learn; 'I believe that by my own reason or strength I cannot believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, or come to him. But the Holy Spirit has called me through the Gospel,'¹ (Explanation of the 3rd Article). That is the Holy Spirit proclaims to me that Jesus is the Son of God who has risen from the dead for me, a poor miserable sinner. Or as Luther puts it in the second article; 'I believe that Jesus Christ, true God, begotten of the Father from eternity, and also true man, born of the virgin Mary, is my Lord,'²

Because the Spirit speaks all about Jesus when he speaks:

4. The Spirit glorifies Christ Jesus.

The Holy Spirit for all his gifts and divinity does not operate for his own Glory.

Throughout our year we have many Christ festivals; Christmas, Epiphany, Transfiguration, Lent, Easter, and Ascension, yet we only have this one day, Pentecost where the Holy Spirit is front and centre. Yet even then the Holy Spirit by his own work brings Jesus to the fore, so even on his own festival, the Spirit proves to be the shy member of the Trinity because he gives glory to Christ rather than claiming it for himself. This is true for his miraculous works. Their sole purpose is to proclaim and confirm Christ to the world, they are not an end in themselves, nor poured out to bring attention to the Spirit. The works of the Spirit are to bring sinners to Christ; so that 'Every Tribe and tongue' 'From Jerusalem to the end of the earth' 'who calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.'

The works of the Spirit keep the ascended Saviour present with his body the church until the end of the age. Therefore, we desperately need the Spirit to speak Jesus' words, and to speak his sacraments, where the Father and the Son put the Holy Spirit to work to bring the Saviour to us.

The Spirit speaks and:

5. The Spirit declares Jesus to you.

It's all well and good for the Spirit to speak about Jesus to the people of the Old Testament through the prophets and the people in the New Testament through the apostles, but the Holy Spirit is still speaking and declaring Jesus to you today.

The Holy Spirit speaks to us today, as I've just said through the written and spoken word. This is where Jesus' life and acts are recorded so that we too can learn all the things that he commanded, so we can glorify Jesus as we hear of his great deeds for us and as we do the Spirit works by the word to create faith in us. To turn us from our unbelief to fear, love and trust of the one true God; Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

The Spirit also works through the tangible word, those things that we call Sacraments, as God attaches his Word to physical things so that we can feel the water, taste his body and blood and his forgiveness of sins, life and salvation. He works through the mouth of others, especially the pastors of the church as they proclaim in absolution; In Jesus' name your sins are forgiven! Jesus is

¹ Tappert, T.G. ed., 1959. [*The Book of Concord the confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church.*](#), Philadelphia: Mühlenberg Press.

² Tappert, T.G. ed., 1959. [*The Book of Concord the confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church.*](#), Philadelphia: Mühlenberg Press.

proclaimed in Word and Sacrament for all to hear and see, touch and smell as the Holy Spirit does his work.

This is most clearly seen in the preaching of the Apostles in Acts and obviously at the Pentecost festival, as Peter stands up and preaches in the power of the Holy Spirit and the other Apostles translate, they don't speak much about the Holy Spirit, they tell the people about Jesus because the Spirit declares Jesus to you.

6. The Holy Spirit gives the Apostles utterance, he causes them to speak.

The spirit causes people to speak, and he speaks to us, by declaring Jesus to us, pointing the whole world to the Saviour that it so desperately needs. This is so obvious in the person of Peter, who through Lent we notice is a coward, who says one thing but is not able to back it up with actions. Yet at Pentecost, in the power of the Holy Spirit, he stands and proclaims Christ, even correcting the ridicule of drunkenness, and taking this slander in his stride he preaches with boldness and power. All on account of the Holy Spirit. 'No prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.' 2 Peter 1:21 (ESV)

For the Spirit as Jesus promised also convicts.

7. The Spirit convicts the world regarding; sin, righteousness and judgement.

The commandments show the world its sin, its lack of fear, love and trust for the one true God. Jesus highlights and intensifies this original sin by showing those who listen to him how sinful they are and what the ramifications of their sin is, and the world hates being convicted. So, the world hates Jesus, and the Holy Spirit who is at work in this act of conviction because no one wants to feel guilty. It would be much easier if our sin was minimised by thinking that someone else is worse, or redefined so that our sinful thoughts, words, and deeds are no longer considered sinful. But this is not how Jesus operates, instead he uses the Holy Spirit to set the commandments before us so that we see the depth of our sin.

The Holy Spirit also convicts the world, and us of righteousness. That is, He lays before us the righteousness of Christ, the true righteousness that we should attain but don't because of our sin. He lays before us Christ's death and resurrection for us to believe and trust as our righteousness or reject with the world as not for us, and still Christ is the world's righteousness, the Holy Spirit reveals him to the world.

But Jesus says 'I have overcome the world'. Christ has conquered sin, death and the devil, 'He's judged, for e'er undone' and it is the work of the Spirit to convict the world of the judgement, and bring us out of this judgement and into Christ's righteousness for:

8. The Spirit guides in truth.

Jesus says, 'I am the way the truth and the life, no one comes to the Father unless through me', we only know this by the work of the Holy Spirit, and he continues to point us to this truth. The truth gives us eternal life and The Holy Spirit uses the commandments to show believers how to live.

He set them out so easily before us so that we know the truth about ourselves, and the actions required of those who have been made new. The Holy Spirit gives us a daily checklist, and various tasks before us to love and serve God and love and serve our neighbour so that we live in God's truth. Should we let the Spirit speak to us, by daily being about his commandments, reading them, and speaking them to each other, we would have no end of truthful and good deeds to do in the whole spectrum of commandments.

Including using God's name to 'call out to Him, pray, praise and give thanks' and so:

9. The Spirit helps us to pray.

This could be a sermon in its own right, maybe even a whole series.

²⁶ Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words. Romans 8:26 (ESV)

The Spirit gives us the words to pray, we are thinking here of the Psalms, the Lord's prayer, and other prewritten prayers. The Spirit puts these before our mind, puts these in our mind and therefore helps us to pray. He reminds us and teaches us Jesus' prayer; Our Father... so that when words are hard to come by, this complete prayer will always be at hand to serve us.

These prayers might be hymns, prayers we have memorised, parts of liturgy, pieces of scripture... We can use these when our words don't come together. We can use these as a prayer routine so that we do not neglect to pray, we can use these to keep ourselves united with the church of every time and every place. But we are not limited to these prayers even though some of them are all-encompassing. Sometimes we can't even get the words out, even with prewritten or memorised prayers and so:

10. The Spirit helps us by praying for us.

The Spirit says the words for us, even when we don't know them or don't say them. When we can't put it into words, the spirit presents our requests to God the Father on our behalf. God does it all for us. The Spirit uses God's other servants to pray on our behalf, when we share our concerns, difficulties and desires with other Christians, the Holy Spirit is at work putting their words together and using their mouths and hearts to pray for those in need. We should expect that when Paul writes 'that the Spirit intercedes for us' that the Holy Spirit is presenting our prayers to the Father in heaven, they are not neglected, they do not go unanswered, and they have express delivery. Even when we are mute, the Holy Spirit speaks. He not only speaks to us, but speaks to God for us.

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2. The Spirit re-creates, the Spirit gives new life, resurrection!
3. The Spirit bears witness to Jesus.
4. The Spirit glorifies Christ Jesus.
5. The Spirit declares Jesus to you.
6. The Holy Spirit gives the Apostles utterance, he causes them to speak.
7. The Spirit convicts the world regarding, sin, righteousness and judgement.
8. The Spirit guides in truth.
9. The Spirit helps us to pray.
10. The Spirit helps us by praying for us.

The Holy Spirit speaks, he is very much at work today, calling us through the Gospel, enlightening us with his gifts, keeping us Holy and preserving us in the faith.

Thanks be to God, the Holy Spirit Speaks.

Amen

The peace of God that surpasses all our understanding keep your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.