

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. 27 And you also are going to testify, because you have been with me from the beginning.”

16:4b I did not tell you these things from the beginning, because I was with you. 5 “But now I am going away to him who sent me, and not one of you asks me, ‘Where are you going?’ 6 Yet because I have told you these things, sorrow has filled your heart. 7 Nevertheless, I am telling you the truth: It is good for you that I go away. For if I do not go away, the Counselor will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you. 8 When he comes, he will convict the world about sin, about righteousness, and about judgment: 9 about sin, because they do not believe in me; 10 about righteousness, because I am going to the Father and you will no longer see me; 11 about judgment, because the ruler of this world has been condemned.

Dear People Filled with the Holy Spirit,

“Grow up!” (pause) *“What is wrong with you, pastor! Maybe you should tell those two young ladies being confirmed to ‘grow up’, but us? We are grown up!”* Actually I have going to tell them tomorrow morning to “grow up.” However, I am also going to tell all the adults and seniors that as well. So tonight I am telling you the same thing, “Grow up!”

It is not actually me who is telling you to do this, I am the messenger. Jesus is telling his disciples then and now that we need to grow up. That is we need to grow up in faith. A resurrection reality is that the triumphant Jesus sends God, the Holy Spirit, to grow us up in our faith and in our Christian living. Today in John 15 & 16 we learn a very comforting truth, **The Spirit Helps Us to Grow Up.** Let’s hear Jesus words and receive comfort from them.

1. The Spirit helps us by testifying about Jesus.

In our churches we often symbolize the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove. (*Point to stained glass window at back of sanctuary.*) This is from Jesus' baptism in the Gospels. The Holy Spirit descended on Jesus not only to bring his gifts, but to identify Jesus as the Messiah. Today he helps us by testifying about Jesus.



A. The Holy Spirit comes from God and he is God. He is the third person of the Holy Trinity: *Father, Son and Holy Spirit*. He is sent to counsel us in God's truth.

1. God wants us to know about his perfect holiness and his plan for saving imperfect sinners. The Holy Spirit uses God's word to show us our sins and shows us our Savior. It is no accident that Catechism classes, Bible classes and worship service are centered in God's word.

2. The Holy Spirit uses this to testify to the truth about Jesus. Jesus is at the center of God's thoughts and plans. Jesus is the perfect Son of God who saves imperfect sinners. The whole Bible points to Jesus as our Savior.

B. The Holy Spirit testifies to help us.

1. One of things that young people struggle with is not that they are sinful, but that the consequences of sin is death. When you are young death seems so distant. While I teach our young people not to be preoccupied with death, at the same I teach that we have to be ready at all times through faith in Jesus. How do we prepare? There are passages for this.

2. Every Confirmation class that I have taught has memorized Romans 3:26. In the NIV Bible it says, "**For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.**" The Holy Spirit is always calling us to repent of our sins through the Word. Through that same word we are promised forgiveness and eternal life. The Spirit's testimony about Jesus helps us to live in peace.

3. One of the things I always do is encourage our Confirmands to make plans to be in the word their whole life. That way they will always have the Spirit's testimony. I would be falling down in my duty if I didn't remind

you, dear worshipper, that you need to do the same. If we lose sight of our sins, we lose sight of our Savior. If we see our sins, but don't see our Savior, we despair. The Holy Spirit works to keep testifying to the truth of Jesus.

2. The Spirit helps us to become mature Christians.

Most young people look forward to learning how to drive. Having the ability to drive gives you some independence. But knowing how to drive, passing the driver's tests does not make a person a good or mature driver. That comes with more learning and experience.

I think most young people come out of Confirmation feeling like they know a few things about God and they are ready to live as Christian adults. As with driving, you are getting started. There is a need for further learning and maturing. Jesus' apostles were likely in their twenties and thirties and they needed to mature. This is true for all of us. We need to continue to grow and mature in our Christian faith. Jesus wants us to know that the Holy Spirit helps us become mature Christians.



A. The disciples had spent almost three years with Jesus, but were not prepared for the realities of where Jesus was going and what it is he was doing. He was headed to the cross, the tomb and then back to heaven.

1. Why weren't they prepared? Jesus had already told them about his death and resurrection. Their mind was aware, but their hearts were not close to being ready.

This true for our two young people who are being confirmed and for many of our young people and new Christians. Christianity is great until we fall into sin and we are tortured with guilt. Being a Christian is fine until someone close to us gets seriously sick and maybe even dies. Like the disciples we get lost in grief and the very words that you learn in class are forgotten. That is immaturity!

2. The very words Jesus is speaking is to help them with their heartache. The words that are learned in Confirmation, the words you hear in church are the very words that Jesus uses to heal your heart and to lift you up. After we get hurt and heal a few times, we start to mature and we realize we can trust Jesus in all situations and even as the tears flow.

B. The hard truth is that it was better if Jesus left his disciples.

1. If Jesus does not go, the Holy Spirit will have no reason to come. Because there won't be forgiveness of sins, there won't be righteousness and there won't be salvation. If we don't allow Jesus to work in our lives, even though sad events, we will lose blessings, maybe even salvation.

2. The Holy Spirit will come and lead the disciples into a deeper understanding and closer bond with Jesus. He loved them enough to leave them and to go to the cross and suffer and die. Then he rose again to bring their salvation. Jesus did this for each and every one of us. Today the Holy Spirit brings us into a closer and deeper bond with our Savior.

3. The Holy Spirit helps us hold the right convictions.

Have you ever shared your faith with someone and while they may not get mad at you, they don't start going to church. Do we think, *"What's wrong? I spelled it out that we are all sinners. I made it clear Jesus is the Son of God, and our Savior. Why are they not convicted and convinced?"*

Jesus ends this part of his Last Supper speech by talking about convictions. (pic vs. 8-11) **8 When he comes, he will convict the world about sin, about righteousness, and about judgment...** Jesus tells us the Holy Spirit will help us hold to the right convictions. This has profound implications for us and for those people around us.

A. The Holy Spirit convicts us of our sins and need for grace.

1. We see our sins, lack of righteousness and need to escape judgement.

2. We understand that we are forgiven, we are righteous and have been judged innocent already. We come to Communion regularly because of this conviction about sin and grace in our hearts.

B. The Holy Spirit convicts us concerning other people's sins and their need for grace. What is true for us is true for our fellow humans.

1. The world does not have the right view of sin. It does not believe in the righteousness Jesus provided. Along with the devil the world stands condemned.

2. This gives us reason to testify about Jesus. (27) We have the truth about sin and grace. The Spirit can use us to share this truth and rescue people

from God's judgement. We may not say it out loud very often, but our lives and our attendance at worship services proclaims this truth to people.

Conclusion: Jesus Ascended into heaven after his resurrection. His disciples missed him. We miss Jesus today. We may miss a pastor, teacher or even a Christian parent or mentor. However, we are not alone.

We have the Holy Spirit as our companion. He wants us to grow spiritually. He wants us to live as mature Christians who are willing to share their faith. He works through Word and Sacrament to help us. The Holy Spirit helps us to grow up! Amen.