

“Another Helper”

You have just sung one of the glorious truths of Holy Scripture – that God the Father has given us “His dearest treasure.” He has given us His only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ – who, in turn, gives us ANOTHER treasure – the Holy Spirit. And God the Holy Spirit, in turn, gives us all the treasures of the Kingdom of God.

Speaking of the treasures of Holy Scripture, did you hear what Jesus says to you today? “If you love me, you will keep my commandments.” [Confirmands] Do you love Jesus? Absolutely, of course! Do you “keep [His] commandments”? Well, that’s another story.

You know that you have broken His commandments – you have done what you “shall not” do – and you’ve left undone those things you “shall” do. But that doesn’t mean that you don’t love Jesus.

When He says “keep my commandments” – we think He means “obey them.” If that’s all He means, then it is **game over** (for all of us). Rather, the word Jesus uses actually means “to keep, watch over, guard, hold, preserve something, pay attention to, don’t lose” – or, as I would like to suggest, “to treasure.”

Psalm 1 says, “Blessed is the man who ... delights in the law of the Lord.” One can DELIGHT in and treasure “the law of the Lord” even without perfect obedience. We treasure it because it teaches us how to live – in FAITH towards God, and in LOVE toward our fellow man.

That is how the Christian lives. We delight in God’s law because it teaches us what is GOOD for us, and for our neighbor. But the Christian also lives by faith in God – trusting that God does not love us ONLY IF we are obedient, or ONLY WHEN we do this or that --- but that He loves us fully, for Jesus’ sake.

That is to say – we treasure all the gifts that God gives to us.

In our text for today, Jesus gives this promise to His disciples: “And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper.” Jesus is our Helper – and yet, He promises “another Helper” – the Holy Spirit.

Jesus is the Savior – the One in whom the debt of all your sin is paid – the One in whom you have the assurance of the resurrection of your body on the Last Day – the One in whom you already have eternal life. In Christ – “it is finished!” So why “another Helper” – why send the Holy Spirit? “To be with you forever.” “[To] dwell with you.”

He is “the Spirit of Truth” – helping you who live in the midst of lies, and deceit, and falsehood. The world does not know, or have, the Holy Spirit – therefore, it does not know or have the Son or the Father.

In other words, the world doesn’t know what to do with your sins. The world doesn’t know what happens when a person dies. The world has its own gods, and truths, that it tells you to worship and follow.

You, however, know and have the Holy Spirit – because this great treasure was given to you in Holy Baptism. You know the Truth of God because the Holy Spirit lives and dwells in you – and therefore, you know and believe in the Son and the Father.

“I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you,” Jesus promises. An orphan is one who has been left all alone. We are not created to live solitary, lonely lives – we are created to live in communion with others – which hopefully, this pandemic is teaching us to appreciate even more, those whom God has placed around us - in our families, our congregation, and our communities.

So why does Jesus even bring up this idea of being “orphans” to His disciples? He says that He is leaving – but where is He going – and when, and how, will He “come to you”?

Jesus speaks these words on the night in which He was betrayed. He is going to the cross to die, and be buried. His disciples will SEE HIM when He is raised to life again on the third day – but then forty days later He will ascend into heaven (to sit at the right hand of God the Father almighty) – and then, they will SEE HIM no more.

But notice what Jesus says. “The world will see me no more, but YOU will see me.” Because YOU have been given the Holy Spirit – you see Jesus with the eyes of faith. You SEE that which is true. You BELIEVE His promise to be “with you always, even unto the end of the age.”

All that the Father has sent His Son to do is coming to a head. Jesus says, “Because I live, you also will live.” Because Jesus has been raised to life – that means that all your sin is forgiven. Because Jesus lives, YOU live – and in Him – you NOW live in communion with the Father and the Holy Spirit.

Dearly beloved, you have Christ’s commandments and you “keep” them – delighting in and treasuring them. You love Jesus Christ, and are loved by God the Father – and as Jesus promises – He will “manifest” Himself to you.

That’s what the Holy Spirit does – He manifests Jesus to you. He “helps” you by teaching you and bringing to your remembrance all that Jesus has done for you – more than that – He reveals what Jesus is doing for you right here and right now.

“Here is Jesus,” speaking His Word to you – leading you through the wilderness of this world to the place He has prepared for you in heaven. “Here is Jesus,” in Holy Baptism – cleansing you and giving you a new heart. “Here is Jesus,” with His Body and Blood – forgiving your sin and strengthening your faith.

Dearly beloved, you are not orphans, you are not all alone. The Father, Son and Holy Spirit come to you, and live in communion with you – so that you may live in communion with Him for all eternity. This is most certainly true.

The peace of God which passes all understanding, guards your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.