

Pentecost

“The Holy Ghost’s worldwide work!” John 16:7-11

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Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, our text for Pentecost is from our Gospel reading, John 16:7-11.

“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 depart, I will send Him to you. 8 And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: 9 of sin, because they do not believe in Me; 10 of righteousness, because I go to My Father and you see Me no more; 11 of judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged”

The world is always looking for an advantage, isn’t it. Nations continually seek an advantage in military strength, trying to stay ahead of the next nation with advanced technology. For example, how can artificial intelligence be used for an advantage to win wars?

“On May 2, Secretary of the Air Force Frank Kendall boarded a modified F-16 fighter jet equipped with specialized artificial intelligence and machine learning capabilities that enabled the aircraft to autonomously fly and perform tactical maneuvers against human pilots.”

How can AI be used for an advantage in one’s business? A technician installed a new copy machine in the office this week and AI helped him set it up correctly.

Are there economic or educational advantages in this world depending on one’s social status, race or gender? That’s another whole issue, isn’t it, that’s debated. Is Caitlan Clark, the woman’s college basketball standout being paid on an equal level with her professional male peers? And is there an unfair advantage for biological males to compete in women’s sports who identify as female? Well, those debates are not what were focused on today, the day of Pentecost.

But what we are focused on is the advantage that Jesus speaks of, which is not just for some, but for the whole world. Jesus said:

“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 depart, I will send Him to you.”

Advantage...this is the same word that Caiphas used when he was convincing the Jewish leaders to kill Jesus.

“47 Then the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered a council and said, “What shall we do? For this Man works many signs. 48 If we let Him alone like this, everyone will believe in Him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and nation.” 49 And one of them, Caiaphas, being high priest that year, said to them, “You know nothing at all, 50 nor do you consider that it is expedient for us that one man should die for the people, and not that the whole nation should perish.” (John 11:47-50)

Expedient, to one’s advantage...Of course, what they did by killing Jesus, thinking that it would save the Jewish nation, actually was God’s plan to save the world. They thought that they could get rid of a troublesome Jesus and at the same time show their loyalty to the Romans. But, listen to what John says next:

“51 Now this he did not say on his own authority; but being high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus would die for the nation, 52 and not for that nation only, but also that He would gather together in one the children of God who were scattered abroad.”

God’s plan was indeed to give an advantage to the whole world. The advantage – Jesus Christ. It was expedient, absolutely necessary, for Jesus to die on Calvary for not only the sins of the Jewish people, but also for the sins of all nations who God would gather from abroad!

This is the advantage that Jesus speaks of to His disciples when He says that He must go away. Jesus must die, then rise again, and ascend to heaven where He reigns on high...having completed the work of the salvation of the world! This must happen Jesus tells the disciples! And then the Holy Spirit can come to testify about ...Jesus and His work of salvation! Calvary must come before Pentecost!

Though it seemed sad for the disciples that Jesus would leave them, it was for their greatest advantage. For the Holy Spirit will then come and do what?

“13 However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come. 14 He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you.”

Artificial intelligence?? As enamored as the world is about it, it has nothing on the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit will guide people into all truth...saving truth, as He witnesses to Jesus. Any work attributed to the Holy Spirit other than witnessing to Jesus is a false work!

And this work of the Holy Spirit is worldwide. Listen to our text again:

“And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment:”

Through the word of God, the Holy Spirit will turn sinful man's damning disadvantage into lifesaving righteousness in Jesus.

First, the Holy Spirit applies the Law. The Holy Spirit tells the world that all people are born with the greatest disadvantage that can never be corrected on their own. All the people of the world are born with sin, original sin, inherited from our parents. Unbelief. Without the power to believe by one's own reason or strength. The Law shows us our sin and convicts us as guilty. Artificial intelligence can't save us. DEI can't save us. Whatever the world puts forth to try and help poor disadvantaged souls can never work.

But the Holy Spirit alone has the power to create faith by the hearing of the Word. The Holy Spirit works repentance in a sinner's heart so that the sinner cries out, "Have mercy on me!" After Peter's sermon on Pentecost in Acts 2, the people were cut to the heart and cried out for help.

“Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.”

37 Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, “Men and brethren, what shall we do?”

38 Then Peter said to them, “Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call.”

Remission of sins is a gift of the Holy Spirit. It can't be earned, bought or gained by one's works. It is graciously given through baptism. Your baptism! That is when you receive the righteousness of Jesus. That is when you receive the righteous robe of Jesus that covers all your sins!

It is your gift, your greatest advantage, the most necessary advantage that a sinner, every sinner of the world needs! The Holy Spirit convicts the world of righteousness. He tells the world that Jesus died for the sins of the world when He went to the cross, rose again and ascended on high.

“of righteousness, because I go to My Father and you see Me no more”

For this reason, the Holy Spirit is called the Comforter – the Paraclete. He comforts the world, comforts you and me with the Good News of the Gospel that Jesus' righteousness is my righteousness through faith in Him.

Paraclete. This is the same root word Jesus used in the Beatitudes. **Matthew 5:4**
“Blessed are those who mourn, For they shall be comforted.”

Those who mourn their sins and repent are comforted by the Comforter with forgiveness, life and salvation!

And to make sure we know this is true, the Holy Spirit's worldwide work is also to convict the world of judgment... **“of judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged”**

Who is the ruler of this world that is judged, defeated and condemned? The devil. What a comfort for Christians to know that the devil cannot accuse one of sin on judgment day. For he is defeated. His power to accuse, the Law, is no more. For Jesus fulfilled the Law. It was expedient that Jesus fulfilled all the Law for the world! “It is finished”, He said from the cross.

And now the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, comforts believers with another gift, the Lord's Supper through which the very body and blood of Jesus that He offered on the cross for the sins of the world are given to you to eat and drink for your forgiveness. By this sacrament, the Holy Spirit convinces you that your sins are forgiven. Go in peace.

Go and also be a witness of the work of Jesus. You who have received the greatest advantage possible, life and eternal salvation in Jesus, go now and testify of this advantage to the world. **“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” Matthew 28:19-20**

You are not alone as you witness. The Triune God, Father Son and Holy Spirit go with you; and through your witness of Jesus others will also receive THE advantage – faith in Jesus.

In tennis, players who need one more point to win are said to have an “advantage”. And then the name of the tennis player is said. Advantage Djokavic, or advantage Nadal. The Holy Spirit says your name in your baptism and says you now have THE advantage as a child of God. You are justified, righteous, washed of your sins through faith in Jesus. You have received the inheritance of heaven...game, set, match! All glory be to God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Now go share this Good News with the world! Amen.

“And this peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.” Amen. (Philippians 4:7)