

✱✱✱ JESU JUVA ✱✱✱

**EXAUDI / THE SUNDAY AFTER CHRIST'S ASCENSION**

Text: St. John 15:26-16:4

IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, AND OF THE ✱ SON, AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. AMEN.

The HOLY SPIRIT is sent as our COUNSELOR and for our comfort. He proceeds from the FATHER and the SON to comfort us. However, He has not come to make us comfortable. In fact, in many and various ways He has come to do the very opposite.

The HOLY SPIRIT comes to reveal to you your sins that you may recognize your depravity and perversion, and, with a contrite heart, turn away from your rebelliousness, turning instead, to CHRIST as your REDEEMER, your SAVIOR, and your GOD. He has come to make known to you the FATHER and the SON that you may, in faith, bear witness of God to all the world. Still, the comfort the HOLY SPIRIT brings may well lead you into places and situations that are, in fact, very uncomfortable.

Therefore, let us consider Father Abraham. What must Abraham have felt when He was led up on a mountain to sacrifice his only son, Isaac? How comfortable do you think he felt as he raised the knife to cut his only son's throat? Or what of St. Mary, the Mother of God? I wonder if she knew of the shame she would endure when it was discovered that she was pregnant and without a husband? And what of the sainted Martin Luther, who was bold enough to take on a corrupt and erring Church at the risk of being burned at the stake? Yet, there are more. What of the great throng of martyrs, both past and present, whom the HOLY SPIRIT led through the Valley of the shadow of death? What of our LORD Himself whom the HOLY SPIRIT led into the desert and ultimately to the Cross? Were any of their lives comfortable do you suppose?

The comfort that the HOLY SPIRIT brings is not for the comfort of your temporal existence; it is for the strengthening of your faith that you may persevere when comes the uncomfortable times of confession, sickness, persecution, hatred, imprisonment, and even the shadow of death.

Yes, the comfort of the HOLY SPIRIT may take you down paths you fear to tread. Therefore has the HOLY SPIRIT caused to be recorded these Words of our LORD: *“These things I have spoken to you, that you should not be made to stumble. They will put you out of the synagogues; yes, the time is coming that whoever kills you will think that he offers God service. And these things they will do to you because they have not known the FATHER nor Me. But these things I have told you, that when the time comes, you may remember that I told you of them.”*

The world does not know the FATHER or the SON and hates all who would believe in and place their hope in JESUS. One need only look to the current situation of our brothers and sisters in Christ who live in such places as Syria, Iraq, the continent of Africa, China, and many other places around the world as a testament to such a truth.

When the world persecutes you for your faith it is done in the name of the gods of this world. For JESUS has said, *“I and My FATHER are one.”* To have no knowledge of one is to be ignorant of the other; to hate one is to hate the other. To be of the world is to hate FATHER and SON, whom the world refuses to serve, and to love and serve instead a plethora of false gods in their place. Therefore, to persecute a Christian in service of God is in fact, to serve the god of this world who is Satan, for if one refuses to serve God, the God of Holy Scripture, FATHER, SON, and HOLY SPIRIT, there is left only one other option—to serve Satan and his demons.

For this reason, to confess JESUS as your LORD means the enmity of the world, but not just the world, not just those whom you may find it easy enough to ignore, but often even the enmity of those whom you love. To confess JESUS with family and friends is almost guaranteed to bring discomfort to the point that one is ostracized and even excommunicated from those whom you wish most would hear JESUS’ Words and come to know the FATHER and the SON.

So, we remain silent when our daughters and granddaughters move in with their boyfriends, or our sons and grandsons move in with their girlfriends. We breathe not a word when our children and grandchildren stop going to worship to receive the gifts of God in Word and Sacrament, but instead, prefer to enjoy the enticements and temptations of the world. We join in and laugh along with our friends’ vulgar jokes and crude language. We attend worship on Sunday, but cozy up to and get comfortable with the world and its perversions and sins Monday through Saturday.

Yes, it is easy and comfortable to stand with the throng when they shout hosannas to our Savior and God, but it is not so easy nor is it comfortable to shout *“Hosanna!”* when we stand in the midst of the throng that is shouting *“Crucify Him!”*

For the same reason we remain delinquent when it comes to the confession of our sins to our pastor—a confession most uncomfortable. We fear what he may think. We do not want him to think less of us for our dark thoughts and sinful deeds, those things we have done and left undone. We fear our shame. Yet, hiding our sins from our pastor does not fool him so that he thinks better of us. He knows who and what you are because he too, is a sinner. Even more, hiding your sins from your pastor does not hide your sins from God. He has seen and knows even the most heinous of your sins.

Repent! You are not so far from the world as you might think. To be of the world is to be comfortable with the character, indeed, the very nature of the world. To be of the world is to be concerned with the affections of the world and the thoughts and opinions of men. Certainly,

we Christians are *in* the world, but we are warned not to be *of* the world. You have been set apart, taken out of this world by your LORD.

For this reason, the HOLY SPIRIT proceeds forth from the FATHER and the SON to reveal the truth of the Gospel to you. He comes to make you mindful of the Words of our Savior. He tells these things to you, *“that when the time comes, you may remember that [JESUS] told you of them.”* He reminds you of JESUS’ Words that you would *“not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you; but [that you will] rejoice to the extent that you partake of CHRIST’s sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy.”*

Therefore, what does it matter if they put you out of the synagogues? What does it matter even if they kill you? What is the worth of the opinion of men when compared to the compassion, the mercy, and the grace of God?

You are a baptized child of God, sprinkled with clean water and cleansed from your filthiness and idols. You are clean. In Baptism, which is the washing of regeneration, the COMFORTER gives to you a new heart, removing your heart of stone and replacing it with a heart of flesh. God has placed His SPIRIT OF TRUTH within you so that your blind eyes may be opened to see JESUS CHRIST as your LORD and SAVIOR and in seeing Him, you become His people even as He has become your God.

Therefore, when you see the whole world hate and persecute you because you are a believer, rejoice. God has given you His Word and SPIRIT. They abide in your heart. They are your Sword and Shield against all the fiery darts Satan and the world can throw against you.

Make no mistake, in this world, you will suffer. You will be tested and trials will come. But you are never alone. JESUS stands with you upon the plain of battle. He fights for you. And take they your life, Goods, fame, child, and wife, Let these all be gone, They yet have nothing won; The Kingdom ours remaineth.

The Kingdom of God is yours and can never be wrested away from you. No, to lose it you, yourself, must give it away. But to prevent that from happening God gives the gift of His very Body and Blood to you, to strengthen your weak faith so that you may stand in the face of every trial you must endure in this life. In this world you will have trouble, but take heart, JESUS has overcome the world for you, and by His death and resurrection, He gives to you all that He has won on the Cross to save you—forgiveness of sin and life everlasting with Him in His Kingdom.

Today the world is an ugly and frightening place. It seems as though we stand on a precipice staring into an abyss of confusion, fear, hatred, war, and despair. Yet, do not fear those who can kill the body but cannot harm your soul. Rather let those who refuse to believe

the Gospel fear Him who can destroy both body and soul. For you are Baptized into CHRIST and have nothing more to fear.

There is no reason to fear the world; it cannot harm you. Neither is there a reason to fear Satan; his power is undone. He is vanquished and you stand with JESUS who crushed his head beneath His nail-pierced heel.

Thus, JESUS' victory is your victory. He has sent the SPIRIT OF TRUTH, the COMFORTER, to proclaim this truth to you. He has sent His Helper to testify to you the truth of His Words—Words of peace and comfort. His SPIRIT speaks the Words He has been given by the FATHER and the SON. And what are these Words? That JESUS CHRIST, true Man and true God came to give you life that your joy may be full.

How do you know? You can know because each and every day the HOLY SPIRIT has these words to say to you: *“Jesus died so that all your sins are forgiven.”*

IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, AND OF THE ✠ SON, AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. AMEN.

✠ ✠ ✠ SOLI DEO GLORIA ✠ ✠ ✠

Rev. Raymond D. Parent II  
Our Savior Evangelical Lutheran Church  
Crestview, Florida  
5/29/22 A✠D