

John 15:26-27
Confirmation & Pentecost
May 15 & 16, 2016

How many of you remember something from the “*Cold War*?” The *Cold War* was a state of political and military tension, after World War II, between powers of the Western Bloc (the US and its allies) and the powers of the Eastern Bloc (the Soviet Union and its allies). The rough dates of the *Cold War* are from 1947 to 1991. That *Cold War* affected even the families who lived in Milwaukee. There were even eight Nike missile sights here in Milwaukee from about 1956 - 1971, including one here in Franklin which was located just down the road from us in the Franklin Industrial Park.

The term “*cold*” is used because there was no large-scale fighting between the two sides. The premise of the *Cold War* was simple. As each side would get more and more powerful, neither side would want to use the weapons and the power that they had developed. If they would use those weapons, they would bring horrible destruction to our world.

Yet, the threat of destruction would bring fear to several different generations. Bomb shelters were created in homes and businesses. The black and yellow signs marking “*Fallout Shelters*” became a fairly common sight. The questions that were on the backs of the minds of many people were simple: “*What if World War 3 would happen? How would you survive?*”

Do you fear things in your life? Fear is real. Fear can do horrible things to us. Today is one of those days that reminds us that we do not need to have fear in our lives. You see, today is one of those BIG days in the Christian Church. It’s Pentecost. Yet, for many people today, they have no idea as to what that means. We don’t see *Pentecost Sales* in the newspaper ads today. No one had to go out and do *Pentecost shopping* for today. There are no *Pentecost meals* at the homes of people today. Yet, Pentecost removes fear from our lives. It is Pentecost that has brought every single one of you here to church today. If the Holy Spirit hasn’t done his work, there is no reason for us to be here because we would not have faith in God. The Confirmands, here today, would have no faith in God to confess and profess. Pentecost, however, changes everything.

I’m not sure that the disciples fully understood what Jesus was telling them when he said: **“When the Counselor comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father, he will testify about me. And you also must testify, for you have been with me from the beginning.”** Their whole world was about to turn up-side down for them. Jesus speaks these words on the night before he dies on the cross. He had prepared them the best he could. He prayed to His Heavenly Father for them. Yet, he also knew that there was no way that they would be strong enough to be able handle all that was laying ahead of them.

He knew that there was going to be someone who would try to destroy everything that Jesus had taught them. There was going to be someone who would try to mislead them on every single turn in their lives. That someone was Satan. He wouldn’t let up. So, Jesus was going to send them someone who could walk alongside them. He would send them a **“Counselor.”** The Greek word that Jesus uses here is a “*paraklete*.” There are a couple of different pictures that are behind that word.

A *Paraklete* was a person who would *walk alongside someone* to comfort them. Ever feel alone? It’s awful, isn’t it? Jesus’ disciples were going to feel real alone the next couple of days. They were going to feel alone when Jesus was no longer walking alongside them as he had done for 3 years. Luke tells us in the book of Acts, that after Jesus’ Ascension, there were only a group of a 120 believers (Acts 1:15). That was about to change on Pentecost.

A *Paraklete* could also be an *Advocate*. An *Advocate* would represent someone in a courtroom setting. Someone who *would speak* on behalf of that person. They would need an Advocate. It would be the Holy Spirit who would represent the sinning believer before God the Father in heaven. Unlike the Advocates in this world, this Advocate would not twist the truth. This Spirit is the **“Spirit of Truth.”** No matter what might happen in their lives, they could trust this **“Spirit of Truth.”**

God the Father had showed His love to this world by sending His Son. But it didn’t stop on Calvary. He just wanted to keep pouring out his Grace on this world. The one who would bring that Grace to the hearts of people would be the Holy

Spirit. What would the disciples do with it? What would believers of all time do with it? **“And you also MUST testify.”** It isn’t optional. As the Holy Spirit works faith in Jesus in the hearts of people, it will flow out to others. Talk about strength and power in those two short verses in our text.

By now, you probably have figured out what this all means for you, the Confirmation Class of St. Paul’s. Jesus didn’t just promise that gift of the Holy Spirit on those disciples in that room on Maundy Thursday. He has given that promise to you. That’s why Pentecost is so important for them here today.

Your God takes away fear in your life. There is a lot to fear in this world by ourselves. Without God, this world is a lonely place. Your God wants to walk alongside you every day of your life. He doesn’t want you to be lost. He knows that Satan is going to try to pull you away from Him, as he does with all of us. When you fall into sin, Satan will try to convince you that God’s Grace isn’t there for you anymore. Don’t listen to him. Remember how much Jesus loves you as you look at the nail holes in his hands and feet. Your God loves you! You see as you look at Jesus, and the Holy Spirit strengthens the faith that has begun in you, you can’t help but be witnesses of him in the world. Today is a big day for you. It’s big, because you will make some big promises in a few minutes. As you make those promises, remember that you have the Holy Spirit who will enable you to keep those promises for eternity.

Talk about power. It is power that will never fail you. The eight missile sites around Milwaukee are gone. I don’t remember much about them. I don’t want you to leave here today and only remember the missile sites in Milwaukee and Franklin. I do want you to remember a Power that is much greater than any missile – The Power of the Almighty! Let him do amazing things in your life. Amen.