

Sermon May 23, 2021 Pentecost John 15:26-27; 16:4b-15

Grace, mercy, and peace be unto you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen!

Gasoline Powers Our Vehicles

Most all of us in church this morning came in some sort of vehicle. Many of those reading this sermon or watching online still travel in vehicles when you can. Maybe a two-door coupe, sedan, SUV, pickup, or convertible with front-wheel drive, all-wheel drive, four-wheel drive, etc. The selection and variety of vehicles today is mind boggling. However, despite all the different types of vehicles and all the many options you can get, unless you are driving a hybrid or something like that, they all have one thing in common. In order for you to get anywhere, you have to have gas in the tank. Gas is the fuel our vehicles burn, and gas provides the power that gives the get-up-and-go.

The Holy Spirit Powers Our Faith

The Bible teaches us over and over that we, in our natural state, are powerless to know God as he is and have a true and living relationship with God. Such truths are humiliating for us, but the only way for God to help us is to start with the facts. And them's the facts. Thankfully, God in his mercy has given us the ultimate source of power – his Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit's power is clean, renewable, unlimited, and free. It's perfect. The Holy Spirit gives life to every living thing on earth. The Holy Spirit gives us eternal life as he creates faith in God and our redemption in Jesus Christ. Without the power of the Holy Spirit, we are still unclean, and we are still chained to sin and death. Thank God for giving us the Spirit and the life and gifts he brings.

The Colonial Pipeline was Attacked, and a Ransom was Paid

On May 7, 2021, the Colonial Pipeline was attacked by hackers. The five thousand five hundred mile Colonial pipeline runs from Texas to New Jersey and delivers one hundred million gallons of fuel every day. Of course a pipeline of this size is computer-controlled, so it can be vulnerable to cyber attack, and it was indeed attacked. The shutdown of the pipeline created gas shortages in many areas, and

North Carolina declared a state of emergency. The pipeline has been restarted, and fuel is now being pumped again.

The FBI has identified the hacker group. They call themselves the DarkSide. They must be Star War fans or something. No doubt on the side of the Evil Empire. DarkSide- not a bad name for a hacker group, I guess. What motivated the DarkSiders to attack the Colonial Pipeline? Was it fame? Was it to create havoc? Was it to test the vulnerability of our nation's infrastructure? It was none of these. The motivation was money, plain and simple. Darkside created ransomware that locked up the system until the money was paid. Colonial paid \$4.4 million in ransom to get their system running once again.

The Evil One Hacked Paradise and Jesus Paid the Ransom

I'd like to make a comparison between the detestable work of DarkSide and the work of the Evil One. We might say that the Evil One hacked paradise. There were no computers or computer programs in Eden, but things were messed up pretty bad just the same. The serpent took the word of the Lord and twisted it, causing Eve to make one very bad decision. Adam went right along. Humanity was cut off from the power of the Holy Spirit. Right fellowship and eternal life with God ended. All Creation began to fall apart. In that very day we became spiritually dead. This is what the Bible says. If we develop a sense for it, we know it is true.

While the Evil One was probably happy enough to have our souls, there was a ransom that could be paid to restore us. The ransom would not be paid to the Evil One, the ruler of this world. The ransom would be paid to God's justice. Every misdeed creates a debt to God's perfect justice and holiness. We have all racked up a big liability. Jesus, the only one who could stand in for us, did so. He paid the full ransom price that we owed to God, our account is settled, and we are free again from that debt and its consequences.

The Power of the Holy Spirit is Ours

In the work of Jesus, we have peace with God, and life in the Holy Spirit. Like the fuel flowing again in the Colonial pipeline, has been restored to us once again. This is no small blessing. Jesus didn't go through all he went through just so we

could have our ticket punched when we get to the pearly gates! Listen to what Jesus says;

When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. John 16:13

Jesus says the Spirit will guide us into all the truth. In the humanistic, science-focused, fake news world in which we live, this is good news. People would still press us that we evolved from star dust and have no other value. Researchers with their own human shortcomings and agendas manipulate and reinterpret scientific results to their own liking. Where do you even go to get the real facts about anything that is going on today? It's tough! This is all nothing new, lest we think we live in some sort of unique time and place. We don't. Humanity is self-destructive and history repeats itself. There have been numerous great and technologically advanced civilizations that have come long before us. We still can't figure out much of what they were able to do! We're not THAT great. We're not THAT special. We're not THAT awesome. In the grand scheme of things, we're average. But that's okay too, because Jesus didn't come to save great people. He came to save sinners, and that is exactly who we are. We are just the kind of people the Holy Spirit has a chance of leading into divine truth. Jesus says something extraordinary;

He [the Holy Spirit] will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you. All that the Father has is mine; therefore I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you. John 16:14-15

We hold that God the Father has life in himself and is the source of all that is. Jesus plainly says that he also possesses everything with the Father. Jesus also says the Holy Spirit is now going to start taking the things of God and revealing them to us. Elsewhere he promises that whenever we ask for this work of the Spirit, God will always grant it. The Spirit has already started that work and will continue to do that for all our lives and until the end of the age. Do we need more faith from God? It's ours. More power in prayer? Ours. More commitment to a life as Jesus' disciple? Done. More understanding of God's holy will? We got it. More strength in temptation? That is ours, too. All the things of Jesus are given to

us by the unlimited power of the Holy Spirit. It is as Jesus teaches, "Ask and you will receive."

Conclusion

Many times we complain we don't have enough energy for everything that goes on in a day. We feel tired, weak, drained, and in need of a comfortable chair or a nap. This never need be the case with our spiritual life when we have the Holy Spirit fueling us with his unlimited power. When we go out to our cars, SUV's, and trucks and start them up, it's good to remember and take heart that even if hackers hack and gas supplies get cut off, Jesus has paid the ransom to redeem us back to be the people of God that we are. He has opened up a never-ending channel of power. Nothing will ever stop the Holy Spirit from fueling our faith and energizing us along the path upon which he leads us. Amen!

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