

# You Know the Spirit

Easter 6

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John 14:15-21

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Grace, peace, and mercy be to you from God our Father, and from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.

Who is the Holy Spirit? The world does not know. Neither does it know Jesus; and because it does not know Jesus, it does not know the Father.

If you ask someone if they could identify a movie character from his or her theme song, they would likely be able to do it, unless it had been a long time since that person had heard the song, or if they had not seen that particular movie. In the first “Marvel’s The Avengers” movie, the audience was clued in that Iron Man would be making an appearance when AC/DC began to play over the sound system. In “Batman v Superman,” Wonder Woman was given a particular theme as well, and the audience knew when she would be showing up when her music began to play. While it is true that the Holy Spirit does not have such a theme song, it is also true that no one from the world would recognize that it would be Him appearing if He had a song and it began to play.

You, however, brothers and sisters in Christ, do know the Holy Spirit. You know that He is the third person of the Holy Trinity. You know that He proceeds from the Father and the Son, and with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified. You even know several of His aliases: the Helper, the Holy Comforter, the Spirit of Christ, the Spirit of Truth, among others.

More than that, you know the work of the Holy Spirit is sanctification. As you have answered in catechism questioning, “The Holy Spirit sanctifies me (makes me holy) by bringing me to faith in Christ, so that I might have the blessings of redemption and lead a godly life (sanctification in the wide sense).” In addition to causing you to believe in Jesus as your Lord and Savior, the Holy Spirit works in you to strive to overcome sin and to do good works. In the explanation of the Small Catechism, you were asked, “What are good works in God’s sight?” to which you replied, “In God’s sight a good work is everything that a child of God does, speaks, or thinks in faith according to the Ten Commandments, for the glory of God, and for the benefit of his or her neighbor.” And if you go back and review your catechism, you’ll find that the basis for this answer comes from our Gospel text for this morning, John fourteen, fifteen to twenty-one.

## Verse 1

Jesus said, “If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, even the spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you.”

In these first words of our text, we are reminded of the two meanings of sanctification. But we must remember that in order to be ones being sanctified, we must first hear the Law. Jesus does mention the commandments, yet here He refers to more than just the Ten Commandments. He is speaking of the entire Word of the Old Testament and His Words as the Christ, the Son of God. Jesus tells us we must keep His commandments, but He means that we must keep His entire Word. This includes the Law as well as the promises about His coming, death, and resurrection.

Even as ones who are being sanctified, we must continually be reminded that we are not able to keep the Law ourselves. I can’t, and you can’t. The primary purpose of the Law is to show our sin. We look to the Ten Commandments and we find that we fall short of the perfect living God demands of us.

We began as rebellious human beings. We were without God the Father, without the Son, and without the Spirit, and we were perfectly content with that. We had been born into the world—the same world which Jesus said cannot receive the Spirit. And yet we know Him. We know the entire Trinity.

God came to you through His Word and has implanted faith in His Son Jesus Christ in you. This work, as we heard, was done by the Holy Spirit, who calls, gathers, enlightens, and keeps us in the one true faith by using the Word of God. The Spirit has taught us how God did not leave us in rebellion but sent His own Son to die for our sins. Jesus came and died—paying the price for your sins against God’s Law—He ascended, and He sent the Holy Spirit that you might come to faith. If you have heard and believe the Word, God has worked that faith into you by that very Spirit. He has welcomed you into His family by His Son’s death, and made you His own dear children.

### Verse 2

Today, you are God’s children, and Jesus has ascended back into heaven. But God the Father promised through His Son, “I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. Yet a little while and the world will see me no more, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live. In that day you will know that I am in the Father, and you in me, and I in you.”

In these words, Jesus promised to return. Whether we die or live until that happens, we will live forever. What is more, though the world does not see Him, we see Jesus, and we know Him. And because we know Jesus, we know the Father.

Even though we cannot see Jesus with our eyes, we see Him with the eyes of faith. We have seen Him perform miracles and raise the dead. We have seen Him crucified on the cross of Calvary. We have seen Him risen from the dead, bearing the scars in His hands and His side. And we have seen Him ascended into heaven. All these are events of which we have been made witnesses. What is more, we still see our Lord Jesus at work each and every Sunday morning.

We know that the Trinity is at work in the means of grace: the Word and the Sacraments. That is where He has promised to be, and we who have the eyes of faith see Him at work right there. Through His Word and water, we see the dead made alive in Holy Baptism. And through His Word and bread and wine, we see Jesus offer His own body and blood for the forgiveness of our friends and family at this altar and every altar where the bread and wine are truly consecrated in the sacrament of Holy Communion. Yet we also see the danger that God has warned us about for those who might desire to partake without first receiving that faith.

Through these means, God cultivates the faith that He has implanted in you, that it begins to grow and fructify. These fruits are seen as the Holy Spirit causes you to come to receive God’s gifts, these means of grace, every Sunday for the well-being of your soul and your faith. They are also seen as you learn to love one another; that is, as you learn to show agape love. This is not brotherly love or romantic love—it is “self-giving, sacrificial concern for another person (ESV Study Bible, p.1903)” love. It is the same love with which Jesus first loved you and me.

### Verse 3

Therefore it is true when Jesus says that “Whoever has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me. And he who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and manifest myself to him.”

In these last words of our text, Jesus reminds us that there are two meanings to sanctification. The Holy Spirit works faith in our hearts to believe that we cannot ever hope to complete the Law of our own and that we have sinned, but that Jesus went to the cross to pay for those sins and to believe on this saving grace. Secondly, the Spirit, the second person of the Trinity, works in us to cause us to desire to stop sinning and to love one another with the same agape love with which Jesus first loved us.

Even though the Holy Spirit may not have a theme song, we know Him and His work. He has proceeded to each of us from the Father and the Son, and with the Father and the Son He rightly receives our praise and thanksgiving.

We were once a rebellious lost people like the rest of the world, but now we have been brought to faith in the truth. And through the power of the Holy Spirit, we keep that truth. In this way, God has made us to love Him who loved us, even Jesus Christ. And as you and I love Jesus, we will be loved by the Father; and Jesus will love us and manifest Himself to us. In Jesus' Name. Amen.