

SERMON - PENTECOST SUNDAY (WHITSUNDAY) - 23 MAY 2010
St. John's Anglican Church, Greensboro, North Carolina

John 14:15-17 (KJV)

Jesus said, If ye love me, keep my commandments. [16] And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; [17] Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.

Jesus said if you love me you will do what I have told you to do and if you do what I have told you to do then I will ask the Father to send you the Holy Spirit to strengthen you.

It all starts with doing what Jesus has told us to do.

I can remember as a child asking which ever one of my parents, "Why do I have to do that?" and receiving that great parental answer, "Because I told you to."

I think most of, if not all of us, have had that experience.

"Because I told you to."

At the time, I didn't think too highly of that particular answer, that particular reason.

Jesus tell us just about the same thing. *If ye love me, keep my commandments.*

Just as our parents used "Because I told you to" for the reason they wanted us to keep from being hurt or getting into trouble, Jesus tells us to keep his commandments to keep us from straying off the path, the path to God.

What are those commandments? I think we all know them by now... or should know

them by now. The first is to love God with all of heart, all of our soul and with all of our mind. One quote says also to love God with all of our strength. The second commandment is to love our neighbor as ourself. Then he commanded us to love one another as He has loved us.

And if we can do this, then he will ask the Father to send us the Holy Spirit.

What are we talking about? Do you mean that if I'm not obeying these rules that the Holy Spirit will be withheld from me?

Let's think about this for a moment. We are made regenerate, born again, through our baptism. We have accepted Jesus Christ as our Lord and our Savior, or our parents have for us if we were baptized as infants. Later, when we were old enough, we were confirmed to ratify in that case our acceptance of Christ and to receive the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

It is from that time that we are accepted as a member, a full member, of the Body of Christ, the Church. It is from that time that we really begin our journey with Christ to God, to begin the process that the Greeks so well termed *Theosis*.

It is through our obedience to the commands of God that we grow closer to Him. It is through our love for God through our love for Christ that we obey what He tells us to do.

And as we live our lives in accordance with his commands then the Holy Spirit directs us like a guide through the darkness, through the rough paths, through the difficulties of our mortal lives that all of us, without exception, will face more often than not.

And it is the Church, the ecclesia, the gathering of the Saints, that provides the shelter for us against the storms of everyday life. It is the Church that gathers us together along with the Real Presence of Christ to feed us and to comfort in the old sense to strengthen us to face the harsh winds of every day life.

And as the Church feeds us and provides for us the shelter against the prevailing forces of destruction and evil, we need to remember that we as this ekklesia, this gathering as it is known as St. John's Church, is a part of a larger gathering of gatherings, our Diocese.

And we should always remember that our diocese is a part, a member, of a still larger gathering of dioceses, and that those gathering, those provinces and jurisdictions in communion with each other becomes the Church at Large, the One, Holy, Apostolic and Catholic Church.

Today, Pentecost, is considered the anniversary of the founding of the Catholic Church, the Body of Christ on earth.

We are not alone. We are not just St. John's. We are a part of an entity that is placed on earth to do His will, to obey His commandments.

St. Teresa of Avila said it so well.

Christ has no body now on earth but yours,

no hands but yours,

no feet but yours,

Yours are the eyes through which to look out

Christ's compassion to the world

Yours are the feet with which he is to go about

doing good;

Yours are the hands with which he is to bless men now.

If we love Christ as we should and if we are obeying his commandments then we will have the strength of the Holy Spirit to carry out what God has for us to do.

Amen.