

Sermon June 2nd, 2019

God Clothes Us with the Holy Spirit

In the summer of 1999 I went on my first job hunt. I was both nervous and excited to begin this new chapter in my life. After hitting a few different spots in the service industry where they took my application, and added it to a hefty pile where I probably wouldn't hear from them again. I walked into Joey Tomatoes Kitchen. They asked me what I was applying for. I said I wanted to be a server. So, the floor manager came in. Looked at me for a minute. He had this weird look on his face. Then said "You would be better in the kitchen." And walked away. I think at the time I was quite offended. I guess I wasn't good looking enough to make the cut.

Anyways, the head chef came out, looked at my application. Saw that I liked to golf, and hired me on the spot. I started out washing dishes, but after a month or so worked my way onto the line.

With no previous experience cooking I was a little more then nervous to start my new role. Fortunately, I spent the first couple of weeks training. I received adequate instruction on how to prepare the meals. After my training was complete my supervisor entrusted me with cooking on my own. For the most part it went well. The one thing I remembered most is that the chef who trained me promised that if I needed help at any time they would be there.

So, I received instruction. Was commissioned/entrusted to do the work on my own. Then received a promise from someone that if I needed help someone would be there to help.

You can probably relate to my experience. In every job, we experience instruction, whether it is through additional schooling or mentorship or training. In every job, we are expected at some point to do the tasks on our own. In every job, we usually have someone more experienced promise to be there if we need them.

Being parented is similar. As children, our parents instruct us on how to live our lives. At first, they pour a lot of time and energy in helping us learn the basics. Then they start to let go a little more, as we learn to do these tasks on our own. Eventually, they send us packing, most of the time in a loving way, so we can create a life for ourselves.

Maybe they turn our bedroom into a room they always wanted or travel more. However, they don't usually change the locks and screen our calls. They promise that if we need them they will be there for us.

In our gospel this morning, Jesus sums up his time with his disciples. Jesus has spent the last three years training and instructing them to continue the ministry Jesus started. At times during these three years Jesus spends a majority of his time teaching them. At other times Jesus sends them out to do a particular mission to see how much they have learned. To prepare them for the time after his death, resurrection, and ascension.

When Jesus appears to the disciples after his death Jesus reassures them that they have learned everything they need to know to continue the ministry. Jesus then commissions them to go out into the world and do what Jesus has been doing. To preach repentance and forgiveness of sins to all the nations. To share the good news of Jesus, the crucified messiah.

Now, this commission is challenging for the disciples to follow. For one, the disciples are deeply connected to their roots as Israelites. They have followed Jesus for three years and most often have seen Jesus reaching out to people within the Israelite communities. And, messianic views at this time believed the messiah would come to save the Jewish people from Roman oppression. So, to be invited to go to all the Gentile communities and proclaim this message is a little puzzling, and probably scary. As most Gentiles didn't look positively towards the Jewish people, and in many cases, persecuted and discriminated against them.

Second, people didn't believe the messiah would be one who would have to die on a cross. This destiny Jesus walked didn't make sense to a lot of people. The disciples would run into a lot of ridicule for even suggesting Jesus is the messiah due to Jesus' fate.

So, even though Jesus taught the disciples that he would have to die, and showed them inclusivity throughout his ministry. The disciples still struggled to follow Jesus in this way.

In response, Jesus goes on to make a promise with the disciples. Jesus promises them that they will be clothed with the Holy Spirit. They will not be alone as they continue Jesus' work. If they need help God will be there through the Holy Spirit. Giving them what they need to proclaim this news

to the Gentiles. Giving them what they need to proclaim the crucified Christ to the people in their communities. God will be there with them as they continue the good work that Jesus has been doing over the past three years.

Well, like those who train us in our jobs. Like our parents who prepare us for the world. Like Jesus who prepares the disciples to continue the work Jesus was doing. God prepares us to continue the ministry that Jesus was doing. God prepares us to live our lives with faith.

God instructs us through bible studies. Through teachings from a pastor or a faith mentor. Through hearing the Word preached in worship. Through small group ministries. Through the music we sing.

God then commissions us to go out into our everyday lives and live out our faith proclaiming the gracious love Jesus offers us.

Then, in our baptism God promises us that we will be clothed with the Holy Spirit. God is with us always through the Holy Spirit. When we live out our faith we are not alone. God gives us the words we need to share the good news. God gives us the love and compassion we need to be there for others. God gives us the strength to endure when we face rejection. God gives us the hospitality to reach out to those who are different from us.

God clothes us with the Holy Spirit giving us everything we need to follow in Jesus' footsteps. To proclaim God's gracious love changing our community and our world in ways that reflect God's kingdom come.

Let us pray, loving God we give thanks for your instruction, commission, and promise. May we feel your presence as we try to live out your gracious love in our lives. In Jesus name we pray, **Amen.**