

The theme for our morning's meditation is, "The promise of the Holy Spirit." When we look at the activity of the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament times we notice that the Spirit acts as a visiting Spirit. The Holy Spirit empowered people and equipped them for certain specific tasks and then left them. So there was no permanent presence of the Holy Spirit within the individual. So it is in this context where we need to see the promise of the Holy Spirit.

The prophet Joel talks about a time in the future when the Holy Spirit will be given to all people. In Joel chapter 2:28, the prophet records the Lord's words as follows, "And afterward, I'll pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions. Even on my servants, both men and women, I'll pour out my Spirit in those days." God had spoken about a time in the future when the Spirit would be freely given to all people. This event was to take place in the future. We know from the New Testament that this event was fulfilled with the coming of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost.

In the gospel reading from St. John Jesus begins by telling his disciples, "If you love me, keep my commands and I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you." The promise of Jesus is also about the coming of the Holy Spirit. Jesus will ask the Father and he is the one who will send the Holy Spirit to the people. The Holy Spirit will be an advocate who pleads and intercedes our case before the Father. The Holy Spirit is also known as a helper or the comforter because he helps us in moments of need and consoles and comforts us in our moments of grief. He is also the one who will live within us forever.

The Holy Spirit is a Spirit of truth. He reveals to us first and foremost the truth about Jesus. Only through the work of the Holy Spirit can our heart receive the truth about Jesus and about God. The eyes of our hearts are opened by the Holy Spirit to receive the gospel. Secondly, the Spirit exposes lies and deceit because he is the Spirit of truth. The Holy Spirit convicts us whenever we lead lives of deceit and falsehood. He exposes untruth in the inward parts. He uses the word to pierce between bone and marrow so that no secrets are entertained.

Every single person who believes on the Lord Jesus is sealed with the mark of the Holy Spirit. Paul writing to the Ephesians says, "And you also were included in Christ when you heard the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation. When you believed, you were marked in him with the seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who was a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession – to the praise of his glory." The moment we receive Jesus in our hearts as our Lord and personal Saviour he sends us the Holy Spirit to be with us forever.

The promise of the Holy Spirit was something that the disciples had to wait for. Jesus had told them at his ascension that they were to wait until they were empowered by the Holy Spirit before going out and sharing the gospel. On the 50th day after the resurrection of Jesus and 10 days after his ascension, on the day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit was freely given to all believers. From that day till today God continues to keep his promise by giving his Holy Spirit to all who believe. May we truly be filled with his Holy Spirit and walk after him faithfully.