

The Blood of the Apostles

John 15:26-16:4

The Seventh Sunday of Easter, June 2, 2019

Immanuel Lutheran Church, Broadlands

On the night when our Lord Jesus Christ was betrayed He told His apostles that He was going to the Father. Since our Lord Jesus Christ told His apostles that He was going to the Father on the night when He was betrayed, He lays before us the way that He took to the Father. The way that He took to the Father was not merely His ascension into heaven. The way that He took to the Father was betrayal, death, burial, resurrection and then ascension.

When their Lord told them this He promised them that He would send them the Helper. Who is the Helper? The Helper is the Spirit of truth. You commonly call Him the Holy Spirit. Therefore it is only once our Lord has been betrayed, crucified, buried, resurrected and ascended, that He sends the Holy Spirit. Without the betrayal, crucifixion, death, burial, resurrection, and ascension of your Lord, there is no Holy Spirit. But with the betrayal, crucifixion, death, burial, resurrection, and ascension of your Lord, He sends the Holy Spirit. He sends the Holy Spirit to His apostles.

Your Lord is the sender of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit comes from the Father. Because the Holy Spirit comes from the Father, He speaks with the Father's authority. Because the Father is the source of all things, He is the source of all truth. The Holy Spirit is therefore not just any Holy Spirit. He is the Spirit of truth. The Spirit of truth comes from the Father. Your Lord, the Son, sends the Spirit of truth from the Father.

The Spirit of truth testifies. First of all, the Spirit of truth testifies to the apostles. On the night when our Lord Jesus Christ was betrayed He promised His apostles that the Spirit of truth that comes from the Father would guide them into all truth. In order to guide the apostles into all truth, the Spirit of truth will testify to the apostles.

Furthermore in order to guide the apostles into all truth the Spirit of truth testifies to the apostles about Jesus. Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life." If Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life, and the Spirit of truth testifies to the apostles about the truth, then the Spirit of truth testifies to the apostles about Jesus. There is no other truth about which the Spirit of truth may testify. The Spirit of truth is from the Father.

The Lord describes it to His apostles this way. "He will not testify about Himself. He will take the things that are mine and make them known to you." Therefore the

Spirit of truth will not testify about Himself. He will testify about Jesus. That is how the Spirit of truth takes the things that are of Jesus and makes them known to the apostles. Any spirit that you encounter that testifies about itself is not the Spirit of truth. There are so called holy spirits who testify about themselves and not about Jesus. In other words there are preachers who preach about the Holy Spirit, but rarely if ever talk about Jesus. Those preachers are false preachers. The spirits speaking through them are false spirits. They are demons. Avoid them. The true Holy Spirit, the Spirit of truth, will testify of Jesus. Jesus is the truth. There is nothing that pleases the Holy Spirit more than a preacher who preaches all about Jesus and nothing else.

So the Holy Spirit will proceed from the Father. The Son will send Him. The Spirit of truth will testify about Jesus to the apostles. The Spirit of truth will therefore guide the apostles into all truth. And then the apostles will testify. They will testify to Jesus and by doings so they will testify to the truth.

The apostles will be put out of the synagogue for this.

Our Lord uses a technical term which in our day and age we would call excommunication. The apostles will testify to Jesus and by doing so they will testify to the truth. The people in charge of the synagogues will excommunicate them for testifying about Jesus.

But that is not all. Some of the apostles were literally put out of the synagogue. When some of the apostles entered into synagogues and reasoned with those present from the Scriptures that Jesus is the Christ, those present physically put the apostle out of the synagogue.

The apostles got put out of the synagogues. The apostles died. They did not just die. People killed them. They were martyred. People killed them because they testified to Jesus. The people who killed the apostles did not know the Father or the Son. If the people who had killed the apostles had known the Father or the Son they would have welcomed the apostolic message with joy. Instead because they did not know the Father or the Son, there were people who killed the apostles. They killed the apostles because the apostles testified to the truth. They testified about Jesus. They did this by the power of the Spirit of truth.

This is not about your life. It is about their life. Have you been put out of a synagogue for testifying about Jesus? No. To my knowledge none of you have ever belonged to a synagogue in the first place much less been excommunicated from one.

Have any of you been killed by those who thought they were doing a service to God by putting you to death? No. It is likely that it will happen. No. In spite of the

media making a big deal about of bombings of churches, it is still unlikely that any of you will die a martyr.

The apostles died as martyrs. They died because they testified about Jesus. They died because they testified about the truth. There is only one apostle who escaped martyrdom and he is the exception. The rest of them died. They gave their blood for the truth about which they testified. They died rather than to renounce or relinquish the truth to which they testified. They testified about Jesus.

There are people who say that there are books that were excluded from the Bible. There are people who say this. When they say that there are books that were excluded from the Bible they are implying that there are books that ought to be in the Bible that are not there. When they imply that there are books that ought to be in the Bible that are not in the Bible they are further implying that there may be books that are in the Bible that should not be there.

This is not a theoretical discussion. I am not making this up. I had this conversation with a young man just recently. Older members of the congregation this is the type of question about which your grandchildren are wondering. There are other young people who are saying these kinds of things to them which causes them to question whether or not the Bible that you and I have told them to read is a reliable testimony to Jesus who is the truth.

Young people of the congregation, let me know after Divine Service whether not someone has said this or something like this to you about the Bible. It makes you wonder, doesn't it?

And it does not help that your flesh would like to be free from the Bible. The Bible is the testimony of the apostles. It is the truth into which the Holy Spirit guided the apostles. It is the testimony of the apostles who testified to the One who testified that the deeds of the world are evil. That is why the world hates Him. Your flesh hates Him also. Your flesh hates Jesus because He testifies that the deeds of your flesh are evil. Therefore it is tempting to use an argument about whether or not the books of the Bible should be in the Bible or whether we should have different books to dismiss the whole thing as unreliable so that you do not have to listen to the testimony of Him who rose from the dead!

How do you know that the books of the Bible that are there ought to be there?

It is tempting for me to use reason to try to establish the Bible. I have been to seminary. It is tempting for me to refer you to the church fathers who record how the Bible was assembled and to use their testimony as evidence that what you have is a

reliable testimony to the One who rose from the dead. But then those who question whether or not what is in the Bible should be there or whether or not there are books that are not in the Bible that should be there would simply respond by asking, "Aren't the church fathers the ones who excluded the books that should be in?"

So don't use reason on them. Erudite argumentation will not help the Bible. And even if it did work the people who believe the argument rely on the argument of a man and not the power of the Spirit of truth.

Some of you older members of the congregation would point out to your grandchildren, "You just have to have faith." While it is true that you have to have faith if you just say that to your grandchildren without a better explanation of the problem that your grandchildren will simply think that Grandma and Grandpa really want me to believe the Bible because they do, but they don't know why they believe and they could be deceived as well. Unless the fruit of faith in Grandma and Grandpa's life is very abundant that argument will not work either even though it is true.

So when speaking of the reliability of the Bible I do not want you to place against the unbelievers elaborate arguments that you heard from me and that some of you have trouble remembering anyway. I do not want you place against the arguments of the unbelievers some vague wish on your part that your grandchildren and young people everywhere to have faith.

Here is what I want you to place against the arguments of the unbelievers regarding whether or not the contents of the Bible should be there. I want you to place against them blood!

Our Lord tells His apostles that they will die for the testimony that the Holy Spirit gives them. He tells them that people will kill them thinking that they are doing something for God by doing so. He tells them that a slave is not about his master. If they persecuted Him, they will persecute His apostles as well. He tells them these things in advance so that when they happen the apostles may know that He said these things to them.

Our Lord does not give elaborate explanations and defenses of His Bible. If He had, the Bible would be a lot longer than it is. Our Lord does not make some emotional appeal to you to believe His Bible. Our Lord puts His own blood and the blood of His apostles behind every page of it.

The apostles shed their blood because of the testimony that they gave. Therefore the testimony that they gave is true. That testimony is the Bible. It is the truth straight from the Spirit of truth.

Why do you think that I should respect the American flag? How many of you posted this to facebook? Why should we respect the American flag? Do you put elaborate constitutional argumentations on facebook as to why we should respect the American flag? Do you post theological arguments from Romans 13 or 1Peter 2 as to why we should respect the flag? No. None of you do. But plenty of you post blood to my newsfeed on facebook as to why I should respect the flag. I should respect the flag because of those who died for it and the republic for which it stands.

The blood behind the Bible is a greater flood of blood than that which stands behind our nation. And the blood that backs the Bible begins with the blood of the apostles. Their blood testifies to the One who shed His blood on your behalf thus adding His own blood to the blood of His followers.

It is because of the blood that you should respect this Bible. It is because of the blood that you should believe its testimony. It is because of the blood that Adele should rely upon her baptism. It is because of the blood that you are saved.

In the Name of Jesus. Amen.