



---

*“The work of the Holy Spirit is to infuse into the heart the true love of God so that obedience to the command of the law is brought about not by fear of punishment but because of a free and happy love to God.”*

*--Regin Prenter (Danish Luther scholar)*

Most religions include rules. Sometimes, depending on the broader society, the rules can be written into the laws of the land. Throughout time and space, leaders have used religious laws to control others. This is true for almost every major religion – even the paganism of Rome during Jesus’s days on earth. It’s one of the reasons Jesus’s radical love of outsiders was considered dangerous to the powers of the day.

He was unique in that he turned the law inside out. He told his fellow Jews that God’s law was absolutely NOT about controlling others. It was entirely about loving others. He said this in so many ways on so many occasions. He also lived out God’s radical love all the way to the cross *and beyond*. It is the *beyond* part that we will be focusing on this Easter.

In the gospel of John, chapters 14-17 all take place at “The Last Supper.” We often focus most of our attention on the foot washing and the supper portions, but also recorded are Jesus’s words to the disciples – both those present in the room and those of us to come later. Some of Christ’s greatest statements are found during this discourse. It is here that he promises to come and collect us at our death and take us to our eternal dwelling place prepared for us by him. It is here that Jesus promises the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

I have said these things to you while I am still with you. But, the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said to you. Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid.” (John 14: 25-27)

Jesus, in the flesh, would be crucified, resurrected, and then ascend into heaven, but he would not leave us alone. Instead, God the Holy Spirit would provide all the teachings, support, and peace *within us* that Jesus, the Man, provided in his earthly life.

Throughout lent, we have been looking toward the crucifixion and resurrection, which promises us eternal life. Now, as we enter into the Easter season (March 31-May 19), we are invited to focus on the lives we are leading now. Christ’s work on the cross guarantees us eternal salvation, but if we just accept that and go on about our daily lives as normal, we are practicing a shallow faith that misses out on the sustenance offered by the Holy Spirit.

God is Creator, Redeemer, *and Sustainer*. This Easter, I encourage you to deepen your faith by the power of the Sustainer:

- Pray more
- Participate in worship more
- Read your bible more
- Connect with others more

These are the ways that the Holy Spirit works to deepen our love and understanding of God and neighbor, so that we can obey God’s will in the world.