

## WHY JESUS WENT AWAY

John 15:26-27; 16:4b-15 Text vs. 7 *“I tell you; it is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Advocate will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you.”*

Let’s get right into Pentecost and try to understand it. Perhaps nothing stands-out more strongly in what John calls Jesus’ *“farewell address”* than the promise He made in John chapters 14-17 and in 15:26 where Jesus said, *“when the Advocate comes, whom I will send to you from the Father—the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father—he will testify about Me.”*

Over the past few Sundays in John’s Gospel, we’ve heard Jesus speak words of comfort to His disciples. Just before His death on a cross He was seeking to calm their sense of abandonment and fear. And His words were surely meant for us as well, for we live in the truth of His resurrection and as heirs of Pentecost having received the promised Spirit. And now, just as those first disciples were comforted, encouraged, and sent forth with Jesus’ words of promise, so are we. Have you ever wondered why Pentecost is marked in red on the Christian calendar. Well, it was the fiery outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the disciples. It was through Divine action that the Church received God’s power to fulfill His plans. Jesus’ last words to the disciples were *“you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you. And you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”* That highlighted the pending arrival of the Holy Spirit. Promises of the Spirit’s coming had also been foretold by Joel earlier in the Old Testament. *“And afterward, I will 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 will pour out my Spirit in those days.”* (Joel 2:28-29).

### After what?

An Army of Locusts had destroyed the crops of Israel! Why? In the Old Testament Joel vividly described a plague of locusts that devastated Israel. He wrote around 845 B.C. that the locust invasion actually happened, and that it wiped out crops and caused ruin. Joel saw that disaster as a sign for the final judgment and warned the people to turn to God in repentance. A Judgment Day was coming on Israel. And the entire world. Now, the locust invasion was a natural disaster. But it was also, a spiritual wake-up call that God used to call Israel to repentance and to recognize His sovereignty. *“I will repay you for the years the locusts have eaten—the great locust and the young locust, the other locusts, and the locust swarm—it is my great army that I sent among you. You will have plenty to eat until you are full, and you will praise the name of the Lord your God, who has worked wonders for you. Never again will my people be shamed. Then you will know that I am in Israel. That I am the Lord your God. And that there is no other. Never again will My people be shamed.”*

Pentecost fulfilled that! 40 days after His Resurrection His Ascension marked the end of His earthly ministry and meant the success of His victory over sin and death. His ascension demonstrated His authority and reign over all things. So, Jesus was with His disciples, and while in their presence, He was taken up and hidden behind a cloud that was a symbol of God’s presence. It showed that Jesus returned to God His Father. And Jesus had told His disciples they would receive power when the Holy Spirit came upon them. (Acts 1:8) He instructed them to wait in Jerusalem until that promise was fulfilled.

The second chapter of Acts is where the Event of Pentecost is found. On the day of Pentecost, when the disciples were gathered in one place, there suddenly came a sound, like that of a rushing wind. And what seemed to be tongues of fire appeared over each of them. They were being filled with the Holy Spirit. And they began to speak in other tongues (languages). Now let’s look at that. The Holy Spirit’s arrival at Pentecost gave power to the disciples in several ways. *Boldness*. Those fearful and hesitant disciples became bold witnesses for Jesus. People from different countries were hearing the Good News of the Gospel spoken in their own language. Jerusalem, a trading crossroad, drew people from other countries. And there, on the day of Pentecost, in Jerusalem, where Jesus had told them to remain, thousands could not understand what was happening. But when told in their own language, the Holy Spirit declared God’s truth to all those people. Speaking in other tongues, means the disciples were speaking to the multitudes *in their own language*. A few Jews accused the Disciples of being drunk with wine, because they couldn’t understand what they were saying. But the disciples assured them, it was too early in the day for that!

So now, people other than Jews understood what the disciples were saying. And the Church was born on that day when Peter spoke to the crowd and boldly proclaimed Jesus as the risen Lord. He called all the people to repentance, and about three thousand people believed! They were baptized *that day!* (Acts 2:41) Think of that! The disciples probably used all the *mikvehs* around the Temple to do it. (A *mikveh* was an immersion pool with steps used to descend into for purification before prayer or worship. Like a baptistry found in some churches, a Jew would immerse in the water of a *mikveh* to become ritually clean.

That’s why Jesus said, *“unless I go away, the Advocate will not come to you.”* And in our lesson today, Jesus said, *“But very truly I tell you, it is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Advocate will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you.”* (John 16:7-8) Jesus promised that after His departure the Advocate would come. Most interpret the Advocate as the Holy Spirit, the third person of the Trinity, where in John 16:13-14 Jesus further explained *“when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth. He will not speak on his own. He will speak only what he hears. And he will tell you what is yet to come. He will glorify Me because it is from Me that he will receive what he will make known to you.”* The Spirit of truth mentioned here is —*the Holy Spirit*—who empowers believers and reveals

God's truth. (1 John 2:1) But John goes on writing *"my little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous."*

Has anyone ever told you that you need a good lawyer when you go to court? An advocate. Someone who speaks for the rights of the client. We call them lawyers! They've studied the fine points of the law. They can navigate through those often-complicated statutes with accuracy and precision. That's the picture John's painting when he refers to Jesus as our *"advocate with the Father."*

Jesus **is your** Advocate before God. He will plead your case in the heavenly court and intercede on your behalf to ensure your forgiveness and reconciliation with God. God's law pronounces you guilty on all counts if you have violated His standards. You're not presumed guilty. You are guilty! And that's more serious than a traffic ticket! When you reject His right to rule your life and you continue to sin, even after coming to a knowledge of the Truth (Hebrews 10:26; Romans 1:21–23; 1 Timothy 2:4) the only just punishment for such wickedness is an eternity in hell. (Revelation 14:10; 21:8; 1 Corinthians 6:9) But Jesus stands as the Advocate between you, and God's law. If His blood has been applied to your life through your faith in Him, and you have confessed Him as your Lord and Savior, (Romans 10:9–10; 2 Corinthians 5:21) then He will plead for you before the Righteous Judge, God the Father.

Imagine it going something like this: *"Father, I know this one has sinned and violated Our commands. He is guilty as charged. However, You have said that My sacrifice is sufficient payment for the debt he owes. My righteousness was applied to his account when he trusted in Me for salvation and forgiveness. I have paid the price so he can be pronounced 'Not guilty!' There is no debt left for him to pay."* (Romans 8:1; Colossians 2:14) Or, something like this: *"Father, this young woman has violated Your righteous command. But she loves You and wants to serve You. I remember what it was like to be tempted like she has been. And My heart goes out to her. She has confessed this sin and desires to turn away from it. Because of My sacrifice, You can forgive her this sin and purify her heart. I will teach her how to let the Holy Spirit comfort her and strengthen her to resist the next time."*

You see, Jesus **is your** Advocate for God to accept you into His family and as His child (John 1:12). And Jesus will remain your Advocate forever! First John 1:9 says that *"when we confess our sin, He is faithful and just to forgive our sin and to cleanse us from it."* His followers will still sin! But, when they do, they are commanded to confess that sin to God. Confession is an admission before God about sin. You stand guilty before God with no excuse. No justification of your own. And when your Advocate steps before the Judge, and together They agree that because you are *"in Christ,"* no further punishment is necessary, because Jesus has already made sufficient payment to redeem you. Then, you are free! Free to have an eternal life living in the presence of God. That makes Jesus a compassionate Advocate. He has experienced life in this world. He has been tempted as you have. Rejected, overlooked, misunderstood, abused. He lived the life you are living. Yet, He did it without surrendering to the evils that cause you to stumble. He successfully refused to give in to temptation so He can be your High Priest having perfectly fulfilled God's law. (Hebrews 4:15; 9:28; John 8:29) An earthly advocate can only plead your case from outside evidence. No witness testimony.

So, it's just between you and your Maker when your heavenly Advocate pleads your case. (Luke 5:22; Mark 2:8) He knows the details of God's legal system. He has already satisfied the demands of justice. So, His advocacy is from a position of strength and righteousness. And God accepts His Son's advocacy on your behalf as part of their divine agreement which was established before the world began. (1 Peter 1:20; John 17:24; Revelation 13:8) Take your position in *"the righteousness of Christ."* It's safe. Because the One who purchased you with His own blood is also your Advocate (Romans 4:25; 8:3; 1 Corinthians 1:30). From Pentecost, the early Church grew rapidly. The disciples continued to perform miracles. They preached the gospel. For them Pentecost wasn't just a one-time event. It marked the beginning of the Spirit's ongoing work. And believers today receive the Holy Spirit who gives them power for service, prayer, and witness. Pentecost fulfilled Jesus' promise by empowering His followers with the Holy Spirit, enabling them to boldly proclaim the gospel and make an impact the world. Pentecost has an impact on faith. Because without Pentecost, Christmas, Good Friday, and Easter have no meaning.

Think about that! Pentecost isn't just a historical event. It's a present reality. You receive God's power to live a transformed life. You bear fruit. You demonstrate His love. The Spirit equips you for service, compassion, and supernatural living. Pentecost completes the story of redemption by enabling *you* to have the experience of God's power in *your* life. Today, celebrate Pentecost. Keep the Spirit's presence in your life so you can fulfill God's purpose in your life. Then you will be ready to stand before God with Jesus as your advocate. AMEN