

Pentecost                      5/20/18  
Psalm 139:1-12                B

## WHERE SHALL I GO FROM YOUR SPIRIT? OR WHERE SHALL I FLEE FROM YOUR PRESENCE?

David asks the Lord, “Where can I go from your Spirit? Or where shall I flee from your presence” (v. 7)? Today, we celebrate Pentecost, the outpouring of the Spirit on the Church. So, let’s talk about the work of the God the Spirit, who sanctifies us, that is, He makes us holy by bringing us to faith in Jesus

“Where can I go from your Spirit? Or where shall I flee from your presence?” That’s a really good question. Honestly, if such a place exists, you want to know where it is because, even though you are a Christian, there are times you would like to go and do things without God knowing about it. And you know why that is. There is something inside of us, sinful people that we are, that wants to sit down, rise up, with a magazine or at the computer screen, or at the coffee clutch table, and read or look or talk about people, places, or things that we sinful people should be not be reading about, or looking at, or gossiping about. We know it’s wrong, but we want to sit down, rise up, and do those things anyway.

Even as Christian people, we are perfectly contented to sit down or rise up and go our own way and do those things we want to do, even though God says, “You shall not do this, or that, or the other thing”. We want to go out and say, “Thus, I shall.” And, when you are done doing all the things you want to do, you want to open up your mouth and boast and brag about it. You want to hit “send” on that text and post it on Facebook for all the world to see. You want to tell everyone about it.

You see, we want to do all those things, and we want to do them our way. We don't want anyone looking over our shoulder or breathing down our neck, especially not God the Holy Spirit. So, like David, if there is a place we can escape the presence of God, to be just left alone, we want to know where it is so we can go there and do what we want. After all the Bible says, "Ask, and you shall receive." You asked the question. So, you shall receive the answer, "If I ascend to heaven, you are there! If I make my bed in Sheol, you are there" (v. 8)! How do you like those apples? You can go up to heaven or down to Sheol [that is, the depths of hell]; you can go east, west, north, or south; it doesn't matter because you cannot flee from God's Spirit or escape His presence. You cannot escape Him because God the Holy Spirit is everywhere.

And, it's not just that He's everywhere, but David also tells us this,

O Lord, you have searched me and known me!  
You know when I sit down and when I rise up;  
you discern my thoughts from afar.  
You search out my path and my lying down  
and are acquainted with all my ways.  
Even before a word is on my tongue,  
behold, O Lord, you know it altogether (vv. 1-4).

It's not just that He's everywhere; He knows everything. He knows when you sit down, when you rise up; He knows the thoughts in your heart, and the words out of your mouth. He knows your looking and ogling, greed and coveting, lust, lies, anger, self-centeredness and selfishness. He knows all about that. In fact, He knows you better than you even know yourself. He knows every dirty, rotten, miserable disgusting, selfish, self-serving wrong thing you have ever done in your life. He knows all about it.

And, He does something about it. David says, "You hem me in, behind and before, and lay your hand upon me" (v. 5). He lays His hand

upon you not to smack you down, but He lays His hand upon you to bring you out of your sin. In our Gospel, Jesus says this is what the Holy Spirit was sent to do, “I will send Him to you. And when He comes, He will convict the world concerning sin” (Jn 16:7-8). Because you are one who is in the world, you are convicted of sin by God the Holy Spirit. God the Holy Spirit does for you what He did to King David when he sinned with Bathsheba – He used the Word of God spoken by Nathan to convict David of his sin so that he could only confess, “For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight” (Ps 23:3-4). The Holy Spirit uses the same Word of God on you to convict you of your sin so that you say, “God be merciful unto me, a sinner” (Lk 18:13).

And once the Holy Spirit has done that, He does something else Jesus said He would do, “But when the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth...He will bear witness about Me” (Jn 15:26). The Holy Spirit will point you to Jesus, who went to Calvary for you. He went to Calvary and to the cross to give Himself as the atoning sacrifice for the sins of all the world, to forgive you all your sins of thought, word, and deed; to forgive you for all the things you have done against God and against your neighbor. He bore on His own body all your sins and He laid down His life on the tree of Calvary. Then, He was laid in the tomb and on the 3<sup>rd</sup> day, He rose to life again.

The evening of His resurrection, He spoke these words, “Peace be with you.” This is the peace of sins forgiven and so that you can be brought into that peace and that peace would be your very own, God the Holy Spirit hems you in and lays His hand upon you in the waters of Holy Baptism and drowns your sinful nature and joins you to Jesus’ death and

resurrection. He hems you in and lays His hand upon you when He feeds you with the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, given and shed for you for the forgiveness of sins. He hems you in and lays His hand upon you when He opens your ears to fill them with the words, "I forgive you all your sins in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit."

The Holy Spirit does for you what He does for the whole Christian Church on earth, He calls you, gathers you, enlightens you with His gifts, and sanctifies you in the Church, where He daily and richly forgives you all your sins.

David asks the question, "Where shall I go from your Spirit? Or where shall I flee from your presence?" We are not to go looking for some secret place we can go off and sin all by ourselves, all that we want. The Good News of the Gospel is that no matter what miserable, rotten sin we have done; whatever we have thought, whatever we have said, whatever we've done, there is God the Holy Spirit to lay His hand upon us to call us to repentance and faith in Jesus.