

St. Peter Lutheran Church
May 3, 2026
Fifth Sunday of Easter
John 16:5-15

Alleluia! Christ is Risen! **He is risen indeed. Alleluia!**

Christ knew where He was going as the darkness came upon Him and the cross was at hand. He was going away to the One who sent Him. He was sent by the Father and He was returning to the Father. What stood between Him and His return to His Father was His passion, but Christ faced this confidently, knowing the outcome, even as it is written concerning Him—that God would not let Him see corruption and He would tell of God’s praises to His brothers in the congregation when He had risen from the dead.

Despite the evil that was coming upon Him, the darkness would turn to light forever as He finished His course. This was good. Very good. Good for Him and good for His disciples. But the disciples couldn’t see past the fact that their Lord was going away. None of them asked him where He was going. Instead, sorrow filled their hearts. They couldn’t see how His going away was such a good thing. **Nevertheless, I tell you the truth, [Jesus said.] It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you.**

The disciples loved their Lord, and they loved His presence with them. They didn’t want to see Him go. Their fellowship was sweet, and they were devastated to think of it being changed forever, but what was coming was far greater. Instead of natural, earthly comfort, protection, and physical friendship, His going away to the Father meant they would receive spiritual comfort, everlasting protection, and joy through the Holy Spirit whom Christ would send to them.

When He goes away, the Spirit will be given to them and to the world, and Christ’s ministry will extend past their tight fellowship, past Jerusalem and Judea, even to Samaria and to the ends of the world. These apostles, who will be given the Spirit, will preach the Gospel to the ends of the earth. And by their ministry, the Holy Spirit will do three things. **He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, because they do not believe in Me; of righteousness, because I go to My Father and you see Me no more; of judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged.**

First, He convicts **the world of sin**. The Spirit must convict of sin in order to bring sinners to the Savior. Those who are well have no need of the Physician. The Spirit must slay us by the preaching of the Law of God. If you’ve ever thought, ‘boy, I don’t really sin that much,’ then you should beg God to convict you of your sins by the working of the Spirit. Those who think they don’t have much sin or that it is manageable and that God is still pleased with their uprightness of life—they have been taught not by the Holy Spirit but by the devil. The evil one remains your lord so long as you don’t see your sins rightly. Pray that God convicts you. As the

Scripture says, “**there is none righteous, no, not one...They have all turned aside; They have together become unprofitable; There is none who does good, no, not one.**” To take the attitude that your sin is not all that bad that God would be angry with you is to remain dead in your trespasses and a child of wrath.

On top of this, Jesus elaborates that the Spirit convicts the world of sin because they don’t believe in Him. Even if their deeds were without fault and shined before all the world, without faith, every work is sin.

Second, the Spirit convicts the world **of righteousness**. And in what does righteousness subsist? In the fact that Jesus goes to His Father and we see Him no more. Christ, dying for the sins of the world, rising from the dead, and ascending into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father—this is righteousness. Christ is righteousness. Not our works, but His. And this true righteousness, which is Christ, is appropriated to us through faith. Though believers continue to sin, they are forgiven, God counts them as righteous, and they are regarded as holy before God though they sin before man. For salvation is not by works of the Law but through faith in Jesus Christ. The Spirit, having first convicted us of sin, convicts of us righteousness through faith in Christ.

The world will not receive these first two points. The ones who think themselves righteous will not be able to stand to hear that they are sinners. The ones seeking to justify themselves will be scandalized by the definition of true righteousness. So they will balk and scoff at the apostles and their successors, and all Christians who bear these truths to the world. They will balk at you.

But Jesus gives encouragement here too in the third conviction of the Holy Spirit—He convicts the world **of judgment because the ruler of this world is judged**. Yes, the ruler of this world is already judged by Christ. He has been proven a liar, for Christ has taken our sins to be His own. Though the devil loves to point to our sins, he now falsely accuses men who stand acquitted. Satan can’t keep us in His kingdom because he no longer has any claim on us, since Christ has been crucified for our sins. Christ has plundered us from the devil, purchasing us with His blood. Christ beat him—he’s judged, the deed is done.

As the Church, in the Holy Spirit, convicts the world of sin and of righteousness, we are called liars and blasphemers and every evil thing. But we have this truth—that the ruler of this world is already judged. Those who speak against Christ and His Christians are sputtering lies while we have the truth. For what is it that Christ promises? **When He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak of Himself but whatever He hears He will speak**. We are on the side of truth—our adversaries on the side of lies. When they won’t receive our message, we know it remains true. We know the reality of sin, righteousness, and judgment because of the Spirit’s working. He speaks not of of Himself, apart Christ and apart from the Father—rather, He speaks with them. **For there are three that bear witness in heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one**. They are of one will and one in their deeds—indeed, of one very substance.

The Spirit who leads the Church into all truth also tells us things to come. And just as it was better for Jesus to go to the Father and send the Spirit, the things to come are even better yet. Today, we have fellowship with God through the blood of Jesus Christ—God rules in our midst through His Word and Sacrament, by the power of the Spirit. Yet through we participate now in the life of God in this way, and are one body with Christ who sits in heaven, we are still for a time in this world that is passing away. Through we are raised to new life even now in Christ, we face still our down death and our own translation to the Father. So better things are yet to come when our victorious Lord Jesus, who lives and reigns to all eternity, comes again in judgment on the last day.

For on that Day, God’s hidden but real and powerful presence in Word and Sacrament will be superseded by God’s unmediated presence. We will behold him with our eyes and stand before him in bodies released from corruption to live forever. Our bodies will be changed to be like His glorious body—that was given into death for us, raised for our justification, and now is seated at the right hand of the Father.

The Spirit tells us of these great things to come for us in Christ. For He glorifies Jesus. The Spirit takes what is Jesus’ and declares it to us. *In Christ, you are a beloved son of God. In Christ, You a righteous.* What belongs to Jesus is yours—holiness, eternal life, everlasting joy in the presence of God.

All things that the Father has are Mine, says Jesus. This is true for Jesus because He is the eternal Son of the Father, who has been made man. The Father gives all that He has to the Son, not only to the Son before the incarnation, but now to the Son after the incarnation. The Father gives all that is His to the God-man, Jesus Christ.

Jesus continues, **“Therefore I said that He will take of Mine and declare it to you.”** The Spirit takes of Jesus and declares it to us. Through the Word, through our Baptism, through the Supper, the Spirit says that Christ’s Sonship to the Father is your sonship, Christ’s inheritance is your inheritance. Christ’s vindication is your vindication. Christ’s resurrection is your resurrection. Christ’s eternal life is your eternal life.

Alleluia! Christ is risen! **He is risen indeed. Alleluia!**