**The Ongoing Reception of the Holy Spirit**

Seminar at Lutheran Community Church, Temora ,NSW

11 June, 2011

1. **Our Ongoing Reception of the Holy Spirit**
2. Spiritual life as receptive life

* Solar torch: shining in the light
* Ongoing reception and empowerment
* Paul’s remarks in 1 Cor 4:7b-8a: *What do you have that you did*

*not receive? And if you did receive it, why do you boast as though you did not. Already you have all you want! Already you have become rich!*

* John 1:14, 16: *The word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only Son who came from the Father, full of grace and truth*...*And from his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace.*
* Full delivery of the Father’s gifts to all believers through His incarnate Son
* Delivery by his dwelling in our midst here on earth
* Our reception of grace upon grace: more to come
* Reversal of normal experience in life
* Col 3:1, 3: *Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God...For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God.*
* Spiritual life as hidden life
* Living heavenly lives on earth
* Life of abundance rather than deprivation
* Grace: Rom 5:15; 2 Cor 9:8; Eph 1:8
* Life: John 10:10
* Love: 1 Thess 3:12
* Hope: Rom 15:13
* Knowledge and insight: Phil 1:9
* Encouragement: 2 Cor 1:5

1. Our access to spiritual blessings

See Ephesians 1:3: *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places.*

* + Reception of blessings from God the Father
  + Our access to **all** heavenly blessings already now here on earth through Jesus
  + Spiritual blessings as blessings of the Holy Spirit
  + Gift of Spirit as foretaste of full enjoyment
* Eph 1:14: *The promised Holy Spirit is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it.*
* 2 Cor 5:5: *God has given us the Spirit as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come.*

1. The gift of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost

See Acts 2:1-4, 32-33: *When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues as of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them... Then Peter...addressed the crowd: ‘God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of that fact. Exalted at the right hand of God, he has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear.*

* Time: Sunday of Pentecost seven weeks after Easter
* People: congregation of 120 in prayer
* Place: house which was the likely location for the last supper
* Communal reception of the Holy Spirit by all in the house
* Signs: life-giving wind and sanctifying fire like the holy fire on the altar in Lev 9:24
* Reception of the Spirit from the Father through our risen Lord

1. Modern problem: possession of the Holy Spirit
   * Common misunderstanding of baptism
     + Titus 3:5-6: *God… saved us by the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom he poured on us richly through Jesus Christ our Saviour*…
     + Gift for possession at baptism rather availability for reception
     + Disconnection from faith and prayer, church and worship
     + Gift from reception rather than possession
   * Pentecostal teaching
     + Acts 19:6: *When Paul placed his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied.*
     + Gift with laying on of hands
     + Tongues as evidence of baptism with the Spirit
     + Problem: two baptisms at two stages in spiritual life
     + Teaching of one baptism in Eph 4:4-5: *There is one body and one Spirit,...one hope..., one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God the Father of all..*
     + Nicene Creed: *I believe in one baptism*.
   * Holy Spirit as a person rather than a thing

* Received but never possessed

1. Ongoing infilling in Ephesians 5:18-19:

*Be filled with the Spirit, addressing one other in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord, giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

* Spoken to people who had been sealed with the Holy Spirit

(Eph 1:13)

* Passive for God’s activity
* Ongoing filling in congregational worship and personal devotions
* Three dimensional praise as the result of infilling
  + - Congregational teaching
    - Personal devotion to Jesus
    - Thanksgiving to the Father
* Spirit: always received yet never possessed
* Ongoing reception of love in marriage
* Ongoing reception of the Holy Spirit by baptised believers

1. **Daily Reception of the Holy Spirit**
2. Jesus as the well in John 7:37-39: *On the last and greatest day of the Feast, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, ‘Let anyone who is thirsty come to me, and let anyone who believes in me drink. As the scripture has said, “Out of his heart shall flow rivers of living water.”’ By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive. Up to that time the Spirit had not yet been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified.*

* Holy Spirit as life-giving water
* Jesus as the source of the Spirit
* Reception from Jesus by believers: heart to heart
* Gift by Jesus after his resurrection

1. Connection between the Spirit and God’s word

* See 2 Tim 3:16: *All Scripture is God-breathed*
* Inspired by the Holy Spirit
* Inspires with the Holy Spirit
* Jesus in John 6:63: *My words are Spirit and life*.
* Spirit: word for air and wind in Hebrew and Greek
* Connection between speaking and breathing
* My weak words in contrast with the powerful words of Jesus
* God’s giving of his powerful Spirit through his word
* Easter Eve: breathing of Spirit by Jesus into disciples by

saying: *Receive the Holy Spirit* (John 20:22)

* The spoken, speaking Spirit
* Luther: *God has so ordered it that the Holy Spirit ordinarily*

*comes through the Word* (LW 23:174).

1. Personal meditation on God’s word

See Luke 11:27-28: *As Jesus was saying these things, a woman in the crowd called out, ‘Blessed is the womb that bore you and the breasts that you sucked.’ He replied, ‘Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and keep it.’*

* God’s word as our life-giving womb and nourishing breasts
* Meditation as hearing God’s Spirit-giving word
* Reception of blessing by relying on God’s word

1. Promise of Jesus in Luke 11:13: *If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will you Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him.*

* Teaching on the gift of prayer in 11:1-13
* Reception of the Spirit by prayer
* Guidance by the Spirit in prayer
* See Romans 8:14-15: *Those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him you cry, ‘Abba, Father.’*

1. Luther on the practice of spirituality

* Daily prayer to the Father through his Son for the Holy

Spirit as your teacher

* Daily meditation on God’s word for reception of the Spirit
* Attack by Satan which drives you to God’s word and prayer: *As*

*soon as God’s word takes root and grows in you, the devil will attack you and by his assaults will teach you to seek and love God’s word.*

1. Daily devotions

* Daily reception of the Holy Spirit with its fruit and gifts
* Daily meditation and prayer for the Spirit: *Come, Holy Spirit!*
* See 1 Tim 4:5: *everything is consecrated by the word of God*

*and prayer.*

* Daily sanctification for our holy vocation
* Daily empowerment for work
* Daily protection from the devil

1. Luther on the Second Petition:

*God’s kingdom comes when our heavenly Father gives us his Holy Spirit, so that by his grace we believe his holy word and live a godly life on earth now and in heaven forever.*

1. **Weekly Reception of the Holy Spirit**
2. Common question: why go the church?
   * Students at SPLC
   * Life after death as the only benefit of Christian life
     + Life before death: divine life
     + Eternal life already now: heavenly lives on earth
   * Missing out on the Holy Spirit and ‘the better things that belong to salvation’ (Heb 6:9)
   * Result of Pentecost: daily and weekly worship
3. The church as the temple of the Holy Spirit

See 1 Corinthians 3:16: *Don’t you know that you yourselves are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit dwells in your midst?*

* No need for a heavenly trip
* Church as God’s holy temple: access to God and His grace
* Place of residence for the Holy Spirit together with Jesus and the Father (see also Eph 2:19-22)
* Workshop of the Holy Spirit: protection from other spirits
* Empowerment for holy work on earth

1. The gift of the Spirit in baptism

See Peter’s message in Acts 2:38: *Repent and be baptised every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins and the reception of the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you and your children, and all who are far away, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to him.*

* Promise of two gifts to baptised parents and children
  + Forgiveness/release from sins as the key to the

Father’s presence

* + The Holy Spirit as the Father’s gift through Jesus
* Ongoing reception of these gifts by baptised believers

1. Weekly reception by hearing God’s word

See Galatians 3:2-5: *I would like you to learn just one thing from you: Did you receive the Spirit by observing the law, or by believing what you heard? Are you so foolish? After beginning with the Spirit, are you now trying to finish by human effort? … Does God give you his Spirit and work miracles by your observing the law, or by your believing what you heard?*

* Contrast: observance of law rather than believing the gospel
* Preaching of the gospel for the giving of the Spirit
* God’s ongoing giving of the Spirit through the preaching of his word
* Reception of the Spirit by faithful hearing of God’s word in the divine service
* John 3:34-35 on God’s unlimited giving: *He whom God has sent speaks the words of God, for he gives the Spirit without measure. The Father loves the Son and has placed (given) all things in his hands.*
* The Father’s delegation of all things to His Son
* His commission of the Son to deliver His Spirit
* Delivery of the Spirit by speaking God’s words
* Full delivery of the Spirit

1. Weekly reception in Holy Communion

See 1 Corinthians 10:1-4: *I do not want you to be ignorant of the fact, brothers, that our ancestors were all under the cloud and that they all passed through the sea. They were all baptised into Moses in the cloud and in the sea. They all ate the same spiritual food and drank the same spiritual drink, for they drank from the spiritual rock that accompanied them, and that rock was Christ.*

* Journey of Israelites through the sea and the desert to the Promised Land
* Cloud: glory cloud as God’s presence with them
* Nourishment of Israelites on their journey
  + Manna from heaven
  + Water from the rock
* Spiritual: Spirit-giving
* Jesus as our travelling watering rock
* Spiritual food: his body
* Spiritual drink: his blood
* 1 Corinthians 12:13: *We were all baptised by one Spirit*

*into one body and we were all given one Spirit to drink.*

* Christ’s blood for transfusion with his life-giving Spirit
* Luther: *The Spirit must not be sought elsewhere than in and by*

*the words which Christ speaks. His words assure us that the flesh is given and the blood is shed for us. Whoever hears this hears God’s Word and the Spirit’s Word* (LW 23:177)*.*

* Luther in the Large Catechism 5:70: *Here in the sacrament you receive from Christ’s lips the forgiveness of sins, which contains and conveys God’s grace and Spirit with all his gifts, protection, defence, and power against death and the devil and all evils.*

1. Prayer for the gift of the Spirit in Holy Communion
   * Prayer of preparation in the Prayer of the Church:

*Give us your Holy Spirit as we come to the Lord’s table, and strengthen our faith so that we may receive the body and blood of Christ for our lasting good.*

* + Prayer for reception in the Service-Alternative Form:

*Send us your Holy Spirit to strengthen our faith so that we who receive the body and blood of Christ may live as true members of the body of your Son.*

***Amen. Come, Holy Spirit.***

1. Bestowal of the Spirit in blessing from 2 Corinthians 13:13
   * *The communion of the Holy Spirit*: common gift of the Spirit
   * Empowerment for holy service in the world
2. Luther on the gift of the Spirit (LW 37, 95): *The Spirit cannot be with us, except in material and physical things, such as the word, water, and Christ’s body, and in his saints on earth.*
3. Lutheran teaching in Article 5 of the Augsburg Confession:

*In order to obtain this faith, the ministry of teaching the gospel and administering the sacraments was instituted. For through the word and the sacraments, as through instruments, the Holy Spirit is given, and the Holy Spirit produces faith, where and when it pleases God, in those who hear the gospel.*

1. How can I receive the Holy Spirit?

* Baptism
* Preaching of the gospel and reception of Holy Communion
* Blessing
* Prayer

1. **Conclusion**
2. Story about plane trip: secret agents of God
3. Ongoing empowerment

See words of Jesus in Luke 24:49: *I am going to send you what My Father has promised; but stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high.*

* Our dilemma
* Call to do God’s work by working with Christ
* See words of Jesus in John 14:12: *I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father.*
* Our weakness: insufficient power to do our own work
* God’s solution: gift of the Holy Spirit
* Borrowed power for holy life and holy work
* Borrowing power by daily and weekly prayer

1. Staying in step

See Galatians 5:25: *Since we live by the Spirit, let us stay in step with the Spirit*

* Spiritual life as a journey with Jesus
* Holy Spirit as life-giver
* Staying in step with the Spirit by listening to God’s word and praying for ourselves and others
* Ongoing reception of God’s gifts for ourselves and others