

BIBLE STUDY
May 8, 2023

THE SIXTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

Acts 8: 5-8, 14-17

John 14: 15-21

1 Peter 3: 15-18

1. Acts 8: 5-8, 14-17

- A persecution broke out in Jerusalem after the killing of Stephen and the apostles and disciples scattered to neighboring cities and regions. Philip went to Samaria and preached. His preaching and miracles convinced the people of the truth of the Gospel.
- When the church in Jerusalem heard that the Samaritans had accepted the Gospel and been baptized, they sent Peter and John to visit there. They prayed and laid their hands on the Samaritans so that they received the Holy Spirit for they had only been baptized.
- This passage is the origin of the practice of the bishop confirming Catholics who have been baptized as infants. It was seen as a way of the larger church welcoming and receiving the new members.
- Some Christian communities baptize only in the name of Jesus based on this passage. Most Christians baptize in the name of the Trinity: The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

2. John 14: 15-21

- Our love for Jesus is shown in our obeying his commandment. Jesus' commandment is that we love one another just as the Father loves him and he loves us. There are two components to this command of love. The first is to believe that Jesus has been sent by God as his Son and Lord. The second is that we show love for our brothers and sisters as Christ loved us, i.e., with a sacrificial, self-giving love.
- Jesus will ask the Father to send "another" Advocate. Jesus has served as their Advocate when he was on earth. The Spirit will now be their Advocate as Jesus returns to the Father.
- An advocate is one who stands by you in time of trouble as a counselor, spokesperson, protector, and guide. Just as Jesus was on trial by the world during his lifetime, now the disciples will be on trial by the world as they preach the Gospel to the ends of the earth. The Spirit will be their defender and representative.
- The Spirit is the Spirit of Truth because he will empower the disciples tell the truth about God as God really is. One needs faith to be able to recognize and see the Spirit. The world does not believe and, therefore, cannot see the Spirit.
- The disciples have faith and so they can recognize the Spirit that is among them as a community and within them individually.

3. 1 Peter 3: 15-18

- Peter is urging the newly baptized to be enthusiastic (literally, filled with the Spirit) about doing good. He says that no one will harm you for doing good, but if they do, do not be afraid, but use it as an opportunity to praise Christ.
- Always be ready to give a testimony of your hope (i.e., faith and trust). Speak the truth but do so with love and respect. Do not become bitter, angry, or insulting when you speak the truth. Be blameless so that it will reflect badly on those who persecute you. If you must suffer, suffer for doing what is right, and not for what is evil.
- Follow the example of Christ, who suffered for the guilty so that he could bring us all to God. God's power was shown in the way that he raised him from the dead. God will do the same for us. God will have the last word.