

INI

St. Paul's Lutheran Church
2100 16th Street SW
Austin, MN 55912-1749
Pastor Ted Barthels
Sermon preached on
May 20, 2018
Pentecost Sunday

Scripture Lessons: Ezekiel 37:1-14, Acts 2:1-21

Hymns: 224; 232; 755; 313:3

Grace be unto you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

Sermon Text: John 14:25-27

“²⁵“These things I have spoken to you while being present with you. ²⁶But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you. ²⁷Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.” (NKJV)

This is the Word of God.

Sanctify us, oh Lord, through Your truth. Your Word is truth. Amen.

In Christ Jesus, God our Savior, dear fellow Redeemed:

INTRO: Pentecost: more than a Bible story.

We are all familiar with the wonders of that special Pentecost day. We just reviewed it again in our Scripture lessons. The disciples were gathered together in Jerusalem on that religious holiday, when there was that sound of a mighty rushing wind, significant in that it really captures the idea of the Holy Spirit and how He brings the breath of life into this world, into all who believe. We still marvel at the tongues as of fire that marked those who received this special outpouring of the Spirit. The crowds of pilgrims gathered in Jerusalem, drawn by that sound, came to where the apostles were

assembled. It must have been quite a developing scene, a scene somewhat in motion for the crowd grew to be numbered in the thousands. There was a preaching going on that captured people's attention. The apostles were busy preaching, but not only in Aramaic or even in Greek, but in many different languages representing the homelands of the pilgrims assembled for the Pentecost festival. The apostles were speaking as the Holy Spirit gave them utterance, and the message was clear and wonderful. It was characterized by the listeners as a presentation of the wonderful works of God. Surely it was a remarkable event, a most spectacularly blessed day! But what does this have to do with us?

Some might answer that this marks the beginning of the New Testament Christian Church. And that is correct in a sense, so it has some special historical significance for us. Others would go so far as declaring that this is the birth of Christianity as a new religion. That would be wrong. Our faith in Christ has that name now and didn't earlier, but one can easily trace faith in Christ all the way back to Adam and Eve. It is the only true faith in the one true God, a thought that we might save for next Sunday.

So what does all this mean for us? Much in every way? The blessings of Pentecost were not confined to that one day, or that one group of believers. We today praise God that the --

THEME: Pentecost Blessings Continue to Be Poured Out Among Us.

Does this mean that we should expect to suddenly start speaking in tongues? That was a definite sign that added to the wonder of that day, but it actually wasn't the main feature of the Spirit's Pentecost blessings. Jesus had promised the coming of the Holy Spirit and in that promise, part of which makes up our text this morning, we see what Jesus emphasized as being important. He promised that--

I. The Spirit would Teach Us All Things.

Of course this began with the Apostles. Jesus said:

John 14:25-26 "These things I have spoken to you while being present with you. ²⁶ But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the

Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.”

Jesus had been teaching the disciples for over three years. They had heard Jesus’ public sermons; they had many private sessions with the Lord as well. He had laid out for them on a number of occasions the need for Jesus to suffer and die, and that He would rise again on the third day. He had explained the nature of the kingdom of God both in parables and in straightforward lessons. The disciples had heard, but they had struggled with much of what Jesus had taught them. It just didn’t go along with their preconceived notions about the kingdom, or the Messiah, or what they themselves were looking for in their relationship with God. One might say that they were kind of “thick” mentally and spiritually.

Jesus spoke these words to the disciples just hours before He would be taken captive and His passion would begin. Jesus knew that then the disciples would struggle spiritually even more. It was time for Jesus to fulfill His mission of redemption and for His visible presence to leave them. Yet it was also time for Jesus to prepare the disciples to be His apostles, His ambassadors of the gospel to the world. How could they if they still struggled with the basic teachings of the gospel?

This is where the promise of the Holy Spirit’s coming is important. With the Spirit’s coming would come perfect understanding, as well as complete remembrance of all the Lord Jesus had taught them. All those important lessons that Jesus had presented, all the truth He had expounded, including the proper and full understanding of the Old Testament prophets, it would all be there. The Holy Spirit would bring these blessings to them so that the Apostles could in turn then relay that wonderful gospel to the sinners of this world.

And that is what happened beginning on Pentecost with the disciples proclaiming the wonderful works of God in the languages of the all those Pentecost pilgrims. That is what happened when Peter stood before them all and boldly called their attention to the fulfillment of the prophecy of Joel, and confronted that massive audience with the sin of having crucified the Christ. That is what

happened when Peter called for that audience to repent and believe and be baptized. And that is what happened when the Holy Spirit later caused the Apostles and Evangelists to write by inspiration the words of the gospels and epistles and the book of Revelation.

And now these blessings have come down to us. It is in these inspired writings of the New Testament that we find the sure and certain truth of Jesus as our crucified and risen and ascended Lord. It is through this gospel which comes to us through the words of the Apostles and Evangelists that the Spirit opens our understanding so that we know the truth of Jesus, and comprehend the wonder of grace that is found in the gospel that declares the forgiveness of sins through faith in Christ crucified.

I made a very deliberate point of noting how mentally and spiritually “thick” the disciples had been even after three plus years of careful instruction from Jesus. I made that point not because we are so much better at understanding the gospel. You know it is easy to be critical of the disciples and their struggles of faith. I made that point because if it was true of the disciples who had received that personal instruction from Jesus, it must also be true of us. And so it is. By nature we cannot receive the things of the Spirit of God. Paul tells us that this is so because these wonders of God’s grace and love, all of God’s truth are not things of reason, but of the spirit. They are not rationally discerned, but spiritually discerned. (1 Corinthians 2:14)

Pentecost blessings continue to come to us today in that the Spirit opens our hearts to believe. The Spirit opens our minds to comprehend. The Spirit brings us God’s truth that we learn from the inspired Scriptures for our remembrance when we are in need of that saving truth because of a crisis in our lives, or when we are called upon to testify to the truth for the salvation of another’s soul.

Because of the blessings of the Father sending the Holy Spirit in Jesus’ name, we live with the certainty of Gospel truth. It is a matter of faith. The wise of this world have always challenged the truth of the gospel, even attempting to undermine the facts of Jesus’ life on earth. Some deny His virgin birth, or His resurrection. Others seek to explain away with natural causes the signs and wonders which Jesus worked. They challenge us to prove

the gospel to be true. Of course we can't prove it in any manner that would satisfy the world. We don't believe because of the massive evidence that demonstrates the truth about Jesus. Whatever evidence there is is fine, it has nothing to do with why or how we believe. That is a work, and a miraculous work at that, of the Holy Spirit. It is an outpouring of the Spirit of Christ sent by the Father so that we might know Jesus as the Savior of the world.

With that Pentecost blessing comes another blessing Jesus promised. The Spirit --

II. Brings us the Peace of Christ that comes from Above

Peace is a marvelous concept, but in this world it is exceedingly rare. Many claims of peace are made, but often there is something missing. With personal something may be eating away at one's nerves, or something that to be done that is difficult or troubling, or there is that deed we wish we had not done and the conscience is not at peace. That is only speaking of peace on a personal level.

There is a standing joke about beauty pageants that when the contestants are asked what it is they would wish for they all answer "world peace!" And of course everyone applauds, because that is the only right answer. Don't we all wish for world peace? Perhaps the most exalted of all prizes sought after by statesmen is the Nobel Peace Prize. But exactly how has that worked out? No matter how many times the prize has been awarded it is war that breaks out all over, and not peace. Even when great efforts have been made to reconcile adversaries in this world peace is always so fragile.

So when Jesus promised peace that would come with the sending of the Holy Spirit He made sure that the disciples understood that this peace was going to be different.

John 14:27 "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."

What makes this peace that comes from Jesus so different? First of all it is not dependent upon people. Sinful human beings cannot secure peace. Jesus' peace is a higher peace. It is not simply peace

between nations or within families or between groups of people. This is the peace that is far more difficult, *far more difficult* to attain; a true and eternal peace between God and man. We are not even able to secure peace in this world, peace between people, and yet so many people deceive themselves into thinking that they can, by their own merit and works, attain a true and eternal peace with God. It cannot be done by man's works. It could only be secured by Jesus through the sacrifice He made for us and the whole world in His innocent sufferings and death. His holy precious blood paid the ransom due because of our sin. Only Jesus' offering of His life could be that propitiating sacrifice that could secure that higher peace, appeasing the wrath of God. This is why we declare as you leave the communion table, "Depart in peace." The peace Jesus brings is then the key to all peace.

Jesus promised to bring the disciples peace. Where does one begin to grasp the multifaceted dimensions of this peace which Jesus brings us? Peace of heart, peace of mind, being at peace with one's lot in life. Peace with the future, peace as we approach the grave. All of that flows from the peace Jesus secured for us by His death and resurrection. This is the peace that comes to the child of God because this is the peace Jesus and only Jesus could bring into this world.

So how does this fit into our Pentecost theme? While this verse doesn't specifically mention the Holy Spirit, it is the Spirit that brings us this peace from Jesus. It is the Spirit working through the gospel of a crucified and risen and ascended Lord that opens our hearts to know the forgiving grace and love of God. It is the Spirit that refreshes our minds so that we see God not as a tyrannical Judge eager to condemn, but as our loving Father who would sweep us up in His protecting arms and hold us safe throughout this life into eternity. It is the Spirit of our God who breathes that life into our cold and stony hearts so that we not only know this wonder of peace with God, but that we also will endeavor to live at peace with our fellow man.

This is the power of the Spirit that is active in this last age of the earth. He is the Spirit of Comfort and the Spirit of life and the Spirit of peace. May we be blessed with His presence in our hearts and lives all our days!

AMEN.

“Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.” Amen. (Romans15:13)