

**Sermon - 05-23-21**  
**Ps 104:24-35; Acts 2:1-21; Ro 8:22-27;**  
**Jn 15:26-27, 16:4b-15**  
**Pentecost Sunday**

Let us be certain we understand the meaning of the Feast of Pentecost. It was first prophesied by the Prophet Joel – reiterated by Jesus – and then it happened as everyone said it would. This is a superficial summary of the Old and New Testament narratives. Your classic survey of the Bible. So, dust off your hands, that's done. What's next? Annual Conference, Father's Day, the 4<sup>th</sup> of July. But the guiding of the Holy Spirit is never so simple. Not in you and me, the individual believer – and especially not in the guiding of the people of God – the body of Christ. You can just give the Holy Spirit a polite nod from time to time. Or you can **acknowledge** that the His kingdom is the ground of reality – the holy and loving presence of God: Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer. Spirit wind comes in and fills the sails of our ship – taking us where holy deeds are accomplished. It is God's doing, not ours.

The appearance and the on-going work of the Holy Spirit is not exhausted or completed in us – or through us. This reality is continually unfolding – continually growing and transforming all things. We are moving toward the consummation (or completion) and revelation of Christ's presence. Paul calls this “creation...groaning in labor pains until now; and not only creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly while we wait for adoption, the redemption of our bodies.” (Ro 8:22-23) The NASB, calls the Holy Spirit our Helper. Some translators call the Spirit our Advocate. This Person is called the Paraclete in Greek: Advocate, Helper, Comforter – “One who by coming alongside gives strength, encouragement and ability.” (Emmanuel Lartey, *Feasting on the Word*, Year B-Vol 3, p 20)

The Holy Spirit is here to give us ability. You and I are enabled to tell the truth – we are given words and actions that come from the Father and from Jesus. This is how Jesus is perceived by those who have not seen Him. His work in the world is manifested in and through His people – the Church. You become transparent by your confession, to yourself, to God and to others. It is the Spirit who guides God's people into the truth. Jesus is the Way, the Truth and the Life. There is no charm, crystal, talisman or mantra that can give you the truth – or that can make you truthful. What can give you the truth? Daily Bible reading and study, earnest and fervent daily prayer, meeting and ministering with fellow saints: worship, mutual encouragement and mission in the world. There is no substitute for these holy things.

We understand the grief of the disciples as they had to say good-bye to Jesus. Our grief at all our final good-byes gives us understanding of mourning. The sorrow of Jesus' disciples must have been profound. Yet, Jesus says that if He does not leave, the Holy Spirit cannot come to them. To unbelievers, Christ's death was utter defeat of the Lord Jesus and His way of being. But to those who receive Him with faith, His death is a vindication and victory of all He teaches and all He is. We have celebrated His Resurrection and His Ascension – and today at Pentecost we celebrate with all we are and all we have the coming of the blessed Holy Spirit into our midst. We are imbued with power from on high to become a courageous community unafraid to confront the world with the truth of the Word of God.

The Word of God confronts the world in three powerful ways. They appear in John 16:8-11. As you turn there in your Bibles, let me remind you that John's gospel mentions truth (aletheia) at least twenty-five times.

First, the Holy Spirit proves the world wrong about sin. (v 8-9) The rebellious worldly mind does not acknowledge the sovereignty and the goodness of God. Thus, just like Adam and Eve, we reach out and take over His rule. We sin in defiance of what God has deeply desired for us. We wrongly perceive God as weak and bad. We want it all for ourselves. In our theological error, we sin against His love and protection. We reject the guidance of the Holy Spirit into the truth.

Next, the world ignores the historical fact of Jesus' birth, death, resurrection and ascension. The darkened mind denies His rightness. This is a mental process of reducing Christ's being to merely human, His teaching as advice and his miracles as coincidence or delusion. His righteousness is beyond such a non-believer. He or she cannot bring themselves to bow to His holy rightness. This is missing the Holy Spirit truth – He is not in them. This amounts to hitch-hiking the road of life. No compass, no GPS, no current map of the cosmos.

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And, finally, the worldly mind denies that it is under the rule of the prince of the air – Satan, the accuser and deceiver of humanity. Such a soul is self-condemned. The evil one offers no guidance out of the big, ugly ditch. Judgment must come. Satan will be banished, and all his angels and followers with him. Only those with the seal of the Holy Spirit will be spared that ultimate separation from God’s gracious presence. This is the truth.

“Holy Spirit, Love divine, glow within this heart of mine; kindle every high desire; perish self in thy pure fire.” (Samuel Longfellow, 1864) Spirit of Truth, guide us!

Amen.