

Home Service for 5/23/2021

Welcome and Announcements

Come, Holy Spirit, come. Come as tongues of fire to enliven us. Come as sighs too deep for words to comfort us. Come as our Advocate to guide us. Come, Holy Spirit, come.

Call to Worship:

Rushing Wind of the Spirit, breathe new life into us! Blazing Flame of the Spirit, burn away our fears! Comforting Presence of the Spirit, heal our wounds Let us be prepared to worship and praise you, O Holy Spirit. Spirit of God, come upon us this day and fill us with your love. Make us people who will proclaim God's good news in all that we do. AMEN

Opening Prayer:

Almighty God, your Holy Spirit came to Jesus' disciples, hidden in an upper room in Jerusalem. A violent wind and tongues of fire were the symbols of a new thing happening in their lives. May your Holy Spirit burst into our lives today, encouraging and inspiring us to proclaim boldly the good news of Jesus Christ who offers healing and hope to all people. AMEN.

Prayer of Confession:

Almighty God, your Holy Spirit came to Jesus' disciples, hidden in an upper room in Jerusalem. A violent wind and tongues of fire were the symbols of a new thing happening in their lives. May your Holy Spirit burst into our lives today, encouraging and inspiring us to proclaim boldly the good news of Jesus Christ who offers healing and hope to all people. AMEN.

Words of Assurance

Don't be afraid! God's Holy Spirit brings you healing comfort and hope. You are being prepared to serve God in some mighty ways. Rejoice! God's Holy Spirit is with you always. AMEN.

Read Psalm 104:24-35:

How many are your works, LORD!

In wisdom you made them all;
the earth is full of your creatures.

²⁵ There is the sea, vast and spacious,
teeming with creatures beyond number—
living things both large and small.

²⁶ There the ships go to and fro,
and Leviathan, which you formed to frolic there.

²⁷ All creatures look to you
to give them their food at the proper time.

²⁸ When you give it to them,
they gather it up;
when you open your hand,
they are satisfied with good things.

²⁹ When you hide your face,
they are terrified;
when you take away their breath,
they die and return to the dust.

³⁰ When you send your Spirit,
they are created,
and you renew the face of the ground.

³¹ May the glory of the LORD endure forever;
may the LORD rejoice in his works—

³² he who looks at the earth, and it trembles,
who touches the mountains, and they smoke.

³³ I will sing to the LORD all my life;
I will sing praise to my God as long as I live.

³⁴ May my meditation be pleasing to him,
as I rejoice in the LORD.

³⁵ But may sinners vanish from the earth
and the wicked be no more.

Praise the LORD, my soul.

Praise the LORD.^[a]

Prayers of the People:

Knock us off our seats, O Lord, with the wind of your Holy Spirit. Don't let us just sit back and rest as though nothing important was happening. Remind us that you have come to bless and prepare us for your service. Now is the time of proclamation and celebration! Now is the birth of your church, not as an exercise in futility, but as a dynamic group of people who know you and love you as you know and love each of us. Flame up our hearts! Make us so joyful that we find it difficult to sit back and watch. We want to be part of your healing love and mercy. We want to be people who bear the word that your love for us is eternal; that Jesus Christ, our Savior, proclaimed and taught that love in all that he did and said, modeling for us a new way to live. Pick us up and propel us forward into your world. Help us to remember that you have given to us what we need to be your disciples. We just need to say a resounding "Yes!" to you. Thank you for all the wondrous patience and blessings you pour into our lives each and every day, as we offer our lives back to you in joy and hope. AMEN.

Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day, our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is The kingdom, and the power and the glory forever and ever. AMEN

Read the Lesson: Acts 2:1-21

When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. ² Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. ³ They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. ⁴ All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues^[a] as the Spirit enabled them.

⁵ Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven. ⁶ When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard their own language being spoken. ⁷ Utterly amazed, they asked: "Aren't all these who are speaking Galileans?" ⁸ Then how is it that each of us hears them in our native language? ⁹ Parthians, Medes and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia,^[b] ¹⁰ Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome ¹¹ (both

Jews and converts to Judaism); Cretans and Arabs—we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues!”¹² Amazed and perplexed, they asked one another, “What does this mean?”

¹³ Some, however, made fun of them and said, “They have had too much wine.”¹⁴ Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd: “Fellow Jews and all of you who live in Jerusalem, let me explain this to you; listen carefully to what I say. ¹⁵ These people are not drunk, as you suppose. It’s only nine in the morning! ¹⁶ No, this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel:

¹⁷ ““In the last days, God says,

I will pour out my Spirit on all people.

Your sons and daughters will prophesy,

your young men will see visions,

your old men will dream dreams.

¹⁸ Even on my servants, both men and women,

I will pour out my Spirit in those days,

and they will prophesy.

¹⁹ I will show wonders in the heavens above

and signs on the earth below,

blood and fire and billows of smoke.

²⁰ The sun will be turned to darkness

and the moon to blood

before the coming of the great and glorious day of the Lord.

²¹ And everyone who calls

on the name of the Lord will be saved.’

Read the Epistle Lesson: Romans 8:22-27

We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. ²³ Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption to sonship, the redemption of our bodies. ²⁴ For in this hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what they already have? ²⁵ But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently.

²⁶ In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans. ²⁷ And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for God’s people in accordance with the will of God.

Read the Gospel Lesson: John 15:26-27; 16:4-15

²⁶ “When the Advocate comes, whom I will send to you from the Father—the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father—he will testify about me. ²⁷ And you also must testify, for you have been with me from the beginning.

⁴ I have told you this, so that when their time comes you will remember that I warned you about them. I did not tell you this from the beginning because I was with you, ⁵ but now I am going to him who sent me. None of you asks me, ‘Where are you going?’ ⁶ Rather, you are filled with grief because I have said these things. ⁷ But very truly I tell you, it is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Advocate will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. ⁸ When he comes, he will prove the world to be in the wrong about sin and righteousness and judgment: ⁹ about sin, because people do not believe in me; ¹⁰ about righteousness, because I am going to the Father, where you can see me no longer; ¹¹ and about judgment, because the prince of this world now stands condemned.

¹² “I have much more to say to you, more than you can now bear. ¹³ But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. ¹⁴ He will glorify me because it is from me that he will receive what he will make known to you. ¹⁵ All that belongs to the Father is mine. That is why I said the Spirit will receive from me what he will make known to you.”

Message

The season of Easter is over and today we are celebrating Pentecost. Pentecost is one of the most exciting days in our Christian Year. It is the birthday of the church; a time when disciples no longer feared but were energized to proclaim the good news of God’s love through the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the empowerment of the Holy Spirit.

I think we would all agree that the Bible focuses on Jesus, with the Old Testament preparing the way for Christ’s arrival as it tells the history of God’s relationship with man. The New Testament tells Jesus’ personal story in four separate books, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John known as the Gospels. Matthew was written mostly for Jews and ties Jesus’ life in with the Old Testament prophecies therefore making a perfect bridge between the Old and New Testaments. Mark’s Gospel

stresses Christ's power while Luke proves how Jesus is the universal Savior: how he is the God for both Jews and Gentiles alike.

But the Gospel of John, which happens to be my favorite Gospel, is quite a bit different from Matthew, Mark, and Luke for John really takes a close look at the relationship of Jesus with the other members of the Trinity: the Father and the Holy Spirit. In addition, John is a book that allows us to gaze right into Jesus' heart, and to see what he's thinking and feel what he's experiencing, especially in his relationship with his close followers. We see all those things coming together in our text for today, where Jesus tells his disciples about this other Divine Friend that they will have. In talking about the Holy Spirit, Jesus wants to stress to his disciples and to us, that the Holy Spirit is sent to us by Christ and his Father, and the Holy Spirit is the one who empowered his disciples long ago and still empowers us in our Christian life and witness.

So today our Gospel comes from John and we are reading about how on the night before his death, Jesus reminds his distraught followers that though Christ was leaving, they will have another divine friend to nurture them. The Holy Spirit was being sent by Jesus and the Father, and Holy Spirit was and still is the Christian's constant, guiding companion.

All through the Easter Season, we have been looking at this section in the gospel of John, where Jesus spends the last hours with his disciples in the Upper Room on Maundy Thursday starting in chapter 13 going through chapter 17. Jesus spends this time with his disciples in order to comfort his disciples and to encourage his disciples. Today, we find that Jesus stating that he is going to send to his disciples the Holy Spirit. For even though Jesus would leave them for a very short time when he died on the cross and 40 days later he would leave them physically, Jesus still promised to be always with them. Jesus was planning to always be with the disciples by sending the Holy Spirit. Jesus said that even though he was ascended into heaven, he would still be with His disciples. We know Jesus kept his promise for he is with us today. Jesus left this earth. Jesus went to his Father in order to send the Holy Spirit.

The coming of the Holy Spirit is Pentecost. In our lesson from Acts we heard how the Holy Spirit came to the disciples. The disciples' reaction was that they understood, they were sad at the same time they were filled with hope and faith. They knew this all by grace, by God's Spirit. The Lord reminds us that none of us comes to faith on our own. It is the Holy Spirit who works faith in our hearts. It is God himself who changes our hearts of stone into a heart of flesh that we might

believe in him and worship him and praise him. For most of us we received the special gift of the Holy Spirit at our baptism. We still receive his gift every time we study the Bible and hear God's holy Word, as we continually grow in our faith. The power of the word reveals more and more to us about the mystery of salvation, and by grace we are saved through the gift of the Holy Spirit. Just like those early disciples we have hope, because Jesus promises us the Holy Spirit, hope because he promises eternal life. That is the hope we have today.

Jesus sends us the Holy Spirit to remind us that our hope is not seen. It is unseen. Our hope and our joy is the fact that our sins are forgiven. Yes, it was a terrible way in which they had to be forgiven. Jesus had to die on the cross: not for any sin of his own, but our sins. What hope that provides for us! What comfort! When it seems that everything else is coming crashing down around our ears, we are reminded to turn to the Lord. We remember that our sins are forgiven. Heaven is our home. Jesus sends the Holy Spirit to comfort the disciples, to comfort each one of us.

The Holy Spirit, part of the Triune God--Father, Son and Holy Spirit--reminds us that we are sinners. We cannot escape that fact. We have been born with a sinful nature. It is going to be with us as long as we have flesh and blood and live on this earth. Today as we are reminded, yes, we are sinners; but what else does the Holy Spirit show us? He shows us that our sins are forgiven. He works faith in our hearts that by God's grace we understand the righteousness of God. The power of the Holy Spirit makes us alive by faith. Then we are reminded that we are sinners who are forgiven. We have been given the victory, the victory to defeat the enemies that stand against us. At times it can seem that our enemies may overcome us. They may rejoice in our shortcomings, yet we rejoice in the strength in our Savior. We rejoice in the hope and comfort that God gives us by grace through the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit is God just as Jesus is God and the Father is God. They are co-equal from eternity. It is a great comfort for us as we look at this section of Scripture to see how Jesus comforts and encourages his disciples and still does the same for us today. Jesus sends out each of us as believers in this world to be lights in a world darkened by sin, since Jesus has gone ahead. He has gone ahead to sit at God's right hand, but he sent us the Holy Spirit to comfort us, the Holy Spirit to convince the world and us of sin and righteousness and judgment, all by God's grace. The Holy Spirit does all of this for us without any merit, without any worthiness on our part.

Let us pray: Gracious God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, speak your word of truth to us. Keep speaking to us through the words of Scripture. Keep showing us your love and glory as revealed through the life, death and resurrection of your Son, Jesus the Christ. Keep prodding us to open our hearts and minds to your will and truth for life through the power of your Spirit, that we might grow in faith and live as your redeemed disciples. This we ask in Christ's holy name. Amen.

Benediction:

God, out of God's great love, has created you. Jesus Christ, out of his great love, has redeemed you. The Holy Spirit, out of great love, has lifted and inspired you to go in peace and service throughout God's world, proclaiming the good news of peace, love, hope, and joy to all. Go in peace. AMEN.