

Sunday 20th May 2018

Pentecost

(Whit Sunday)

Red



Collect

God, who as at this time taught the hearts of your faithful people by sending to them the light of your Holy Spirit: grant us by the same Spirit to have a right judgement in all things and evermore to rejoice in his holy comfort; through the merits of Christ Jesus our Saviour, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen**

Acts 2:1-21 English Standard Version (ESV)

The Coming of the Holy Spirit

2¹ When the day of Pentecost arrived, they were all together in one place. ² And suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. ³ And divided tongues as of fire appeared to them and rested^[a] on each one of them. ⁴ And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance. ⁵ Now there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men from every nation under heaven. ⁶ And at this sound the multitude came together, and they were bewildered, because each one was hearing them speak in his own language. ⁷ And they were amazed and astonished, saying, “Are not all these who are speaking Galileans?” ⁸ And how is it that we hear, each of us in his own native language? ⁹ Parthians and Medes and Elamites and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, ¹⁰ Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, ¹¹ both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabians—we hear them telling in our own tongues the mighty works of God.” ¹² And all were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, “What does this mean?” ¹³ But others mocking said, “They are filled with new wine.”

Peter's Sermon at Pentecost

¹⁴ But Peter, standing with the eleven, lifted up his voice and addressed them: “Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and give ear to my words. ¹⁵ For these people are not drunk, as you suppose, since it is only the third hour of the day.^[b] ¹⁶ But this is what was uttered through the prophet Joel: ¹⁷ “‘And in the last days it shall be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams; ¹⁸ even on my male servants^[c] and female servants in those days I will pour out

my Spirit, and they shall prophesy. ¹⁹ And I will show wonders in the heavens above and signs on the earth below, blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke; ²⁰ the sun shall be turned to darkness and the moon to blood, before the day of the Lord comes, the great and magnificent day. ²¹ And it shall come to pass that everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.’

Footnotes: a. Or *And tongues as of fire appeared to them, distributed among them, and rested.* b. That is, 9 a.m. c. Greek *bondservants*; twice in this verse

COMMENT: The giving of the Holy Spirit is prefigured in two Old Testament passages: Numbers 11:16-17, 24-29 where the 72 Elders received the spirit & 2 Kings 2:9-12 where Elisha received a ‘double portion’ of the Spirit that was upon Elijah. Being equipped for service and being gifted for prophecy were two of the hallmarks on both occasions. The general giving of the spirit on “all flesh” was prophesied in the passage reference in Joel 2:28-29. As to the ‘Day of Pentecost’, this was not what Pentecost meant to Jews before and after the time of Jesus. Originally, it was a harvest festival (Exodus 23:16; 34:22; Leviticus 23:17; Jeremiah 5:24) recognising God as the source of rain and agricultural fertility. Greek-speaking Jews gave it the name of Pentecost referring to the seven week period of the harvest. It was also known as the Feast of First Fruits (Numbers 28:26) and the Feast of Weeks. Note how this dramatic account in Acts differs from the quiet breathing of the Holy Spirit upon the disciples in John 20:22. The early church experienced many other ways in which the Holy Spirit came to the gathered community. All descriptions of the coming of the Spirit tell us of the special relationship God establishes with all of humanity through faith in Jesus Christ, not one exclusive group of believers. This is the true definition of the third person of the Trinity: God with us and at work in the world right now. – equipping us for service. None of us can claim to have exclusive control of the countless ways the Spirit of God works to bring the whole world to faith.

John 15:26-27, 16:4-15 English Standard Version (ESV)

15 ²⁶ “But when the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness about me. ²⁷ And you also will bear witness, because you have been with me from the beginning.

16 ⁴ But I have said these things to you, that when their hour comes you may remember that I told them to you.

The Work of the Holy Spirit

“I did not say these things to you from the beginning, because I was with you. ⁵ But now I am going to him who sent me, and none of you asks me, ‘Where are you going?’ ⁶ But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your heart. ⁷ Nevertheless, I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you. ⁸ And when he comes, he will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment: ⁹ concerning sin, because they do not believe in me; ¹⁰ concerning

righteousness, because I go to the Father, and you will see me no longer;
¹¹ concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged. ¹² “I still
have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. ¹³ When the
Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not
speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will
declare to you the things that are to come. ¹⁴ He will glorify me, for he will
take what is mine and declare it to you. ¹⁵ All that the Father has is mine;
therefore I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you.

COMMENT: As John related Jesus’ table talk at the last supper, Jesus promised to
send the Holy Spirit to the disciples (the promise of the Spirit preceding the Acts
passage is Luke 24:49). The Spirit would carry on Jesus’ work and constitute his
continuing presence in the world. Many different names have been given to the
Spirit, each one defining a different function. In each case, the work of the Spirit is
to glorify Jesus by what the Spirit does, i.e. to make Jesus known as Christ, the Son
of God, the one who reveals God completely and so shares God’s glory. Here the
name given to the Spirit is Advocate or Helper (verse 26) “who comes from the
Father” and “will testify on my behalf.” The name in Greek (*parakleptos*) has quasi-
legal meaning, as in “one who is called to the side of,” denoting one who pleads for
another. 1 John 2:1 applies the term to Christ himself. Hebrews 7:25-27 also regards
Christ’s high priestly role in the same way.

Psalm 104:26-37 *Quam magnificata sunt opera tua* Grail Psalter

✠ Send forth your spirit, O Lord, and renew the face of the earth.

²⁴ How many are your works, O Lord!
In wisdom you have made them all.
The earth is full of your riches. ✠

²⁵ There is the sea, vast and wide,
with its moving swarms past counting,
living things great and small.

²⁶ The ships are moving there
and the monsters you made to play with. ✠

²⁷ All of these look to you
to give them their food in due season.

²⁸ You give it, they gather it up:
you open your hand, they have their fill. ✠

²⁹ You hide your face, they are dismayed;
you take back your spirit, they die,
returning to the dust from which they came.

³⁰ You send forth your spirit, they are created;
and you renew the face of the earth. ✠

³¹ May the glory of the Lord last for ever!

May the Lord rejoice in his works!

³² He looks on the earth and it trembles;
the mountains send forth smoke at his touch.

✠ Send forth your spirit, O Lord, and renew the face of the earth.

³³ I will sing to the Lord all my life,
make music to my God while I live.

³⁴ May my thoughts be pleasing to him.

I find my joy in the Lord.

³⁵ Let sinners vanish from the earth
and the wicked exist no more.

Bless the Lord, my soul. **✠**

**Glory be to the Father and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit,
As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be,
world without end. Amen.**

COMMENT: The viewpoint of the psalmist is similar to that of the hymn of creation in Genesis 1. The keen observer that he was, the psalmist knew that everything that grew depended on the sun. They saw as part of creation obedient to the divine will (verse 19 – not part of the Reading today).

Short Preface

And now we give you thanks that, after he had ascended far above all heavens, and was seated at the right hand of your majesty, he sent forth upon the universal Church your holy and life-giving Spirit; that through his glorious power the joy of the everlasting gospel might go forth into all the world.

Post Communion

Faithful God, who fulfilled the promises of Easter by sending us your Holy Spirit and opening to every race and nation the way of life eternal: open our lips by your Spirit, that every tongue may tell of your glory; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

Blessing

The Spirit of truth lead you into all truth, give you grace to confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, and strengthen you to proclaim the word and works of God; and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among you, and remain with you always. **Amen.**