

The Sunday of Pentecost / May 23, 2021

John 16:13;14

“When the Spirit of truth comes, He will guide you into all the truth...He will glorify me, for He will take what is mine and declare it to you.”

The gospel writers tell us that over a period of forty days, Jesus appeared to His disciples and to the community of believers to show that He was alive. They would be witnesses that He has risen from the dead, that God accepted His sacrifice for the atonement of human sin and that everyone who believes in His name receives forgiveness and the promise of rising to eternal life! In Galilee He said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.”

On the fortieth day of His resurrection near Jerusalem, He gathered the disciple on the mount of Olives. He would soon be removed from their sight and be received into heaven. He told them that in a matter of days they would be clothed with power from on high. He said, they should not depart again for Galilee, but remain in Jerusalem. Something wonderful was going to happen! He said, “John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.” They would be His witnesses; testifying to the truth of His resurrection. They and the whole company of believers would be empowered by the Holy Spirit to bear witness about Him; that He is the Saviour of all people and everyone who calls on His name will be saved. The work of the Holy Spirit to bring glory to Jesus by proclaiming His as Saviour and drawing people to Him through faith in His Name and baptism into His death and resurrection.

The disciples had learned to do what Jesus told them to do. They remained in Jerusalem. On the fiftieth day of Jesus’ resurrection the disciples were gathered with the other believers, a company of about 120. Suddenly the room was filled with the sound of a mighty rushing wind. What seemed to be tongues of fire, appeared and rested on each one of them. Luke says they were “all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.” Their ecstatic speech served two purposes: to bolster and encourage them in faith, and to call all within earshot to pay heed to the salvation God has prepared for everyone through the cross of Christ and offers all to receive through faith in Him! It was just as Jesus said in the gospel of John, “The Spirit will take what is mine and declare it to you.”

Each person within earshot heard the believers declare the wonders of God in Christ Jesus, each in their own native language. The gospel is for all people! The Spirit spoke the good news of Jesus to their spirits, so they would declare the good news of salvation in Jesus to others. As Peter said, voicing the words of the prophet Joel, “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.” Pentecost is the Spirit inspiring people to faith in Jesus. Pentecost is the Spirit strengthening believers in faith. Pentecost is the Holy Spirit empowering the church to declare the good news of Jesus and testify to the salvation God offers all people to receive through faith in His Name. Pentecost was not a day long ago. Pentecost is every day! Every day the Holy Spirit leads us to Jesus, so we may believe. Every day the Holy Spirit impels us to tell others the wonder of God’s love and the salvation He offers to all people through faith in Him.

In our gospel and in the verses around it, Jesus spoke of the work of the Holy and prepared the disciples for the outpouring of the Spirit on the church. The Spirit would comfort them in their tribulations by leading them to His words. The Spirit would remind them of everything He had said. The Spirit would open their minds to understand the scriptures and to see Him in them. He said, “He will glorify me, for He will take what is mine and declare it to you.” The Holy Spirit works to make Jesus known as Saviour and to bring people to faith through His Name. The Holy Spirit calls, gathers and enlightens the whole Christian Church, by opening our ears to hear the gospel and opening our hearts to receive Jesus as Saviour. The Holy Spirit extends the church on earth, by opening our lips to proclaim Jesus as Saviour, so that through our testimony others may believe.

The Holy Spirit manifested His presence among believers on Pentecost Sunday. Nevertheless, the Holy Spirit was with the church in the days before Pentecost and throughout Jesus’ ministry. The Holy Spirit has been at work since the creation of heaven and earth! The Holy Spirit gathered followers of Jesus. The Holy Spirit enlightened the disciples’ minds to believe that He is the Son of God and has the words of eternal life. On the day of His resurrection Jesus gave the church authority to forgive sins in His name. He breathed on the apostles and said, “Receive the Holy Spirit, if you forgive the sins of any they are forgiven.” The Spirit made His presence known on Pentecost Sunday in a powerful way, but Spirit seeks to draw attention only to Jesus and to lead us to Him. The Holy Spirit glorifies Jesus, by taking the good news of His victory over sin, the devil and death on the

cross and making it known to us, so we may believe and so we may also make Jesus known to others.

The Holy Spirit works through the word. The Holy Spirit nurtures our faith and gives it growth by leading us to see Jesus in the words of Moses, the prophets and evangelists. All God's words are fulfilled and given their greatest expression in Jesus. As St. Paul said to his disciple Timothy, the sacred writings make us wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. He wrote, "All scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction and for training in righteousness." The Spirit leads us to Jesus in the word and washing of baptism. Baptism is the gift of God's salvation. St. Peter wrote, baptism saves you, "not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an appeal to God for a good conscience through the resurrection of Jesus Christ." The Spirit leads us to Jesus in Holy Communion and brings His forgiveness to us through the gift of His holy body and blood, received under the forms of bread and wine. The Holy Spirit seeks not to glorify the disciples, the church or to bring glory to Himself. The Holy Spirit glorifies Jesus by making Him known as our God and Saviour through the word.

The Holy Spirit glorifies Jesus by proclaiming the gospel of salvation to all who listen, through the voice of believers. On the Day of Pentecost, a multitude heard the church proclaim the wonders of God's love in Christ Jesus, each in their native language. Some dismissed the gospel they heard as the ravings of drunken people, but others listened. By the power of the Holy Spirit working through the word, more than three thousand believed and were baptized. The glory of Pentecost was not believers speaking in the native languages of all who had gathered for the feast. The glory of Pentecost was that through the word of the gospel the Holy Spirit created faith in the hearts of thousands who heard, so that they believed in Jesus and were baptized in His name. The glory of Pentecost is that through the word the Holy Spirit has given us faith to believe in Jesus as our Saviour.

The Holy Spirit glorifies Jesus as the only name given under heaven by which we are saved. The Spirit glorifies Jesus with the assurance that everyone who calls on His name will be saved from sin, the devil and death; in time and for eternity. This is the work of the Holy Spirit in the life of the church, in our lives as believers and in the life of the world, through the voice of believers who make Jesus known as Saviour of all people and call others to believe. The Holy Spirit gave astonishing gifts to the church on the day of Pentecost, but the greatest gift was faith to believe. The Holy Spirit gave this gift to those who were gathered in prayer. The Holy Spirit gave this gift to those who heard the gospel message through their words. The Holy Spirit gives this gift to you and me through the word of God's grace and forgiveness promised in Christ Jesus. Pentecost is the good news of the gospel given for us to share and believe. The gospel is God's promise that "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."

Pentecost is the Holy Spirit speaking through the Church to proclaim the Name of Jesus, as the only name given under heaven by which we must be saved. Pentecost is the Holy Spirit testifying to the world through the voice of the Church that Jesus by virtue of His cross, is the Saviour of all people. Pentecost is the Holy Spirit calling to the world through voice of the Church in every language under heaven, to turn to God in repentance in the blessed assurance that for the sake of Jesus, His blood and righteousness, "everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."

We thank God for the salvation He has prepared for us in Christ Jesus. We thank God for the Holy Spirit, who has opened our hearts to believe in Christ as our Saviour through the word and by the witness of the church. We pray God to continue to bless us with the Holy Spirit, so we may believe with our hearts and tell who will listen the good news of the gospel that "everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."

God who has called us in by the word and working of the Holy Spirit, keep us in faith and empower us to share our faith until faith passes into sight at the return of Christ. In His Name. Amen