



Free Evangelical
Lutheran Synod
in South Africa

Sermon- Sunday Pentecost (Proper B) 2018

*Beginning at Pentecost the Holy Spirit
opens the right understanding
about Jesus Christ to all nations!*



St. John's Lutheran Parish
Shelly Beach

• The Word of God for this Sermon is written in John 15, 26-27; 16,4b-16:

- ^{ESV} 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. [...]
- **ESV John 16:4** "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 judgement:
- 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 judgement, 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 whole of)* 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. *(refers to the Death & Resurrection of Jesus), see 18,4).*
- 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.
- **Let us pray:** *Come Holy Spirit, breath Your Life into our ears and take it into our hearts and guide us into the whole of the Truth! Amen.*
- **Dear friends of the living Christ!**

• Pentecost, the beginning of the out-pouring of the Holy Spirit onto all flesh! We have heard three readings. On the one hand we have the Gospel Reading proclaiming to us the prophesy of Christ, that He will send the Holy Spirit from the Father, as a "paraclætos", translated as helper or comforter.

- On the other hand we have the reading from Acts 2 which recorded for us what actually happened on the day of Pentecost, in Jerusalem! Then we also heard the OT Reading prophesying about the dead bones coming alive.
- Jesus prophesied, that He was going to send the Helper, the Spirit of Truth to them. He would bear witness of the Truth, namely who Jesus is, what He did, does and will do. It is significant, the Holy Spirit will not proclaim something new. Rather, he would convict the world of its sinfulness, the flip- side of the Truth. He would proclaim concerning righteousness, that Jesus has gone to His Father- all has been made right, by Him. The ruler of this world, satan, is judged. His end is decreed. It is fixed. It is only a question of when, not if.
- The Spirit whom Jesus will send from the Father, will guide the disciples in all of the Truth. He would reveal the whole Truth to His disciples. Everything concerning Jesus' ministry of preaching, doing signs, suffering, dying as the Lamb of God and His Resurrection, all of Jesus, He will reveal the Truth about it all.
- This is the first thing we have to realise today: The Holy Spirit is concerned about the truth of who we are before God and what God has done and is doing and will do in Jesus Christ. The precise and certain truth. The Holy Spirit is all about Christ for you. The Holy Spirit is all about leading all people to repentance, preaching the Law of God to them and convicting them of their sinfulness.
- The sermon of the Holy Spirit is Christ- centered for the benefit of the convicted sinner!
- Now, lets see what happened on Pentecost. Let Scripture interpret Scripture: All the disciples were filled with the Holy Spirit and tongues of fire appeared on their heads and they began to speak in different tongues as the Holy Spirit gave to them. Yet, they were not speaking gibberish, not to be understood by anyone. No. This gift of the Holy Spirit enabled them to reach all people gathered that day in their own language. This speaking in tongues was for the very sake of clarity, so that all could understand the sermon! Up until that time, only Hebrew was spoken in the temple.
- Therefore, many were amazed and realised something very significant was happening here. But not all, others were critical about this phenomenon, and said that the disciples were drunk.
- Peter then lifted up his voice and gave the main sermon for the day. And here we have a Spirit-filled sermon recorded for us. He spoke directly to the crowd and addressed them as "men of Israël". He started off by countering the accusation that they were drunk by applying the Word of God, the prophesy of Jøel, as being fulfilled that day. In the Last Days

God will pour out His Spirit on all flesh. Devout men from every nation were gathered in Jerusalem that day.

- Then he accused them of killing Jesus by the hand of lawless men. Turning again to Scripture and quoting David he revealed to them that David already spoke of the Resurrection of Christ. The Holy Spirit, speaking through Peter, used precise arguments, paying close attention to what the Word says, not neglecting the details, saying [Acts 2, 34-35]: *"For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he himself says, "'The Lord said to my Lord, sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool.'"*
- Then he drew the conclusion from it [36]: *"Let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has made Him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified."*
- So, we see, the Holy Spirit does not in any way refrain from countering wrong assumptions from culture. He attacks them head-on with the Word of God and reveals that Jesus is LORD in the same way as the Father is LORD. And the Holy Spirit bluntly accused them of killing Jesus through lawless men.
- To what avail? We hear in verse 37, that *"Now when they heard this they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?"*
- The Holy Spirit convicted the world of their sinfulness! Indeed, He did it! How did He do it? Through what? Through the sermon of Peter! And then comes the critical question, 'what shall we do'?
- How is this giving of the Holy Spirit going to be propagated? How is it going to come unto them, or into them? Will they also receive fire jumping onto them? Is that the main thing to desire or do?
- No. Peter, inspired by the Holy Spirit preaches: *"Repent and be baptised every one of you in the Name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."* This will be the new way of the Holy Spirit to be poured out on all flesh. This is how the gift of the Holy Spirit, namely forgiveness of sins, eternal life and salvation, will reach out into all the corners of the world, through all times until the end! Through preaching of the Word and receiving the Sacrament of Baptism. And the Holy Spirit makes this gift certain [39]: *"For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself."*
- What an important verse! Baptism is for all people, no age restrictions, and the children are explicitly mentioned! And it's the LORD's doing. He called us to Himself. That is the right Baptism. And repentance? Its the Holy Spirit convicting us of the truth of our

sinfulness! Do, you see, how honest and straightforward the Holy Spirit speaks with people. He did not beat about the bush! He calls sin “sin” and hands out the mercy and grace of God to all whom the Lord calls through His preaching!

- Law and Gospel preaching. That is what Jesus said the Holy Spirit will do and that is exactly what He did, and still does with us, today! There is no such a thing that He will change His tune. Today the Gospel is preached in many more languages than named in Acts 2. The Gospel is the most widespread good news preached in all of the world.
- Unfortunately, it is still resisted and many attempts are being made to destroy the effectiveness of Word and Sacrament! The false prophets of the world cannot do anything to the effectiveness of the Spirit’s Word and Sacraments, but they try very hard to deceive people into desiring alternative, more flashy and more appealing means to the flesh, of coming to Christ. They teach people far and wide, that there is one thing God or His Holy Spirit, cannot do, namely that they cannot create faith! That needs to come from our self. This resonates deeply with our old Adam, who wants to keep all decisions of his life to himself and who thinks that he is fully capable of doing so.
- Here lies one of the greatest temptation we are facing in our times. Our old Adam is pulling us towards this logical reasoning which is the same as killing Christ, which is the same as denying the Work of the Holy Spirit. This is so, because, if I am capable of creating faith in myself, why do I need the death of Christ, to count for me, why do I need the Holy Spirit to convict me of my sin, if I can produce repentance myself and even faith myself?
- The truth is, as envisioned in the prophecy of Ezekiel: We were all like the dead bones Ezekiel was shown in his prophecy. Spiritually dead! Dead in our sins, who cannot create anything, least of all faith in Jesus! Whoever has faith in Christ, true faith, must have received the sound from God’s “Ruach”. Yes, its true, you and I, we also share in the guilt of causing the death of Jesus. On the other hand, the death of Jesus is our life and in Baptism the great exchange happened. Your real guilt was crucified with Jesus and Jesus gave you His innocent and precious life, His faith and His Spirit, who remains your comforter in your remaining stay on earth and throughout your death and will wake you up on the Last Day to see what you have believed. Glory be to the Father, Glory be to the Son and Glory be to the Holy Spirit! **Amen.**
- *“The Lord God breathes upon the slain, and so shall they live; for so the Lord has spoken, and He shall do it.” Amen.*
(Ezek. 37: 5–14)