

“PREACHING PENTECOST TO OURSELVES.”

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First Christian Reformed Church

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Scripture Texts: Ephesians 1:16-20; Romans 8:13-17; John 16:7, 13-14

Prayer: Holy Father, what a privilege it is to come into Your house with Your people to worship You. Now Lord, pour out Your Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the proclaiming Your Word that we may know You. Make us both hearers and doers of Your Word. By your Holy Spirit, through your Word and sacrament, fall afresh upon us and help us for the sake of your glory and your gospel. In the name of Jesus, Amen.

Introduction.

Two weeks ago we heard about the benefits of the ascension and preaching those benefits to ourselves. We don't just have a risen Savior, we have an ascended Savior who now reigns on the throne of heaven with all power and authority. He is our Lord and King. He is our great high priest, the once-for-all perfect and complete sacrifice. By His blood our sins are forgiven. And now He is praying to the Father on our behalf.

Continue to preach and proclaim to yourself Jesus who is in heaven, what He is like and what He has done and is doing for you, who's side is He on.

One of the fruits or benefits of the ascension is Pentecost. Jesus said He must ascend so the Spirit could descend.

John 16:7 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.

So this morning let's consider together the great benefits of preaching Pentecost to ourselves.

Pentecost is the spiritual turning point in history. Something absolutely transforming and cataclysmic happened on that day. We just observed the anniversary of D-Day, which was a decisive turning point in the history of WWII. Pentecost is that decisive moment in our spiritual battle with sin and with walking in the will of God and in a relationship with Him.

Pentecost is essential for your life as a Christian. In fact, you can't be one without the Spirit. You can't know or understand the Gospel without the Spirit, you can't preach the Gospel to yourself without the Spirit, you can't believe it or apply it without the Spirit.

Preaching Pentecost to yourself.

What do we know because of Pentecost and how can we preach it to ourselves?

First, God is a God who keeps His promises. He is faithful and trustworthy and He does everything He says He will. Remind you soul of this.

Pentecost is God fulfilling His promises He made in the OT.

Jeremiah 31:33-34 For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the Lord: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people. 34 ... I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.”

New hearts leading to a restored relationship and God’s purposeful forgetfulness of our sins.

Ezekiel 36:26-28 I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. 27 And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules. 28 ... you shall be my people, and I will be your God.

Here is the Gospel in the OT, God will forgive our sins and give us His Spirit so we can be made new and enabled to obey His will and His Word. Notice God doesn’t just clean up our bad hearts, He takes them out and gives us a new heart. And He promises to be our God, with us.

Joel 2:28-29 “And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh;

your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions. 29 Even on the male and female servants in those days I will pour out my Spirit.

Pentecost is also Jesus fulfilling His promise He made in the Gospels.

John 14:16, 18 I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever ... 18 “I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.

John 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.

John 16:7 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.

When Satan lies to you telling you God has failed you or causes you to question, has God really said, remember your promise-keeping God. God dwells not just with us but in us.

And remind your soul of the eternal truth, that when God seems like He is most absent, that is when we is actually most present with us. The cross proves it. God can never leave or forsake one of His own.

We are not orphans, we have been given the promised Holy Spirit who is the Spirit of adoption and makes us children of God who are able to say to the living God of the universe, Abba, Father.

The Spirit is in us and He who is in us is greater than he who is in the world.

Second, because of God's Spirit in us we can know God and know Jesus. Our greatest need is to know God and glory to God, He has made it possible by our asking for it. Without the Spirit this is impossible, by the Spirit God makes the impossible possible.

I Corinthians 2:9-11 As it is written,

“What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined, what God has prepared for those who love him”—

10 these things God has revealed to us through the Spirit. For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God. 11 For who knows a person's thoughts except the spirit of that person, which is in him? So also no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God.

The Spirit is the Spirit of wisdom and revelation and this wisdom and knowledge is yours for the asking. So ask. Ask again.

If it wasn't for the Holy Spirit you wouldn't know about the Gospel, you wouldn't have a Gospel to preach to yourself.

The reason you and I believe and are here this morning to worship God and celebrate the Lord's Supper of His Son and our Savior, is the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the reason the Gospel spread out of Israel and into all the world, all the way to Lynden, Washington.

You know and believe what you do because God has come to you and is in you and has revealed Himself to you. Tell yourself this and ask for more of it.

Third, the same grace that saves us is the grace that sanctifies us. This is the Spirit's work in us to change us, transform us, recreate us in the image of Jesus.

This is good news worth preaching to ourselves. The worst sinner can be convicted of his sin and brought to repentance and reconciled to God and made into a worshiper of Jesus. My sin, your sin, no sin is too great or too bad that the Holy Spirit can't overcome it and apply the blood of Jesus to it.

You are not beyond help or beyond hope. You are not so messed up to be no use to God. Those are the lies and condemnation you can rebuke in the name of Jesus and by the power of the Spirit. By the Spirit we are enabled to put to death the sin that dwells in us.

The God who created the universe by the power of the Spirit, can and is recreating you and making you a new creation.

Fourth, the Holy Spirit is filling us now with His fruit, His gifts and His power and Paul prays we will know this.

Ephesians 1:19-20 ... what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his great might 20 that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places.

The same power that made the ascension possible and seated Jesus on the throne in heaven, the same power that raised Jesus from the dead is also not just available to us but is in us working to transform us, to raise us from the dead, and seat us in the heavenlies with Christ.

Now let's be honest. When we read this we don't believe it for ourselves. We read about the Spirit's power in us and we guess we have to say it's true because the Bible says it, but we don't feel it, it doesn't seem true for me.

I felt that way yesterday. I was driving to the gas station and there was a very slow driving person in front of me and I was getting impatient. Then as I was sitting at the pump my mind went to today's sermon about the Holy Spirit in us and one of the fruit of the Spirit being patience and I sat there reflecting on how the power and presence of the Spirit didn't seem very real to me in that moment.

Have you felt that way? You are struggling with some sin, some anxiety, some fear, some doubt, some impatience or anger and this talk about the power and presence of the Holy Spirit seems just vague and theoretical and like so much pious religious talk.

I had quenched the Spirit by my sin, rather than rely on the Spirit to overcome my sin and die to my selfishness.

The reason we don't feel it is because we have cataracts on the eyes of our hearts. We don't think about, let alone pray this prayer in Ephesians 1. Paul cared about the fact that we don't feel and know this truth and power, so he prayed this prayer in Ephesians 1 to help us. Your heart won't change without prayer and asking the Spirit to change it.

Pray for the Spirit to do spiritual cataract surgery. Pray for the spiritual dullness to be taken away by the power of the Spirit in you. Pray for the Spirit of wisdom and revelation so you can know in your knower these things.

Pray so you will know the hope of the calling in Christ you already have.
Pray so you will know the riches of your inheritance that is already yours.
Pray so you will know the immeasurable power that is already at work in you.

To know how great this power is you have to know how great sin and death and Satan are and how much those things assault you every day, and how every day we are dependent on Jesus' power and victory over sin and death and Satan, and how the Spirit applies that power and victory to us every day.

Our D-Day has come, the Spirit has landed on the beaches of our hearts and is making progress in uprooting the enemies of our souls. It is a fight, but it is a fight we can win by the power of the Spirit who is in us and for us and with us.

Implications and application.

How is Pentecost still happening around us? Everything that is said about Pentecost and the Holy Spirit in the Bible is still true, still real, still active. Speak this truth to yourself today and live it this week.

Where do you see the activity of God most at work in your life and in your world today? Where is the power of the Spirit moving, changing, filling, transforming, convicting, healing?

How often do you focus on your lack of wisdom or ability or energy or lack of knowledge? How often do you deny the Spirit who is in you? How often do you forget you have a great treasure in jars of clay, so God can demonstrate His power in our weakness (II Corinthians 4:7)?

What excuse are you giving for not doing something for God? For not doing something for Christ, for not speaking up for the Gospel? For not serving?

How often have you stepped out in faith, in total dependence on the power of the Holy Spirit?

There is still opportunity for many to help with Serve. Do it in the power of the Spirit. Ask God to show you what and to use you. Ask Him to glorify His Spirit through you.

Do something out of your comfort zone and in your weakness that will become a demonstration of the Spirit's power. I experience this every Sunday.

I Corinthians 2:1-5 I ... did not come proclaiming to you the testimony of God with lofty speech or wisdom. 2 For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. 3 And I was with you in weakness and in fear and much trembling, 4 and my speech and my message were not in plausible words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, 5 so that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.

The Holy Spirit is God's verdict that He loves us and cares about us and desires to be intimately involved in every aspect of our lives. The Holy Spirit is God's yes and amen to each of us who will repent and believe and live by His power for His glory.

The Holy Spirit is God's sermon in you. Preach Him to yourself.

Prayer:

Ephesians 3:14-21 For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, 15 from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, 16 that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being, 17 so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith—that you, being rooted and grounded in love, 18 may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, 19 and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. 20 Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, 21 to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen.