

**Acts 2:1-21 (The Day of Pentecost—Series C)**  
**“Come, Holy Spirit, Kindle in Us Your Love to Share Jesus”**  
**Lutheran Church of Our Redeemer, Enfield CT**  
**June 5, 2022**

In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Our text is the Second Reading from Acts 2:

<sup>5</sup>Now there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men from every nation under heaven. <sup>6</sup>And at this sound the multitude came together, and they were bewildered, because each one was hearing them speak in his own language. <sup>7</sup>And they were amazed and astonished, saying, “*Are not all these who are speaking Galileans?*”<sup>8</sup> *And how is it that we hear, each of us in his own native language?* <sup>9</sup>Parthians and Medes and Elamites and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, <sup>10</sup>Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, <sup>11</sup>both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabians—*we hear them telling in our own languages the mighty works of God.*”

How does your harvest of wheat look? Do you have a good crop this year? The Feast of Pentecost, which means “fiftieth,” took place on the fiftieth day after the Sabbath of Passover week, or fifty days from Easter! Pentecost is also called the Feast of Weeks or the Feast of Harvest. It marked the end of the barley harvest and the beginning of the wheat harvest. Pentecost was a thanksgiving festival. God’s people joined in giving thanks for the goodness of God the Creator as they presented an offering of new grain to the Lord. Jews from all over the world would come to the Jerusalem temple for the annual celebrations of the Feast of Tabernacles, Passover, and Pentecost.

And that’s why Luke records all these peoples present—Parthians and Medes and Elamites and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabians. Jews from all over had come to Jerusalem for the Feast of Weeks, for Pentecost, to give thanks to God for the harvest of new grain. And it

happened that it was on this Sunday that the Lord poured out the Holy Spirit in power on the chosen disciples of Jesus. Jesus kept His promise in our Gospel reading, "But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you" (John 14:26 ESV). And the result of the gift of Holy Spirit in power was that those present in the temple heard the disciples sharing God's Word through the special gift of language. As a result of the gift of the Holy Spirit that day and the preaching of the Gospel that took place, "about three thousand souls" were added to God's kingdom (Acts 2:41). That was a harvest of abundance—not of grain—but of people in whom the Holy Spirit created saving faith in Jesus Christ, upon whom were bestowed the forgiveness of sins and eternal life. A reason to give thanks, indeed!

Jesus said to His disciples in Luke 10, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest" (Luke 10:2 ESV). The events of that Pentecost are an answer to this prayer of Christ's followers. It is a prayer that we continue to speak when we pray, as we did in the Introit this morning, "Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of the faithful, and kindle in them the fire of your love." Without the work of God the Holy Spirit, we could not know Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior from sin, death, and the power of the devil. We confess in the Explanation of the Third Article of the Creed, "I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, or come to Him; but the Holy Spirit has called me by the Gospel, enlightened me with His gifts, sanctified and kept me in the true faith. In the same way He calls, gathers, enlightens, and sanctifies the whole Christian church on earth, and keeps it with Jesus Christ in the one true faith."

It is the work of God the Holy Spirit to call people to saving faith in Jesus Christ by the Word of the Gospel—the Promises—forgiveness of sins, eternal life, and salvation from death and hell. These Jesus alone purchased and won for all people with His perfect life and with His suffering, death, and resurrection. “How can what Christ did for us two thousand years ago . . . become effective in our lives today? . . . The comforting truth is that the Holy Spirit works through objective, external, sure, and certain means of grace, through which we receive justification by grace alone, through faith alone, on account of Christ alone.”<sup>1</sup> When God the Holy Spirit works through the Gospel in Word, water, bread and wine, He creates saving faith in Jesus in us through these means and sustains us in that saving faith that apprehends all the gifts of God in Christ—the forgiveness of sins and eternal life.

On that Pentecost Day recorded for us by Luke in Acts 2, we see the Holy Spirit doing what He does. Through the proclamation of the “mighty works of God” in the Gospel, saving faith is created. People receive the Good News of Jesus and, having been called by the Spirit through the Gospel, believe in Him as their Savior. The Reformers said it this way in the Augsburg Confession, “Through the Word and Sacraments, as through instruments, the Holy Spirit is given [John 20:22]. He works faith, when and where it pleases God [John 3:8], in those who hear the good news that God justifies those who believe that they are received into grace for Christ’s sake. This happens not through our own merits, but for Christ’s sake.”<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Paul Timothy McCain, ed., *Concordia: The Lutheran Confessions* (St. Louis: Concordia, 2005), 33.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

In a very real way, you and I are part of the great Pentecost harvest. The Holy Spirit has been given to us through the Means of Baptism and the Gospel Word. We rejoice in the gift of saving faith that trusts in Jesus Christ alone for the great gifts of forgiveness of sins, rescue from death and the power of the devil, and the blessing of eternal salvation, which is already our present possession by faith, even as we look forward to its fullness on the Day of the Resurrection.

Now we could, as Pastor Yeadon once said in a sermon, just sit around soaking up the Lord's blessings like a bloated pig. (Yes, he really did say this.) But that's not the Lord's intentions. Again, the words of Jesus, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest." Guess who the laborers are?

If you guessed all the disciples of Jesus, you're correct. The faith given to us by God the Holy Spirit through the Gospel and the Sacraments is not only a saving faith but also a sanctifying faith. That means the gift of faith in Jesus not only receives the forgiveness of sins and everlasting life, but the gift of faith also makes us holy by the power of the Spirit as we live the life of a disciple of the Lord Jesus. The faith given by the Holy Spirit is a living and active power in our lives, bearing the fruit of good works. And is it not truly a good work prompted by the Holy Spirit that we share the Good News of salvation from sin, Satan, and death that Jesus gives to all people freely by faith?

If you have an old, used something in your house that's still in decent condition (or sometimes not), you can leave it by the side of the road. There's a really, really high percentage chance that within the first few hours, someone will stop and adopt your no-

longer wanted item. At least, that's been my experience around here. I think this is true because people like getting things for free. Put a sign on it—FREE—and it'll be gone before you know it. Who doesn't like free? The free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord (Rom. 6:23 ESV). And it is a gift that all people need. Without it—without the forgiveness of sins which bestows upon people eternal life and salvation—there is nothing but everlasting death and condemnation in their future. The judgment of God against unbelief is real. Hell and eternal death are real. But the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

There is an abundant harvest of people who are dying in sin, dying because of suffering, dying in agony and fear caused by the world and the sinful flesh. That's why we pray, "Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of the faithful, and kindle in **ME** the fire of your love." Kindle in **ME** a love for the lost who do not yet know Jesus by faith. Kindle in **ME** a heartfelt concern for the spiritual as well as physical needs of my neighbor, that person to whom I have the ability to show love and mercy in the name of Jesus because the Holy Spirit dwells in me and is prompting the good works of faith to flow from my heart.

St. Paul enlightens us by the Holy Spirit's words in Romans 10. "For 'everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.' How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, 'How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!' But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, 'Lord, who has believed what he has heard from us?' So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ" (Rom. 10:13–17 ESV).

As the disciples did on that Pentecost so long ago, since you too are empowered by the same Spirit, boldly tell the Good News of Jesus Christ. Share what you believe about Jesus as the Spirit gives you the opportunity. When you see the troubled hearts of your friends and family members, even strangers, give to them the Lord Jesus' own words of peace that come from the Gospel—a real, present God; a real Savior who is with us to the very end of the age; guilt removed and sins forgiven in the name of Jesus Christ; a new life in the new family of the Church.

In the *Large Catechism* we read from Dr. Luther, "The Spirit has His own congregation in the world, which is the mother that conceives and bears every Christian through God's Word [Galatians 4:26]. Through the Word He reveals and preaches, He illumines and enkindles hearts, so that they understand, accept, cling to, and persevere in the Word."<sup>3</sup> As disciples of Christ by faith through the power and grace of God the Holy Spirit, pray the Lord of the harvest to send workers into His harvest, even yourself. Pray the Holy Spirit gives you the Gospel Words to share so that others might know Christ by faith and join with all disciples in the One, Holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, to the glory of God our Father. Amen.

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<sup>3</sup> Paul Timothy McCain, ed., *Concordia: The Lutheran Confessions* (St. Louis: Concordia, 2005), 403–404.