

Day of Pentecost

May 31, 2020



PROCLAMATION POINTS

The following are some thoughts and questions to be used for a text study on the weekly lessons, or for jump-starting the imagination of the preacher and hearer in preparing for the proclamation event.

(Christ) has proved his love in taking your sins upon himself and paying for them with his blood, as he tells you by the gospel. He has given you grace to believe by his Spirit, and has prepared and accomplished everything most surely, so that you need not care or fear any more, but only keep your heart strong and reliant on his Word and faith.

– Martin Luther –

Letter to His Father (February 15, 1520)

Numbers 11:24–30

Sometimes our desire for good order in the church causes us to butt heads with the Holy Spirit. While Moses gathered up the elders of Israel and they received the gift of prophesy through the Holy Spirit, two men stayed behind in the camp. Eldad and Medad didn't join the gathering of elders, yet the Spirit came to rest upon them, too. They prophesied right where they were, in the midst of the camp.

This was not how things were supposed to go. There was a meeting and a plan — and Joshua didn't think this sort of thing should be allowed. He wanted Moses to stop the two men. But Moses recognized that the Word they were given to speak was a Word the people in the camp needed to hear. Rather than seeking to restrain the gifts of the Spirit, Moses celebrated the gift God had given these two men.

- *What are some ways we seek to restrain the work of the Spirit for the sake of good order? On the other hand, how can lack of concern for good order in the church lead to problems?*
- *For us, as Christians, how do we properly discern when a word of prophesy comes from the Spirit and when it is of a different origin? Compare what is written in 1 John 4:1–6.*

Psalms 25:1–15

In faith, we offer up ourselves — our lives, our hearts, our obedience, as well as our time, talent, and treasures — in hope that they will be pleasing to God. This is all well and good. But often, because of what we do, the sinner in us cannot resist the urge to put the focus of faith on ourselves.

The psalmist has a different way of thinking about this. He lifts up his soul to God, puts his trust in the Almighty. From this vantage point he recognizes that everything is already in God's hands. We have nothing to offer, only to receive.

“Show me your ways ... teach me your paths ... lead me in truth ... forget my sins.” We come before God with open hands, in need of his bountiful gifts. The promise we live in is that God is merciful to his beloved children, providing us with exactly what we need.

- *What difference does it make to think of ourselves primarily as receivers rather than givers in relation to God?*
- *Why is it so difficult to recognize and admit our empty-handedness when it comes to the grace and mercy of God?*

Acts 2:1–21

There is tremendous power in wind. It can erode the land. It

can slam doors and bend crops to the ground. When violent and out of control, wind can destroy everything in its path. This everyday occurrence, one we often don't even take note of unless it is gusty and violent, is also one of the most powerful forces in nature.

In Acts, the coming of the Holy Spirit wasn't a little breeze or one breezy gust. As the disciples were gathered together trying to figure out what to do next, the Holy Spirit came upon them like a tornado. The Spirit filled that room and shaped everything it touched.

As the disciples spoke, their words were received in countless languages. The fear and trembling that had filled them since Jesus had ascended into heaven was replaced with confidence in the message they had been called to share. The story of a lowly carpenter's son who had suffered a violent death became THE story of God's deeds of power. That wind that rushed through that house and impacted their lives changed everything!

The power of the Holy Spirit made it possible for the disciples to do the work they were called to do. It made their message understandable to the crowd that gathered for Pentecost, and gave them the faith and courage to take on a mission for which they had no particular training. That same Spirit is at work among us still, shaping our reality and inspiring our witness.

- *Are the gifts of the Spirit reserved for magnificent displays like Pentecost? What are some everyday miracles you have noticed, or failed to notice before?*
- *What are some ways you see the Holy Spirit at work in your context (your community and congregation)?*

John 7:37–39

Jesus speaks to those who realize their spiritual thirst, who know they are not righteous in and of themselves. To thirsty souls, his words are a comfort; to those who are “full of themselves,” Jesus' words seem presumptuous. But we know that all are thirsty, whether they realize it or not. So, we preach that the Spirit of the Lord is ready to fill the thirst in us. The promise is that the Spirit is being unleashed upon believers. Those who belong to Christ will be filled with the righteousness of his living water.

- *In what ways does faith quench our thirst? In what ways does faith make us thirsty for more?*
- *Why must we look to Christ for righteousness and not to ourselves?*