

Pentecost Sunday (Acts 2:1-21; John 15:26-27; 16:4b-17)

Now today I am going to begin my sermon with an illustration that honestly seems so simple I am almost embarrassed to use it. So today I brought some things. I brought a glove. It is a work glove. When I set the glove down I can ask the glove to pick up the book beside me. I expect the fingers might be able to work together to grip the glove. No matter how hard the glove tries it cannot do so. Well maybe this glove needs some fellowship with others to gather strength. We have different types and different colours together. So, I ask the glove again to please lift the book but to no avail. It needs help. If we think of ourselves and the disciples we need help to get to work too – sharing the gospel. Our bodies were created by God to have the capacity to do these sorts of things. It is only because the Holy Spirit enters our bodies and empowers us first to do what God intends that we are able to be filled with the Holy Spirit as his children. The Holy Spirit enters into our hearts in many ways and on in this Pentecost day we witness it in Baptism and at the Table.

God doesn't care who we are. He loves us unconditionally. We are created in his image. We are all his children.

Now there are times in our lives when we become distracted from our faith. Our wrong doings and sins focus on anything but God, it causes some of us to feel unworthy of God's promises of grace, mercy, and forgiveness.

God, through the Spirit of Truth, continues to come down to us just like that first Pentecost day.

We are reminded today of God's goodness through the baptisms of Tiffany, Paige, Markus and Katrina. Baptism usually happens to people as toddlers. Today we are witness to four individuals who have all chosen themselves to become part of God's family.

In baptism we use water, something so ordinary, and with the Word of God, it is transformed into this extraordinary rite. When one is baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, the God comes down. Like when Jesus was baptized by John in the Jordan and the heavens opened up for the Spirit to appear in the form of a dove, God, the Spirit of Truth comes down and chooses to love us freely. We are made part of his family the Body of Christ. We just show up and God does the rest. Tiffany, Paige, Markus and Lucas and everyone. God's gift of love and grace are free gifts. God doesn't say, "I will baptize you if you do this." God has done the work for us. Instead, God invites us to respond to such love by letting the Spirit of truth live in us so that we can respond by sharing such love with others. Any love that we show after baptism is a response to the love first shown to us on the cross. I encourage you as you leave this place today be reminded of God's love in baptism when you have a shower, wash the dishes, water the garden, have a glass of water or any number of activities. Remember that you are freely loved.

I can only imagine what it must have been like that first Pentecost day. You are gathered with your friends – fellow Galileans. You’re having a little shindig and then suddenly a roaring wind and a ball of fire enters the party. Everyone is touched by the Spirit. No longer did they speak the same language. There were God-fearing Jews from every nation gathered also and they understood those speaking their language and wondered how could this happen?

Of course, the first thing they do is blame it on the wine, but Peter assures them that has nothing to do with it. Peter reminds the people that the prophet Joel says, “In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophecy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit.” Acts: 2:17-18.

Often during the day of Pentecost we focus on the birthday of the Christian church. When the Spirit of Truth comes down and touches the people, sending them out speaking God’s words of hope in different languages, the Church is birthed. Again God comes down.

What does this all mean for us as faithful followers.

As we have been called by God to be his people and to know his love, we are called to be disciples. God wants to prophecy. In faith we can have visions. We can dream dreams. We can do this solely by the power of God’s love. Faith is freely given to us and lives in us. It empowers us to do the work of God. Nothing we do in response to God’s love is wrong if it is faithful to God. Jesus calls us to do so much in response to the love he showed us on the cross and through his resurrection.

There are other words that come to mind at Pentecost: Trust. Share. Come Forward. Encourage Others. Have Faith. Invite. Laugh and Smile. God is inviting people to joy and thanksgiving. Be renewed today by the Spirit of Truth and know that you are loved. Amen.