

## **Sermon for Pentecost**

**May 20, 2018**

### **“God Is With Us”**

Grace, mercy, and peace are yours from Jesus. Amen.

Dear people who call God your Father, God worked an amazing change in the lives of his disciples. When we see the disciples in the gospel accounts, it's often an unflattering picture. They are so often confused. They bicker about who's the most important disciple. They are afraid and scared. They just don't seem to know what they're doing most of the time.

But after the resurrection, we can see the change starting to take place as Jesus appears to his disciples and teaches them for forty final days, they're starting to get it and piece together what had happened.

When we get to Pentecost, the change is complete. Jesus wasn't kidding when he said that they would receive power when the Holy Spirit came upon them! They weren't scared anymore, or confused. They were bold. They were courageous.

It was an incredible change. Jesus promised it was coming. “I have told you these things while staying with you. But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and remind you of everything I told you.”

As always, Jesus kept his promise. He ascended to heaven and sent the Holy Spirit, and Pentecost was just the beginning of bold, far-reaching gospel proclamation throughout the world.

Could it happen to you? Could it happen to you that you would become bold and courageous in sharing God's Word? Could it happen to you that you would be highly knowledgeable in God's Word and understand it and apply it correctly?

The Bible is a big book. It's a lot of material to read through just once, cover to cover, but reading something once doesn't really make you a highly knowledgeable expert. There are strange names of people and places. To understand the Bible well, there's a lot of background knowledge that you'd want to have – like geography, world history, Jewish culture, and all sorts of other things. God's Word is a huge amount of material to know and to keep fresh on.

And then there's you in this equation, and you might take a look at the Bible and say, “That's a bigger challenge than I'm looking for. I don't feel up for it. I don't feel smart enough to do it, or dedicated enough to learn it all, or capable of learning all the things that Jesus taught.”

Jesus sent the Holy Spirit to the disciples, a mix of people, a few educated, most not. Men who had been confused and bewildered more often than not for three years of personal instruction with Jesus. And the Holy Spirit did his work on them, and turned those men into powerful preachers and evangelists.

Jesus sends the Holy Spirit to every believer. Jesus sends the Holy Spirit to you. And whether you feel smart or not, educated or not, the Holy Spirit will do his work on you, and grow your faith and grow your knowledge.

Don't study God's Word alone. I mean, yes, definitely, you will study God's Word without other human companions, but never think that you are all alone trying to study and learn God's Word. The Holy Spirit is with you to do his work; that's something to remember in a prayer, or

something to remember in a song, like Create in Me that we'll sing after the sermon. When you study God's Word, you grow by the power of the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit does his work, of course, through the Means of Grace. The gospel that is found in Holy Scriptures, Holy Baptism, and Holy Communion. The gospel that created faith in your heart so that you, once an enemy of God because of sin, have been washed clean by the blood of Christ, and are at peace with God, just like Jesus promised.

"Peace I leave with you. My peace I give to you," he promised. Jesus always keeps his promises. So what did he promise you?

What is peace? Artist Jack Dawson illustrated the peace Jesus promises in his painting titled, "Peace in the Midst of a Storm." The painting doesn't look very peaceful. It's mostly the storm – lighting, clouds, and rushing water pouring down in a waterfall, crashing over a rocky cliff. Where's the peace? In a little cleft in that rocky cliff, there's a nest with a little bird sleeping it in, surrounded by all the storm, but it didn't matter. The bird knew everything was just fine.

Jesus says, "My peace I give to you." Christians know, by faith, that everything good. First, that everything is good between us and God, because Jesus redeemed us, paying the price to buy us back so that we belong to him. Jesus calls it, "My peace," he's earned it. It's his to do with as he pleases – and he's given it to you. Peace between you and God! Second, the peace that everything is under control of Jesus, who rules all things, and that, like the bird in the storm, we're going to be taken care of, no matter how bad it looks.

Jesus is only place to get peace like that. He says so himself, "Not as the world gives do I give to you." That's general statement – Jesus' giving of anything is not done the way the world gives.

How does the world give things? So often, grudgingly, and sometimes even deceitfully. Everybody can tell a story about a time they got ripped off, or got a bad deal, or had to beg and plead just to get what they should have gotten in the first place. How does the world give? Temporarily. The world can promise a lot, but can't fulfill for long. The parsonage siding has a lifetime guarantee from a company that's now out of business. The world can promise a lot, but so often, there's not even a plan to come through. How many leaders have promised peace and prosperity, but haven't been able to deliver?

Looking to the world for peace is tempting, even for people who have Jesus' peace already. We look to get a good job that will pay well and provide for a household. We look to be friendly and polite and be well-liked so that people will help us out when we need it. We hope for policies and government that will protect our way of life and make it better.

But we don't control the economy or the helpfulness of our neighbors or the success of government programs. And looking to those things for peace will leave a person's heart troubled about the things that are already falling apart and afraid about the things that will fall apart in the future.

Thanks be to God for those troubles and fears, because he uses them to point us back to the only source of peace from the only one who gives willingly, gladly, totally, freely, and eternally. Jesus gives us peace. The Holy Spirit teaches us and reminds us of that. Jesus gives us peace between us and God, and the knowledge that we are secure in God's hands. Amen.

**Text** *John 14:25-27*

*Jesus promises to send the Holy Spirit.*

<sup>25</sup>“I have told you these things while staying with you. <sup>26</sup>But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and remind you of everything I told you.

<sup>27</sup>“Peace I leave with you. My peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Do not let your heart be troubled, and do not let it be afraid.”