

Day of Pentecost 2021 Style

Acts 2: 1-21

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Nathaniel Hawthorne once described happiness as a butterfly, when pursued, it is always just beyond your grasp, but if you sit down quietly, it may descend upon you. And that is the way with the Spirit of God. He is not seized, but received.

Today is Pentecost Sunday and we remember it was the time when the Holy Spirit descended upon the early disciples in the form of wind and tongues of fire. And it is this same Holy Spirit who helps us as we live out our Christian walk. **My text is Acts 2:1-21.**

2 When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. **2** Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. **3** They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. **4** All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues^[a] as the Spirit enabled them. **5** Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven. **6** When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard their own language being spoken. **7** Utterly amazed, they asked: "Aren't all these who are speaking Galileans? **8** Then how is it that each of us hears them in our native language? **9** Parthians, Medes and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia,^[b] **10** Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome **11** (both Jews and converts to Judaism); Cretans and Arabs—we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues!" **12** Amazed and perplexed, they asked one another, "What does this mean?"

13 Some, however, made fun of them and said, "They have had too much wine."**14** Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd: "Fellow Jews and all of you who live in Jerusalem, let me explain this to you; listen carefully to what I

say. ¹⁵ These people are not drunk, as you suppose. It's only nine in the morning! ¹⁶ No, this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel:

¹⁷ "In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams.¹⁸ Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy.¹⁹ I will show wonders in the heavens above and signs on the earth below, blood and fire and billows of smoke.²⁰ The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and glorious day of the Lord.²¹ And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."^[c]

It was on the Jewish feast of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit was first poured out on the early disciples. This took place some 50 days after Jesus' resurrection when 120 of the disciples prayed in the large spacious room in Jerusalem. This was also the day the church was born.

The wind that the Scripture talked about symbolized God's presence among the disciples while the tongues of fire symbolized the written and spoken message of the Risen Christ and the purifying aspect that takes place in our lives. The Spirit of God entered into the inner soul of each believer and caused them to be dynamic witnesses to their generation.

And it is this same Holy Spirit who helps us live out our Christian faith today.

The role of the Holy Spirit can be compared to a couple of surveyors who were given the job to map out a remote mountain. And to assist them in this task, they hired an experienced shepherd to be their personal guide.

But after so many successful trips up and down the mountain, the surveyors felt confident of their own abilities, that they told the old shepherd, that his services were no longer needed. But he

responded, "I must go with you, for I know the mountains like the back of my hand. If I don't go with you, you will get lost."

The surveyors were insistent and said, we now have a completed a map of the mountain and we feel we can go up and down without any problems. But the concerned shepherd said, "But there is no fog on your map."

And sure enough, when the surveyors went back up on the mountain, a thick fog enveloped them and they got lost. And for most of the day, they wandered aimlessly. And just like what happens in old movies, the old shepherd found them and led them back to the base camp.

Like the Shepherd in that story, the Holy Spirit is the one who provides direction in our lives and gives us the extra courage or boldness to share our faith. To help us in our struggles and temptations.

When I first asked Christ into my heart, I soon realized that I was not alone in my journey of faith. Although I could not see the Lord, I could sense his presence. Up until that time, my spiritual focus was to try to keep the 10 commandments or live by the Golden rule, but when I now concentrated on my relationship with Christ, I had an easier time doing the things I was supposed to do.

The turning point in my spiritual walk took place in my freshman year at Plymouth when I attended a prayer meeting. At the conclusion, an episcopal priest gave me the laying of hands. And what I received was an incredible awareness that Christ was with me and it has never left.

In addition, I was also given a prayer language. This baptism of the Holy Spirit gave me a great hunger to read God's Word, a

desire to want to worship in church and courage to start a conversation about my faith

For all of us who have Christ in our lives, it doesn't mean we do not struggle or have doubts or experience temptations or failures, but the Holy Spirit helps us with all the ups and downs. With Christ in our hearts, we are not alone.

There is the story of a missionary who was a Bible translator in Zambia. In that country alone, there are 41 different languages. But what the missionary tried to do was translate the word "Helper" into the language of the tribe with whom he was working with, but he just couldn't find the right match. And one day, the missionary attended a court session in one of the villages and during the proceedings; he heard the name Nsenga-Mukwashi used on several occasions.

At the close of the court session, the missionary asked the old tribal chief, "Is there someone in the court by the name of Nsenga-Mukwashi?" The chief answered, "It is the title of an official whose duty is to interest himself in the people and stand by them when they are in trouble and plead their cause. He is a comforting helper."

The missionary knew this was the exact word to describe the relationship of how the Holy Spirit helps God's children. This was how he translated John 16:7. "If I go not away, the Nsenga-Mukwashi will not come to you. If anyone sins, we have a Nsenga-Mukwashi with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous."

When Jesus referred to the Holy Spirit as the helper, he used a Greek word, parakaleo or paraclete which was a military term. In ancient times, Greek soldiers went into battle in pairs, so when the enemy soldier attacked, they could protect each other's blind side.

This battle partner was called the paraclete. It is the same way in the spiritual realm, Our Lord does not leave us as orphans, but he is our battle partner who covers our blind side and fights for our wellbeing as well.

On Pentecost of the Holy Spirit was released on early believers. And today the Spirit of God helps us have a deeper walk so that we will have more of Christ in our hearts.

Today in churches all over the world as Acts 2:1-12 is read, the emphasis is the birthday of the church, and I have seen birthday cakes with red balloons to celebrate the event. I suppose that is okay.

But when I received the laying of hands, it was like the Holy Spirit was there to help me believe, put my faith in Christ confirm in my heart that I could trust heaven. It was like I received a down-payment in my heart knowing that the best is yet to come.

So therefore, I would encourage everyone be baptized in the spirit. If anyone wishes to receive laying on of hands, contact me.

If you are reading this and not able to experience physical laying on of hands, open up your Bible to Acts 2, lay your hands on the verse and ask the Holy Spirit for a closer walk and for the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of the faithful and kindle in us the fire of your love.