

Sunday, May 23, 2021

Pentecost Sunday

We hear things like, “Are you saved?”, “When were you saved?”, “Do you remember when you were saved?” It is true that we are to work out our salvation as if it all depended upon us? But, we are reminded right after that word is shared, “For it is God who is at work in you.”

“Do you have the Holy Spirit?” Yes, the Holy Spirit is with you and in you. You were baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. “But I don’t feel the Holy Spirit.” What you feel is what you feel, but it does not change reality. Have you ever had a temperature, or the chills? Feelings were not on par then. Indeed, it is a wonderful thing to feel the presence of the Holy Spirit, but the Holy Spirit being present does not depend upon your feelings. “Lo, I am with you always,” Jesus said.

Jesus said that He would give His Spirit to the disciples. We have the gift of the Holy Spirit. I know some act as though some kind of special dispensation comes upon special people, but it is not dependent upon us, but upon the One who has called us. He is our salvation. He is the One who breathes His Spirit upon and into us. It is not something different, but the same Lord who is both calling us and in us.

This day is all about celebrating the faith you have been given. You know that the Lord has called you. Through the waters of your baptism He has called you to follow Him. The daily life we live in this age is fraught with many difficulties. So it is not about having a perfect life in this world. Yet, we also know that we are beckoned forward into a life that trusts the Lord above all things. All power and authority belong to Jesus, so we know it is not about gaining some new or special power. When we live this life of faith, that is our belief in action. Jesus calls us to believe. When we do ministry we are believing. When we care for another, lift up a prayer, or even attend a worship service, we are believing. Many heard the word of truth that day and they believed.

Some of the more modern renditions of this might lead you to believe that some kind of special thing was poured out upon the people that instantly and magically transformed them into something else. I suppose there may have been a few over the years, but for most of us, it is a matter of being transformed by the Holy Spirit in and through the day to day life we experience when we live by faith. This takes a lifetime, which is why we are still here. The Lord is forming not only in His image, but into what we shall be in eternity.

There are three things we should pay attention to: sin, righteousness, and judgement. We do not need to guess at what this means, for our Lord tells us. Our Savior has given us the words of eternal life.

Concerning sin, because there are those who do not believe in Jesus. Remember what I just told you. Faith is the evidence of things not seen. When we move to action in faith, we are acting upon what we have not yet seen. We do this all the time, from the operating of our cell phones to driving a vehicle, or any number of other things. To believe in the Jesus, Yeshua, “God’s Salvation,” which is the meaning of His name, we walk in faith trusting that our Savior has overcome the sin issue for us. If someone asks, “Are your sins forgiven,” that answer is, “Yes.” What did you do to receive the forgiveness? Nothing, for this is the gift of grace. But, when you walk as one who has been forgiven, it does change you. The one who has been forgiven much, loves much. The reality for one who believes is that now they understand that they are not doing any of this on their own. By the power of the Holy Spirit, they, we, are walking as people forgiven who are learning how to love and truly live.

Concerning righteousness, because Jesus has gone to the Father. This is something we must do. Not on our own, for Jesus has given us the helper. Righteousness, or justice is not the same as grace. When you feed someone who is hungry, that is justice. When you help another in need, that is justice. It is correcting what is wrong. If we live seeking righteousness, we seek to correct what is wrong, to make right what needs to be corrected. This is both an outward and an inward thing. I need to be justified. That is, I need to be corrected. So do you. If we believe we have grace, then we believe that Jesus will justify us. If we believe we shall be justified, we will seek justice in the world. I know this is a big deal in our day, so hear clearly that this is not about making things right – for in this world that is not going to happen – but about doing what YOU are able to do in any given situation. “I tell you that when you gave a cup of water to one of these, you gave it to Me.” We have Scripture’s reminder that the just shall live by faith.

Concerning judgement. There are five words in the New Testament for “Judgement.” The word used here is a word we use in English: crises. We are born in crises. Separated from God because of sin, we live as if we were the center of our world. There are those who press hard to have things go the way they want them to go. We each take our turn thinking and acting this way. I remind you that Jesus gave us those words, “Not my will, but Thine be done,” to lead us to seeking the Lord’s will in all things. No matter how good we think we are, if left to us, we will make a mess of it. But, do speak out the crises, both in your life and, when you see it in others, in there’s. This too is part of loving your neighbor. If someone is about to do something that is, shall we say, not prudent, it is no sin to say, “Bless your heart.” You are telling them that they are about to intentionally enter into a crises. We have enough crises in our world that we do not need to add to it.

Jesus has many other things to teach us. He has said that the Holy Spirit will lead us in maturity. The Holy Spirit has and will. Walk in the way of the Holy Spirit. Know that God has placed His Spirit in you to lead you now and always. Just as Jesus said over and over, the Holy Spirit will not act apart, but be in constant and eternal relationship with the One. Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are not three gods, but the One true and everlasting God.

If you will, the Heavenly Father is calling you to Himself. The only begotten Son, our Savior makes coming to the Heavenly Father possible, and the Holy Spirit is leading ever forward to be in unity with God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

The whole creation groans in labor pains. We who are in gestation are being conformed to the image of Jesus as He makes of us what we shall be. In the hope of salvation, in the assurance we have that because Jesus lives we too shall live, we hold fast to the faith the Holy Spirit has given us. Yes, we hope for what we do not see. We may not know what to do, or even what to pray, but know that the Holy Spirit is interceding for us. He knows our every need. He not only knows our needs, but supplies for us even for those things of which we are afraid to ask.

Too often, we become busy with life and do not see the action of the Holy Spirit in our lives or our community. As an outsider coming in, let me share a testimony of faith that I have seen the Holy Spirit very busy in this place. Time and again, the Holy Spirit is lining things up for the Father’s to be done here, on earth, as it shall be done in heaven. God does search our minds and hearts and the Holy Spirit, our Advocate, intercedes for us according the will of God. Be encouraged, for the Holy Spirit is with you. Be led by the Holy Spirit and pray for eyes that see the hand of God in your life and in our midst. Our good and gracious God is with us, just as He promised. Amen.