

Pentecost
May 15, 2016
Youth Confirmation

"The Powerful Holy Spirit Is Still with Us"

JOHN 15:26,27

When the Counselor comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father, he will testify about me. ²⁷ And you also must testify, for you have been with me from the beginning.

Imagine what it must have been like to experience the first Pentecost. There was the sound of a mighty rushing wind, the loud sound of wind but no wind blowing. There were tongues of fire dancing on the heads of people but not burning their hair. And there were people speaking different languages even though they had never studied the languages before. And then there were 3000 people who came to faith and were baptized. You have to stand in awe of the power of the Holy Spirit who filled the disciples on that first Pentecost.

Imagine what it would be like if before the end of this service something similar happened to us in this congregation. The sound of the mighty rushing wind would draw in people from the Orcutt area in large numbers. We would be looking in amazement at one another as flames of fire danced on our heads. People who only speak the English language would be powerfully proclaiming the wonders of God in multiple different languages.

If you think this morning that the Holy Spirit is not with us today then you have it all wrong. The night before he died Jesus promised his disciples that he would send them the Holy Spirit. Jesus kept that promise and he still keeps that promise for us. Let's look more closely at these words of Jesus and be convinced beyond any doubt that **"The Powerful Holy Spirit Is Still with Us."**

The Holy Spirit will testify to us about Jesus

You know that the powerful Holy Spirit is with you because the Holy Spirit keeps testifying or witnessing to you that you have a wonderful Savior who has done everything necessary to rescue you and save you. Jesus promised you personally, "When the Counselor comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father, he will testify about me." The Holy Spirit is our Counselor. The word for Counselor or Comforter has the thought of someone walking along side of you and talking to you. The Holy Spirit is like a life coach who keeps telling us over and over again that things are actually OK because you have Jesus.

If you read the verses before this and after this, you will hear Jesus warn his disciples of difficult days facing them in the future. He told them, "If they persecute me, they will persecute you also." He told them how the world would hate them without reason just as it hated Jesus without reason. He told them that people would kill them thinking they were doing a service to God. Every one of the disciples except for John, were put to death for their faith. The worst of times for Christians are some of the best of times because it is

then that the Holy Spirit powerfully reminds us of Jesus and his unfailing love and mercy.

Why is it that people of this world don't like the name of Jesus and the people who follow Jesus? Because Jesus takes something away from them they dearly love. He takes away this false hope we all have from birth that we can do a good job of rescuing ourselves and saving ourselves. No one wants to hear the truth that they have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. Jesus tells us the truth. He tells us we are sheep that have lost our way and we need him as our Shepherd. The people who pass this message on to others will not be cheered and applauded. They will be hated and despised and persecuted. Try and take a bone away from a vicious dog and he will bite. Try and take away from people their false hope in themselves and they will turn on you.

The Holy Spirit is so powerful. He comes to the followers of Jesus who are being persecuted and testifies to them about Jesus. Jesus promised to send the Holy Spirit. He tells us the Holy Spirit will go out from the Father. Jesus calls the Holy Spirit the Spirit of truth. In a court of law we swear to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth. When you stand condemned by the world for your faith in Christ, the Holy Spirit stands up and tells you the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth. He testifies to you that you have a Savior whose name is Jesus. He shows the nail prints in the hands that he purposely kept for you after his resurrection from the dead.

The Holy Spirit will not leave you alone. He is your Counselor. He walks beside you every day of your life. He hears when you cry out in pain, "Lord help me?" He is right there to tell you over and over again who Jesus is and what he has done to rescue you. Sometimes he will even give a verse from the Bible such as from Isaiah 43, "Fear not for I have redeemed; I have called you by name, you are mine." He may cause the words of a song or hymn to well up inside of you. He may send a friend to you that he can also use to counsel you. He will open the Scriptures to you. He caused the Holy Scriptures to be written so we can be drawn closer to our Savior. As we are told in John 20, "These words are written that we may believe that Jesus is the Christ and that by believing we may have life through his name."

The Holy Spirit is so powerful. He was there in creation hovering over the creation. He was there at Jesus' baptism descending on him in the form of dove and anointing him as the Messiah. He is personally present with you every day, every hour and every minute as your personal life coach who keeps testifying to you about Jesus. If you were paid a dollar for every time the Holy Spirit reminded of Jesus in your lifetime here on this earth, you would be millionaire many times over.

Your powerful Holy Spirit charges you nothing to be your personal life coach. Romans chapter 8 says the Holy Spirit keeps reminding you are a dear child of your heavenly Father through Jesus. "The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children." Then it goes on to say, "Now if we are children, then we are heirs-heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we might share in his glories." The Holy Spirit will not hide from us that we may have to suffer for the name of Jesus, but at the same our Comforter will remind us of the glory we have with Jesus as his co-heirs in this life and for all eternity. We may not have the sound of a loud rushing wind, or flames of fire on the head or the ability to speak many different languages, but we the Holy Spirit powerfully managing our lives and testifying to us about Jesus.

The Holy Spirit will testify through us about Jesus

The Holy Spirit testify to us about Jesus, the Holy Spirit also testifies through us about Jesus. Jesus said, "And you also must testify, for you have been with me from the beginning." Peter certainly did a good job of testifying to Jesus' death and resurrection on the day of Pentecost. He was fearless. But that definitely was not the case on the night before Jesus died when he spoke these words about the Holy Spirit. That night Peter was afraid. He cursed and swore he never knew Jesus.

The Holy Spirit filled Peter on the day of Pentecost and gave him courage to speak loudly and boldly. Acts 2 says that Peter "stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd." He boldly witnessed to Jesus death and resurrection, he boldly witnessed to the Old Testament Scriptures and he boldly called on people to repent of their sin.

Before ascending into heaven Jesus promised he would send his Holy Spirit to his disciples of every age. Jesus kept that promise. "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." Just as this glove has no power to do work unless a hand is placed into it, so Christians have the Holy Spirit to help them bear testimony to Jesus throughout the world.

While Jesus was here on this earth he talked about himself and about his heavenly Father. After Jesus ascended into heaven he wanted his disciples to tell people what they had heard and seen while they were with them. Here is where the Holy Spirit helped them remember what Jesus said and then gave them the courage and strength to boldly proclaim what they had seen and heard. Here is how John began the first letter he wrote: "That which was from the beginning, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched-this we proclaim concerning the Word of life. This life appeared; we have seen it and testify to it."

I once read a statement in church that said, "I am a nobody, telling everybody about Somebody that can save anybody." I may be a nobody in the eyes of the world. But I am certainly not a nobody in the eyes of our God because of Jesus. And I certainly am not a nobody when it comes to bearing witness to my faith because the Holy Spirit helps me witness to what I believe. Jesus told his disciples they should not be afraid to speak before important people, because the Holy Spirit would give them the words to speak. God's plan is to use very ordinary, garden variety people like you and me to testify to Jesus. We are not alone. The Holy Spirit helps us say things that we would not be able to say on our own.

Treasure the Holy Spirit. He is so powerful as he constantly directs your attention to Jesus and the blessings you have in him. Treasure the Holy Spirit who enables you to boldly witness to your faith as the disciples. With the Holy Spirit every day is Pentecost. Amen.