

Whitsunday (Day of Pentecost): June 9, 2019
“Perfect Preacher—Perfect Sermon”

Grace, mercy, and peace be unto you from God, our Father, and from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.

Jesus promised the Holy Spirit would be given and would call to remembrance all things that He has taught. How does the Holy Spirit do this? We confess very clearly and succinctly in the Apostles' Creed—I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Holy Christian Church, the communion of saints. The Holy Spirit speaks words through the mouths of sinful men. Even a cursory reading of the Gospel reveals Peter as one who is quick to act and slow to listen. He often speaks what is on his mind without much of a filter. He confesses Jesus to be the Christ, and then attempts to stand in the way of Jesus going to the cross. He denies Jesus three times, then leaves his fellow apostles to haul in the nets while he swims to shore. He's emotional, and often seems frantic; so, how great we hear from his lips once again.

But these words are not his own. While we marvel at the many miracles done on the Day of Pentecost, the real miracle is the Holy Spirit is given. The Holy Spirit uses this once erratic, now bold confessor to speak His first sermon. On this Pentecost Day, we are going to hear the first sermon preached by the Holy Spirit. As you listen, note the content of this sermon. The Holy Spirit speaks of Jesus. He preaches nothing but Christ, and Him crucified. We do not see God in the tongues of fire, in the speaking of tongues, the rushing of wind, or in hyper-emotionalism. The Holy Spirit doesn't want us to sit in Spirit-benches, or look inside ourselves. He doesn't want to speak of Himself, or for you to close your eyes, meditate, and hear Him speaking to your heart. The Holy Spirit is not simply an inward feeling; He's not like indigestion. The Holy Spirit speaks of Christ. He shows us exactly where to behold God—through the gifts of God's Son. The Holy Spirit uses words to call to remembrance, and to give all that is God's, to you, His children.

Pentecost is the perfect day to do this. Why? Because it is the fiftieth day after Easter. Just as the children of Israel left Egypt on the heels of the Passover, went through the Red Sea, and received the Law on Mount Sinai through Moses on the fiftieth day after they left; so now, the apostles and disciples of Christ receive the Holy Spirit in Jerusalem, on Mount Zion, on the fiftieth day after the true Passover Lamb of God, being sacrificed, rose from the dead.

Just as the fiftieth year in the Old Testament, was designated by God to the Jews, to be a year of jubilee; a year in which all slaves were released and all purchased estates were to be returned to their rightful owners—so also on the fiftieth day after Christ’s resurrection Christians were given the Holy Spirit, who frees, releases, and unbinds hearts and consciences from all sin, and restores them to Christ their proper Master. Pentecost is nothing other than a revealing of both the Law and the Gospel.

We turn to the Holy Spirit’s Sermon, delivered through St. Peter:

“¹⁴*Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and give ear to my words.*” In other words, these words are for everyone. Listen to them. The Holy Spirit is bringing to you all that belongs to Jesus.

“¹⁵*For these people are not drunk, as you suppose, since it is only the third hour of the day.*” It is 9:00 in the morning. There are two reactions to the hearing of God’s Word. One is receiving with joy and gladness; this is the way of life. The other is mocking, which is the way of death. Mocking has a very straight-forward progression. It moves from ridicule to questioning to threats to imprisonment to beatings and finally to death. These men are not drunk at 9:00 in the morning giving prayers at the temple; rather, this is proclaimed in the Scriptures: “¹⁶*But this is what was uttered through the prophet Joel: ¹‘And in the last days it shall be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh,*

and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,

and your young men shall see visions,

and your old men shall dream dreams;

¹⁸*even on my male servants and female servants*

in those days I will pour out my Spirit, and they shall prophesy.

¹⁹*And I will show wonders in the heavens above and signs on the earth below, blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke; ²⁰the sun shall be turned to darkness and the moon to blood,*

before the day of the Lord comes, the great and magnificent day.

²¹*And it shall come to pass that everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.”*

You see, all of God's creation show signs. There is nothing and no one who is beyond God. Creation bears witness to the death of God's Son. From the lights who rule the day and night, to the pinnacle of God's creation – mankind. Men will prophesy; that is, they will speak the Words of God. The Word that called all things into existence from nothing is given through the mouth of men to speak faith into hearts where there is nothing but death. God cannot take His Word back. His is a creative Word. He doesn't speak out of emotion or vainly, only to retract His Word's. God doesn't say, "Oops. Sorry. I didn't mean it. I take it back."

In Him is only light and life, and He is the life of man. With all of the things the Holy Spirit could bring them this day. The Holy Spirit has the power to call, gather, enlighten, and sanctify dead, sinful hearts. What does He do? He does it the only way it can be done! He preaches Christ crucified: ²²*Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs that God did through him in your midst, as you yourselves know—* ²³*this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men.* ²⁴*God raised him up, loosing the pangs of death, because it was not possible for him to be held by it.* In a beautiful word picture, you hear the word pangs. This is the same word for birth pangs. The pains, cramps, and sting of death, through Christ, is pangs, birth pangs. The pain lasts only for a time, and increases in intensity, but at the end there is joy and gladness at the new birth, a new life, washed, restored, and given life eternal.

Then, so we don't miss the point of the Bible, the Holy Spirit recalls the Bible is not about us, it is for us; it is about Christ. We get a short excurses on Psalm 16: ²⁵*For David says concerning him, 'I saw the Lord always before me,*

for he is at my right hand that I may not be shaken;

²⁶*therefore my heart was glad, and my tongue rejoiced;*
my flesh also will dwell in hope.

²⁷*For you will not abandon my soul to Hades,*
or let your Holy One see corruption.

²⁸*You have made known to me the paths of life;*
you will make me full of gladness with your presence.'"

The innermost being is glad, and the instrument of confession rejoices at the resurrection of Jesus the Christ! The resurrection is inevitable. It is certain. David prophesied and it has come to pass. Just as the resurrection is sure, so is the exultation of Christ:

“²⁹Brothers, I may say to you with confidence about the patriarch David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. ³⁰Being therefore a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that he would set one of his descendants on his throne, ³¹he foresaw and spoke about the resurrection of the Christ, that he was not abandoned to Hades, nor did his flesh see corruption. ³²This Jesus God raised up, and of that we all are witnesses. ³³Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this that you yourselves are seeing and hearing. ³⁴For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he himself says,

“The Lord said to my Lord,

“Sit at my right hand,

³⁵ until I make your enemies your footstool.””

There were witness to these events. From the baptism of Christ to His death to His resurrection to His ascension; many saw it happen. They recorded it for you and me, so that we can be sure. The same Holy Spirit has always existed, *“The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was.”¹* He was there. He caused all these things from Day one to be *“written for our instruction, that through endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.”²* The Holy Spirit is the author of every Word from *“In the beginning,”³* through, *“He who testifies to these things says, ‘Surely I am coming soon.’ Amen. Come, Lord Jesus! The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all. Amen.”⁴*

It is important every page of Sacred Scripture be written by the same author, because it is then with confidence, this same person, can rightly say, *“³⁶Let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified.”*

¹ Genesis 1:2

² Romans 15:4

³ Genesis 1:1

⁴ Revelation 22:20–21

The knowledge of Jesus being both Lord and Christ can only be acquired through the proclamation of God's revealed Word. Let all of God's children know, that is knowledge given by the Holy Spirit, this Jesus, whom was crucified for your sins, and raised for your justification is Lord of lords and King of kings; He is the Christ, the one anointed to die for your salvation.

This Jesus did not die for His own sake. He didn't die for His own sins. He had no sin. He died for your sins. He laid down His perfect, sinless life, His innocent suffering and death for you; so that, you may be His own and live under Him in His Kingdom.

The reaction to the Holy Spirit's sermon on that first Pentecost is the same today. For those that hear His Word and receive it as God's Word; those who are poor in spirit—theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven. His Word of Law cuts right to the heart, *“³⁷ Now when they heard this they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, “Brothers, what shall we do?”*” So it is when the Law is heard. Sinful man cannot look inward, because all that is seen there is sin and death. What excuses can we give that would justify the death of God's Son on our behalf?

Hear the Words of the Holy Spirit again, *“³⁸ And Peter said to them, “Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. ³⁹ For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself.” ⁴⁰ And with many other words he bore witness and continued to exhort them, saying, “Save yourselves from this crooked generation.” ⁴¹ So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls.”* Luther rightly confessed in the beginning of the 95 Theses, *“When our Lord and Master Jesus Christ said, “Repent” (Matthew 4:17), he willed the entire life of believers to be one of repentance.”*⁵

As the sinful nature still clings to us in this sinful life, we are constantly in need of turning back. As our sinful nature wills to go down the wrong roads in thoughts, words, and deeds, the inner nature is in need of renewal day by day. We are in constant need of returning to the grace given to us in our baptism.

It is a work not done by man, but gifts given by the mercy and grace of God—forgiveness of sins and the Holy Spirit. As we are brought back to our baptism, the Holy Spirit brings

⁵ 95 Theses #1

to us all of the things Christ has given to us through that gift—a regenerated heart and renewed life. As we have been born from above, we bear the image of not just the man of dust, but also the image of the man of heaven.

The outflowing of this has not changed, “⁴² *And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.*” There is only one truth. The Apostles’ bore witness to it. The Holy Spirit preaches it. We gather around it. It is only this truth that drives our fellowship. We don’t gather around what each of us thinks is true. We gather around what is in fact, actually, truly true. The Church’s liturgy carries this truth, and in this way is a timeless gift. When we sing and pray the words of the Scriptures, we join with angels and arch-angels and with all the company of heaven. We gather around the One Lord and Christ, who gives His body and blood for food and drink to give forgiveness, and strength to face the days ahead. We gather not just as like-minded thinkers, who maybe get along once in a while. We gather as the body of Christ, and the Holy Spirit does what He has always done. Uses the gifts of God’s Word and Sacraments to call, gather, enlighten, sanctify, and keep you in faith through the Apostles’ teaching, the fellowship, the breaking of the bread and the prayers, until you like saints before, see God face-to-face. Amen.

May the peace of God, which passes all understanding, guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus, our Lord. Amen.

Prayer of the Church: The Day of Pentecost – 9 June 2019

Let us pray for the whole Church of God in Christ Jesus and for all people according to their needs. For all baptized believers, that they would be given ears to hear and learn all that the Holy Spirit teaches them about their Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, and the salvation they have through Him, let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

For the faithfulness of all those whom the Lord of the harvest sends into His vineyard of grace, that the number of those who call on the name of the Lord and are saved would be increased, let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

For spiritual renewal in our congregation, district, Synod and the whole Church on earth, that by God's grace and the power of the Holy Spirit, we would long to keep Christ's Word, dwell in His peace, sing God's praises and love our neighbors, let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

For the enemies of Christ's Church, that they would have their hearts turned and be brought to repentance and faith, and thus share in the blessings received by all believers in Christ, let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

For all those placed in authority over us, that they would strive for peace among the nations, and that the peoples of our world would be blessed to live in peace and quietness, unhindered by threats of violence, oppression or fear, let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

For all those who are suffering or experiencing trials and tribulations of any sort, [*including Dennis, Larry, Amber, and Greg,*] that they would receive the care and support they need, and that they would be reminded that the glory that awaits them in the life of the world to come far surpasses the sufferings of this present time, let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

For those whom God has granted another year of earthly life, especially His servants **Carl, Jan, and Terry**; that they may grow in wisdom and grace, and that God would strengthen their trust in His goodness all the days of their life; let us pray to the Lord; **Lord have mercy.**

For the joy and blessings that God has granted **Zachery & Chelsea** during the years of their marriage; that God would assist them always by His grace that with true fidelity and steadfast love they may ever honor and keep their marriage vows, grow in love towards Him and for each other, and come at last to the eternal joys that He have promised; let us pray to the Lord; **Lord have mercy.**

For those who come to the holy altar this day, that they would come in faithful reverence and awe, recognizing how awesome God is from His sanctuary in giving them the very body and blood of their Savior to eat and to drink for the forgiveness of their sins and the strengthening of their faith, let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

For those who have gone before us with the sign of peace and who now rest from their labors, that we may follow them, as they followed Christ, and be found faithful by those who come after us, let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

Through our Lord, Jesus Christ, all glory, honor and worship is Yours, Almighty Father, with the Holy Spirit, both now and forevermore. **Amen.**