

The Holy Spirit, the Forgotten Person of the Trinity

Texts: Acts 2:1-21

1 Corinthians 12:3b-13 (Series A, The Day of Pentecost) Ps. 104:24-35b

John 20:19-23

Prayer:

**"Jesus came and stood before them. 'Peace be with you,' He said ...
At the sight of the Lord the disciples rejoiced" John 20:19,20**

Have you encountered the Holy Spirit recently in your life? If so, how did the experience change you? What are some of the ways you're trying to follow the Spirit's lead in your life, and what challenges and rewards have come about through the process?

There is a story in the Old Testament about, Israel's greatest King is David. Almost 3000 years ago King David put together a parade the like of which has never been seen again-not even on our modern times. David, after overcoming many obstacles, he established Jerusalem as the Capital City, the "Holy city of God." He built the great wall around the city. He built the water supply system. He put in place the best of his military to defend the city.

He did many other marvelous things to make the city great, but ... there was one thing missing: *The Ark of the Covenant*. The Ark of the Covenant, from earliest times in their history, was for the Hebrew people a symbol of **God's Presence** in their midst. It was their holiest symbol. When they had wandered through the desert, the *Ark of the Covenant* was there to remind them that God was with them.

When they had wondered why God allowed his Chosen People to suffer so many hardships and disappointments, the *Ark of the Covenant* was there to remind them of his *great love* for them and his promise of their fulfillment. They had carried the *Ark of the Covenant* with them into battle as a sign of *God's Presence* in the midst of their struggle.

There was no way, therefore, that Jerusalem could really be the Capital City until the *Ark of the Covenant* was safely enshrined within its walls. Finally, King David was able to bring the Ark of the Covenant into the Holy City. And that is when he organized the big parade. David placed the Ark of the Covenant in an ox-drawn wagon.

He placed all of his best musicians out in front, with their tambourines and cymbals and other instruments. He had all the people lined up and following behind, joining in the great parade formation. Then the great King David felt such joy, such ecstasy, such deep feelings of praise and thanksgiving to God, that he danced before the people. It was his way of saying, " *Thank you God, for being in the midst of your people.*

What does this Biblical episode have to say about our life in today's world? To understand Pentecost, we must first of all appreciate who David was when he celebrated the presence of God. We do not know where *The Ark of the Covenant* is today, (*Indiana Jones tried to find it, but came up empty*) but one thing we do know my friends in Christ the presence of God is in our midst now through the Holy Spirit and we too can rejoice and dance in the Lord.

Pentecost is to remind us that God's love for us is great; that He draws near to us in Jesus Christ; that God Himself has come to us in Jesus Christ to tell us that He loves us; that God offers us, through Jesus Christ, wholeness of life and joy; that through Jesus Christ.

It is Lutheran to say Halleluiah, Praise the Lord and Amen! But for most Christians the Holy Spirit is a forgotten member of the Trinity. Encountering the Holy Spirit can be thrilling and powerful. It is possible to experience the Holy Spirit's presence and revival frequently – the answer is Yes! If we open ourselves to the Holy Spirit.

In today's Gospel Lesson, Jesus reveals the Good News of the Resurrection Power of God. He appears, as the Risen Lord, to His frightened disciples, saying, "Peace be with you! Peace be with you!" He is telling the disciples that he has risen in order to bring them peace, to bring them to fulfillment, to make their lives whole and complete-everlastingly whole and complete.

And how do they receive this Good News? The Bible says, "They rejoiced!" They didn't say to themselves, "That sounds good. We'll think about it." They didn't receive it as *an idea*. They didn't *intellectualize* it. They just believed it.

Having received the Spirit of God, having experienced the Holy Spirit of God deep within their souls, "*the disciples rejoiced*"- the Apostle John has captured the real meaning of the Pentecost event, no less for us than for the disciples in Jesus' time. The Holy Spirit truly leads us: When we struggle with fear, remember that God's love and wisdom will always cause God to act in our best interests.

For us, today is the day to move beyond merely knowing the story. Today is the day to seek the *feeling* of the Spirit within us – to be as amazed and astonished and bewildered as the Apostles - and to be reinvigorated and excited. We have the Spirit within us!

And God's grace, and the love and Salvation of Christ for the wanting of it. This is the day that the LORD has made! Let us truly rejoice and be glad and joy-filled, and *alive* in it! After all, what else is faith for?

On this fiftieth day from Easter, we are to *know* that we, too, are filled with the Holy Spirit, we are to accept and welcome the extraordinary gifts and abilities bestowed on us, chosen for and unique to each of us. To be eager and enthusiastic in embracing all that a true life of faith calls us to be and to do, to live fully in the belief in Christ that we claim to have.

We also celebrate, with our Jewish heritage, the giving of the Law on Sinai as our rules of life, transformed by Jesus into the *Greatest Commandment* (see Matthew 22:37-39).

On this *Birthday of the Church*, let us claim our heritage as children of God, equal one and all, and to use the language of love with each other and especially with those who aren't so lovingly inclined.

It is in times such as these, as we strive to be all that Jesus has shown us we can be, that the Spirit gives us what we need to withstand the challenges. Christmas is wonderful, and lovely, and blessed, Easter is fragrant and joyful, but with Pentecost comes the true gift that brings fire to our souls and lifts our life's journey to a new level!

There was an old Wyoming rancher who was a good man, basically, a hard-working man. But he was a man who never expressed his feelings. People who knew him usually thought of him in that way: "*You never know what he is really feeling; you never know what's going on inside him,*" they said.

His wife of 46 years became ill and died. As he stood beside the bed where she had just died, other members of the family were amazed to see his eyes grow moist. He said to them, "You know, I really loved Sarah. I wish I had told her so." Our relationship with God is so much like that. Somewhere inside we have deep, deep feelings about God.

Tell God! Express your feelings to God! Let him work in your life, at the deepest level of your being—just as He worked in the lives of the disciples in the upper room; just as he worked in the life of David, the Dancing King.

Serve others whenever the Spirit asks you to do so. Remember that God will always help you do what He asks. Use the resources you have, trusting God to multiply them once you step out in faith.

Let God use your service as a way for Him to channel His love through you to other people. Express freely and unreservedly your love for God and you will discover, by the power of his Holy Spirit, how to express freely and unreservedly your love for one another. **Amen.**

Make melodies in your heart with these hymns:

- Come Down, O Love Divine #804
- O Spirit of Life # 405
- Spirit of Gentleness # 396

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