

**Pentecost—The Holy Spirit Came | Acts 2: 1-21; Romans 8:14-17; John 14:22-26 |
Hope Lutheran & LUMC | June 5th, 2022.**

Rev By Grace Kanake

Dear Church family and friends: We are celebrating Pentecost; the day God sent the Holy Spirit. Today we recall Jesus talking to the disciples on the 36th day before ascending to the Father when he said, “I will not leave you like orphans, when I go”, (meaning) when I ascend to “my Father, your Father,” I will ask him to send you the Holy Spirit. Jesus ascended after four days, that is after completing 40 days of resurrection when He walked on earth preaching and encouraging the disciples. The Holy Spirit was sent 10 days after ascension.

For our review, the Holy Spirit is part of the trinity: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. We all know God is our creator, the Son is our redeemer, and the Holy Spirit is our sustainer, our guide and counselor. Everyone knows and understands God from kindergarten lessons of yesteryear. We also know about Jesus, and his saving grace. Yet I am not sure everyone knows or pays much attention to the Holy Spirit. This reminds of me of two people dying on the same day, one very important like the president, and the other person who led a normal life. News in the media of the latter’s death and burial is overshadowed by the highly placed person’s. This works the same way regarding the presence of the Holy Spirit in our lives: even in prayers we tend to recognize God and Jesus, and much less so the Holy Spirit.

Although we are inclined to pay less attention to studying the Holy Spirit, He is written and spoken of in the Bible—both in the Old Testament and the New Testament—every bit as much as God and Jesus are. I want to spend time with you learning about the Holy Spirit, so we do not forget Him, His attributes, and His role in the Christian life. We might want to do a Bible study on the Holy Spirit to further understand Him. You are not alone; most Christians who do not read the Bible daily fall victim. I know I have and had to remind myself to rely on the Word and the guidance of the Holy Spirit in my ministry.

The Holy Spirit is not an “it”. Scripture defines the Holy Spirit as masculine, including in the use of gender pronouns. We know from the Bible that the Holy Spirit shares all attributes of God. When we are in touch with God’s Spirit (Holy Spirit); He reveals Himself to us, and without a doubt we know when we are in the realm of the Spirit. Every culture in history describes something similar to the Holy Spirit though using different names. God’s Spirit must not be confused with secular spirits such as ghosts, monsters, UFOs (the images seen in the atmosphere the federal govt is researching). He is not the *Saitan* or *nkoma* in my language.

Simply stated, the Holy Spirit is not some mystical force. He is not wind, fog, or mist. The Holy Spirit is not fire or wind though he can appear in these forms. The Holy Spirit comes after rushing winds and when the wind calms down, the Holy Spirit’s presence is seen and felt. The Holy Spirit is not fire but can appear as fire or flame, like tongues of fire (but not a burning fire). The Holy Spirit proceeds from God; He is God in another form despite His distinct individual attributes and roles.

The Holy Spirit is our teacher, instructor and counselor. He gives us knowledge and understanding of everything God sends our way. He counsels us to turn away from our evil desires and bitterness in this life! Much of the time evil desires come so strongly that they can almost overpower us. God's Spirit intervenes powerfully, directing us into the better life, and offers us tools and solid resources to use in overcoming the evil thoughts and actions, staying on the side of God. We have St Paul as an example. He was a short guy and very homely by human standards, but the Holy Spirit chose to use him to make Jesus known throughout the ancient world, including Jerusalem, Greece, Turkey, Rome and elsewhere. Paul managed to do ministry because he allowed the Holy Spirit to INDWELL. To those who love and obey God, the Holy Spirit is given without measure.

The Holy Spirit is received at baptism and continues in the life of the believer. There are other times God can give the Holy Spirit. For example, some sick people have been met with God's flames of fire, light, and rushing wind, and have heard God's Spirit whispering, "You will not die." My father-in-law's mother narrated how she met with God's Spirit at a hospital in 1960 when the Spirit assured her of continued life, not death. After that encounter she lived 27 years and died in 1987, being over 90 years of age.

The Holy Spirit can speak for us when we encounter difficult situations in life beyond our own strength, power, and wisdom. The Holy spirit will put words in our mouth and the ability to analyze the situation to attain a better outcome. Peter is our example. When he was taken to the Temple, the leaders accused him of preaching the Good News. While being accused, the Holy Spirit put words in his mouth and he responded to the accusers saying, "Should we obey you or God who sent us to preach Good News?" The accusers were apprehensive of being called ungodly, and unable to hold the disciples in jail, they released them.

The Holy Spirit knows our mind and the mind of God. We cannot walk away or hide from Him. He lives in our thoughts and intelligence, and shapes us into his likeness when we allow Him to do so. The Holy spirit acts on our behalf for better living. He can remove us from dangerous situations and take us to a blessed place in life.

When Jesus was done with His work on earth, the Spirit took him to eternity—God's place. I have witnessed believers escaping death by a whisker, yet when you ask them, some do not even realize what the Spirit did! They just say its luck or something ... that something is the Spirit of God. The Spirit of God forbade St Paul to go to Asia when it was not safe to do so. The Spirit of God refused Mrs. Jones, a committed Christian, who was to join her daughter to go shopping but refused the last minute, telling her daughter that God's Spirit was saying, "Do not go". They declined the shopping trip, causing her daughter to be unhappy. But shortly after, a 30-minute fire gutted their vehicle in their parking lot. The family was struck by how God ordered them not to use the vehicle.

The Holy Spirit knows what is best for us. Let us obey so we can always live by the Holy Spirit's standards. When Peter obeyed the Holy Spirit, he and other disciples

preached, and 3000 souls were saved. These two churches have preached the Good News over many years, and often people who had not led Christian lives came to know the Lord. Some even became leaders of this city and beyond. The Holy Spirit will call and guide us as He guided Mrs. Jones, as He guided St Paul and St Peter in the mission fields, and as He guides us in our lives.

I know the Holy Spirit will give us strength and courage, and will lead us to pray in season and out of season. The Holy Spirit made us children of God through forgiving our sins and leading us to the baptism font. Brethren: if it means suffering with the Holy Spirit, let us do so; Jesus and St Paul affirms we shall be glorified.

The Holy Spirit is willing to teach us everything about life, about wisdom, forgiveness and Godliness. Human beings are stiff-necked. That is why sometimes we do not experience the Holy Spirit in our lives. We are often into ourselves so much that we think we know it all and we'll do things our way. I rarely if ever hear my friends saying, "I got this". I have said that very thing a couple of times, only to realize later how foolish I was. I now say, "I got this if God wills", because I know I can't do it on my own.

I want to finish the sermon on the Holy Spirit with a recent story. The last three weeks of May tested my will, understanding and wisdom. In short, my faith was on the chopping block. This is what happened: on an evening I took my kids to play at fisher school. We played and returned home. At home I realized I had lost my ring at the school. I returned to the school and searched and searched, but I did not find it. I returned home, went again the following evening and still another evening. So many hours I searched that ring in the school where kids play. I never lost hope.

At the end of the third week, I realized I was doing everything on *my* intellect, wisdom and will. I took a step of faith: I called the Holy Spirit to guide me to the ring. I gave up my "all knowing and all wise aspect". I relied on God's spirit to guide. That evening I took my kids to play while relying on the Spirit to lead me to the ring. The first thing I saw when I entered the playground was my ring. I took it and thanked God. This lesson reminds me when we rely on our own, we often fail. When we rely on the Spirit of God, we succeed.

Friends, the Holy Spirit is our counselor, our teacher, our leader, and our speaker. He is all-knowing, and He forbids us to participate in any evil deals. Allow the Holy Spirit to intercede for you, allow the Spirit to call you into a better fearless life and better living. The Holy Spirit is God with us. He is God who was, is and will be forever. When we rely on the Holy Spirit, we will receive God's blessings without end.

Amen