

## SERMON FOR SUN. AND WED. JUNE 5 AND 8, 2022

Pentecost C John 14:23-3` Acts 2:1-21 “Come, Holy Spirit.”

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

Happy birthday! Yes, happy birthday to you, for today is the church's birthday. On the great festival of Pentecost, what was divided is united. What was scattered has been gathered. What was confused has now been made clear. The curse of Babel was undone by the sending of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost.

Yet Pentecost was not a one-time event; it is an ongoing celebration, for the nations are brought together to hear God's Word, here, in this congregation also.

The same Spirit of Pentecost descended upon us in Holy Baptism. Whatever your social, ethnic, or economic background, we have been made one. One in faith. One in Christ, our Savior.

The curse of Babel has been reversed, so that we no longer speak diverse tongues, but one Word - the word of the Gospel.

We proclaim the death and resurrection of our Lord among ourselves and to our neighbors, for all who call upon His name shall be saved.

This gathering together is clearly not our doing. Why would you drive to be in this place - unless the Spirit has drawn you?

You aren't here because of your handsome Pastor, nor because we have the most beautiful church building in town, although it's certainly a nice one.

No, you're here because we have the most beautiful Savior, and the Spirit has opened your eyes to see Him here.

Here in His Gospel. Here in His water. Here in His bread and wine. Here for you, for the forgiveness of your sins. Here, to grant you life and salvation. Yes, what started on the Day of Pentecost, still continues today.

Brothers and sisters, we live in the Last Days, the time between Jesus' ascension and his second coming. Since no one knows when he'll return, each day could be our last day on earth.

Yet the great thing about our God and Savior is that He is always coming to us. He has not told us to build a tower to ascend to Him, instead He descends to us.

God descended to Babel. The Son of God descended to us in His incarnation. The Spirit of God descended to us the day we're baptized, which is our own personal Pentecost.

And we have the promise that our Savior will descend again in glory on the last day.

And all these comings are God's ways of drawing us to Himself, that we may be saved. Even at Babel, when God scattered the builders, it was not to punish them, but to save them.

God worked to ensure that they may not trust in their own Word, wisdom, and ways but in God's Word, wisdom and ways. He does so that, by crushing our pride, we'd seek His glory.

That showing us our weakness, we'd seek His strength.

That revealing our sin, we seek His forgiveness.

For the work of the Spirit is to point us to Christ, to the cross, tree of life.

And this He is still doing, crushing our towers of pride, wealth, wisdom, and good works we've built. God wants us to seek our life and meaning not in those, but in Christ alone.

And so today, Jesus says: **"If anyone loves me, he will keep my word. Whoever does not love me does not keep my words."**

How have you done, you who love the Lord? Have you kept His Word? Have you treasured it above all other words?

Have you guarded it and defended it against those who contradict it and speak and live against it? Have you lived it? Have you trusted it?

Or have you lived as if God did not matter and as if you mattered most? Has the Word of God fallen upon your stony heart and been snatched away? ***Where are your prideful towers now?***

But do not despair - as God scattered at Babel in mercy and grace, so He brings you in that same mercy and grace to see your sin and repent.

This is the Spirit teaching you to despair of yourself, and leading you to Christ so that you'll see in Him that you have all that you need.

In our text, Jesus said, **"the ruler of this world has no claim on him."** ***But He does have claims on us, though, doesn't he?***

For we have sinned in thought, word, deed, and desire.

We have not loved our neighbor as ourself.

We have not loved God above all things. We deserve death and hell, we modern-day citizens of Babel.

But on Jesus, Satan, the ruler of this world has no claim.

And so when the ruler of this world puts to death the one who has no debt - on the cross - it is not Christ who is undone, but the ruler of this world himself is undone!

Satan's Babel is torn down. His kingdom is destroyed. His towers and powers are scattered. And he must release his claim on us.

For Jesus, who had no debt to sin or death, paid our debt, and we are set free. Free. For that's what forgiveness is. Freedom. Release. Life from the dead.

And that is what happens here, every time our Savior comes to us, and His Word of Spirit and power is spoken into your ears and hearts, saying:

***I forgive you all your sins!*** Go, you are free. And you are free. Free in Christ. Free to live.

And with this forgiveness, you then have peace. For again, as Jesus said: **"Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid."**

For what can trouble a heart in which the Father and Son have made a home through the Spirit?

Three in One and One in Three. He in you and you in Him.

We are no longer scattered but united in Christ. And so, we also rejoice, as Jesus said, for He who has gone away has come to us.

He who died for us has come again in resurrection, and He who has ascended now comes in His body and blood. That eating His body and drinking his blood in this His holy Supper, He lives in us and we in Him. Truly united, as a branch to the vine.

That His life and salvation be always given to us, and we bear much fruit, living as branches of Christ in the world.

Loving and forgiving with the love and forgiveness here given to us. That those now scattered may be gathered as well.

Here, with us. Gathered by the Word and Spirit. Again, we are not the builders, **but the stones, the living stones in the City of God, with Christ Himself as the cornerstone.**

Jesus concludes His Word to His disciples- and to us- by saying, **"Rise, let's go!"** Let's go and not wait. Why was Jesus in a hurry? **Because of the joy set before Him.**

For Jesus, that joy was the joy of the cross, that dying He might rise. And rising, He lives, that we, too, may live.

And for us, that joy is the joy of going to the cross in repentance, that dying to sin, we might rise and live in Christ.

We joyously go to His Supper to rise and live in His salvation.

We go into the world joyously - having, each morning, risen from the death of sleep to live out our God-given vocations.

To love our neighbors as we've first been loved. To forgive others as we've been forgiven.

To live trusting not in ourselves and what we do, but in Christ and what He does for you.

**Rise, let's go!** Jesus said. And the apostles did. After Pentecost, they rose and filled the world with the Word, for their Lord and His Spirit went with them.

So too you and I: **Rise, let's go!**

Let's go to fill the world with the Word that lives in us. For your Lord and His Spirit has come, and now goes with you as well.

**Rise, let's go!** Until the day when Pentecost is finally fulfilled, and we are gathered - once and for all - to live with our God in His kingdom forever.

***Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of the faithful, and kindle in them the fire of Your love. Alleluia! AMEN***