

May 20, 2018

Pentecost--Come Holy Spirit, Advocate, Comforter, Lead Us

Prayer

May the words of my mouth be meditations of our hearts and be always acceptable unto Thee. O Lord our strength and our redeemer. Amen.

Sermon

Today we celebrate the feast of the Pentecost. It is the giving of the Holy Spirit first to the apostles. They have been visited by the risen Lord. They have moved further in their understanding of God and who Jesus is as the risen Lord. And now they are beginning to teach and to preach. But they are now given the gift that was promised. The Advocate, the Holy Spirit, the one that is to lead them into all truth.

Jesus says in the gospel reading today that he has more to tell them. That they couldn't bear it before, they weren't where they needed to be. And so, he taught, and he shared with them what he could to bring them to this point. This point where he would now suffer and die for the sins of all and be raised from the dead. But his promise is that they would not be comfortless. That the advocate would come and for that to happen he had to finish his earthly ministry.

And we know from scriptures he had to finish coming to the disciples and bringing them to the point where they were no longer afraid. Where they could stand up and speak the name of Jesus to the people. But they also needed to continue moving forward. They needed to have the power that comes from that relationship with God. That can only come in the Holy Spirit, as it becomes a part of their lives.

And in that moment of time when we call Pentecost. Where the tongues as a fire come and light up on each one as they are free to tell the

mighty acts of God to all people in their own tongue. So that they could understand. So that they could hear. So that they could be moved by that very spirit. So that they too could begin to follow, to believe, to be citizens of God's kingdom. But even now the Holy Spirit that comes still comes to us.

We hear about John baptizing and questioned are you the one who is to come? And John the Baptizer tells them I'm only baptizing with water. It's a ritual washing away of your sins. To declare your repentance and to declare your forgiveness of sins that have been. So that you can see anew. So that you can live anew. But the one who is coming will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.

That is what we see in Pentecost. That is what we experience today as we are baptized in the name of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The baptism that we will experience today is the entering in of the Holy Spirit. And to one whose family professes the faith of Christ crucified. A faith that leads to belief in a God that loves unconditionally. That loved the world so much that he became a part of creation. To show us a better way of living our life. A way that was intended from creation before sin became a part of life. To become a part now of our lives in baptism. So that the Holy Spirit might dwell within us. To lead us still the church and individuals, to know the truth. To understand what God has in mind for the world.

Now I've already mentioned Michael Curry's sermon. I think the truth that the Holy Spirit is leading us to know and to understand is that ultimate love of God. A love that is real for every living person. A love that is complete for every living person. And I believe that the Holy Spirit leads us not only to understand God's love for me as an individual. But also leading me and leading us, leading the church to seeing a people of the world as God's children, as brothers and sisters.

Michael spoke about the love of God. How it was to imagine that neighborhoods would love one another with that unconditional love. To see one another beyond the differences. To see one another as God sees them. As beloved children who are invited to come and be in this place. This place called the kingdom of God. This place where God dwells with us because of God's love for us. And to free us as it freed the apostles from fear. So that we can go forth and we can proclaim the mighty acts of God that are alive today. So that we might so experience the love of God through the Holy Spirit.

That we are free to love one another regardless of where we come from. Regardless of the religion that we practice. Regardless of how we look or how we talk. To take away the divisions and to unite us as the body. To recognize that each one has worth. That each one has purpose in God's kingdom. So that we can accept one another. So that we can lift up one another. So that we can share God's love with one another.

That is where the Holy Spirit leads us as we open our hearts. As we open our minds to God and we see the things that have separated us in the past begin to fade. So that we can reach out to one another. So that we can share the gospel of that good news.

Today we will be baptizing Lucy Dianna Diggs. It is our opportunity as her church family. The ones who are going to be closest to her as she comes to know God. As she comes to hear about the Lord who loved her enough to die for her. It is for us to help her to know and to understand that what we do the Holy Spirit begins to dwell in her. And as she is willing and as she understands. The Holy Spirit will lead her in a path where she knows the love of God. It is for us to make sure that she knows that truth. That she is the beloved daughter of God.

No matter where she goes and no matter what transpires in her life or around her. That that love is not diminished. It is for us to show her that

love. To embrace her as she grows up. As she begins to know and understand what God is about. We are the ones who will show her a reflection of God's kingdom. So, it is for us to allow the Spirit to lead us as individuals. To know love and to share love. That is our role.

Now parents and god-parents, you will be taking promises, making promises to God and to the church for her upbringing. You are the ones who will be closest to her. Share the love of God with her at every opportunity. Help her when she is confused. Show her the way of truth. Show her the way of kindness and mercy and justice. Help her to see that no matter where she goes she is in your heart, just as she is in God's heart.

When the parents and god-parents have made their promises, you as witnesses will be asked to do all that you can to help in this way that she is beginning today. When you say we will, say it with conviction. When you share with her and parents and god-parents the baptismal covenant, read and understand the words. Commit yourself to what God has done for you. What God is doing in you.

Be aware the promises that you are making. For the promises that you make help you create this reflection of the kingdom of God in the world. This promise that quite possibly was made for you when you were baptized. That you, yourself made. That you certainly made when you were confirmed. Remember that it is by our intention. By our believing in the Holy Spirit that we are able to show one such as Lucy the path to walk. So that she might know peace in times of trauma. She might know truth when truth is hard to find in the world. So that she might know justice for herself, for those around her. So that she might show mercy even as mercy is shown to her. This is what we do today. We invite the Holy Spirit to be a part, a powerful part of her life and of ours. So that we might truly be God's kingdom on earth.