

Worship Service for May 23rd: Day of Pentecost

- **Old Testament:** Ezekiel 37:1-14
- **New Testament:** Acts 2:1-11
- **Psalms:** Psalm 104:24-34, 35b

Announcements:

- Welcome to our worship service! We're glad you are reading. We pray that God's blessings and peace will be with you all now and forever! Amen.
- Food Bank: Donations for the Food Bank can be dropped off on Wednesday, May 26th at St. George's parking lot between 10:00 am and 11:00 am and at St. David's between 11:15 am and 12:00 noon.

Sermon Title: Sermon Title: Revival: The Work of the Holy Spirit!

In our church calendar, we are celebrating the Day of Pentecost today. Pentecost is celebrated on the fiftieth day after Easter. Pentecost was a Jewish feast that was celebrated in honor of the beginning of the early weeks of harvest, and it was known as the Feast of Harvest or the Feast of Weeks (Exodus 23:16).

The Jews had gathered as usual on the day of the Feast of Weeks to celebrate and give thanks to God in Jerusalem. And as we heard in our passage last week, Jesus Christ had promised the Holy Spirit to His disciples and had asked them to tarry in Jerusalem until they received the Holy Spirit. Pentecost day was the day when while praying and praising God, the disciples, a hundred and twenty of them received the Holy Spirit which descended upon them as a strong wind and tongues of fire.

Jesus told His disciples in today's passage that it was for their good that He was going, because if He didn't go, the Holy Spirit wouldn't come to them. He goes further to tell them the advantages of having the Holy Spirit with them. And when we read about the ministries of the disciples after Pentecost, we see that the Holy Spirit used them to do great and mighty acts.

However, for some strange reason, the Holy Spirit has been greatly minimized in our era. Who is the Holy Spirit and how is He beneficial to us as Christians?

The Holy Spirit is the third person of the Holy Trinity. It is through Him that God reveals His will to His children and empowers individuals and discloses His presence. The Holy Spirit is represented by different symbols like fire, dove, oil,

water, wind (John 1:32-34; Acts 2:3-4; 2 Corinthians 1:21-22; John 7:37-39; John 3:8).

The Holy Spirit also functions in us in the following ways: He dwells in us, inspires, adopts, baptizes, revives, sanctifies, convicts, seals, guides, sustains, helps, intercedes, advocates, comforts, counsels, strengthens (2 Timothy 3:16; Romans 8:15-16; 1 Corinthians 12:13, Mark 1:8; John 3:3-8; John 14:17; 1 Corinthians 2:13; 1 Corinthians 6:19-20; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; Romans 15:16; 1 Peter 1:1-2; John 16:7-11; Ephesians 5:18, 1: 13-14; Acts 4:8, 31, 13:52; John 16:13; Romans 8:14; Galatians 5:18; Acts 16:6-7. There are also gifts of the Spirit and the fruit of the Spirit (1 Corinthians 12; Galatians 5:22-23).

The Holy Spirit has been in existence from the beginning of creation and has been working in people from the Old Testament to the New Testament. The Spirit of God/Holy Spirit was on Moses when God called him, and God took some of the Spirit from Moses and put it on seventy of the leaders. The Holy Spirit filled people with skills and wisdom to build the Ark of the Covenant. The Spirit of God was also upon Gideon one of the judges of Israel, on Jephthah, Samson, Saul who began to prophecy with the prophets, David and Zechariah the prophet (Genesis 1:1-2, 26; Job 33:4; Hebrews 9:14; 1 Corinthians 2:10; Luke 1:35; Psalms 139:7-12; 104:29-30; Exodus 31:1-3; Numbers 11:16-17, 24-26; Judges 6:34, 11:29, 15:14; 1 Samuel 10:10, 16:13, 2 Chronicles 24:20; Psalms 143:10; Nehemiah 9:20; Ezekiel 36:-27; Isaiah 11:1-5, 61:1-2).

There are so many things that the Holy Spirit does which will be helpful to us as Christians. One of the functions of the Holy Spirit is to revive. Today, most of our churches are empty, dry and void of spiritual life because they have failed to acknowledge the dynamic presence and power of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit has been overlooked for too long, yet the hearts of people sitting in our pews are hungry for an encounter with the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit plays a major role in personal salvation, church formation and discipleship and the proclamation of the gospel. It is impossible for the church and individuals to experience revival without the help of the Holy Spirit.

What is revival? Simply put, revival is what God does in and through us with the help of the Holy Spirit. Without the help of the Holy Spirit, we can do nothing and

even if we do anything it would not be effective, leading to spiritual and physical exhaustion and frustration. There is both corporate and personal revival which takes place when the Holy Spirit renews the hearts and minds of individuals and the church. For this to happen, we need to pray fervently and seek the face of God. The Bible says if we ask we shall receive, if we seek we shall find and if we knock the door shall be opened unto us (Matthew 7:7).

In our churches today, many people have become like the dry bones in Ezekiel 37:1-14. God, however, is telling us through the prophet that our dry bones can come back to life again. He says: *"I will make breath enter you, and you will come to life. I will attach tendons to you and make flesh come upon you and cover you with skin; I will put breath in you, and you will come to life. Then you will know that I am the Lord."*

In order for that to happen, the prophet had to prophecy and speak to the dry bones. We need to come together as a church and speak and pray and call on the name of the Lord so that our dry bones can come back to life again. We need a revival beginning in the church and extending to our families and communities and the ends of the earth. We need the Holy Spirit to work in us and through us.

When the Holy Spirit filled the disciples, it was a glorious sight to behold. They were speaking in order tongues, and it attracted crowds of people. It is clear that we have been speaking in the wrong tongues, reasons why instead of thriving, the church has become a valley of dry bones. The church needs new tongues in order to proclaim the gospel of the forgiveness of sins in a way that will be accepted by unbelievers. For that to happen we need to be filled with the Holy Spirit and power so that we can begin to speak in new tongues of acceptance, healing, love, warmth and care and not of judgment and rejection.

After the experience of the Holy Spirit, the apostle Peter addressed the wondering crowd with boldness and courage, something he didn't have before. By the help of the Holy Spirit three thousand people accepted Christ and the church in Acts grew in numbers and in love and care for one another. Are we ready as Christians, to put away our differences and come together as a church or as a two-point charge and pray and seek the face of God for a revival in our churches and communities?

At a time when we are restricted from doing outreach because of the pandemic, what we need more than anything else is a revived church. When that happens, it will be evident for all to see. And God is telling us today that *“Many peoples and the inhabitants of many cities will yet come, and the inhabitants of one city will go to another and say, ‘Let us go at once to entreat the Lord and seek the Lord Almighty. I myself am going.’ And many peoples and powerful nations will come to Jerusalem to seek the Lord Almighty and to entreat him.”* “In those days ten people from all languages and nations will take firm hold of one Jew by the hem of his robe and say, ‘Let us go with you, because we have heard that God is with you (Zechariah 8:20-23).”

There is yet hope for us and for our churches by the help of the Holy Spirit. May God release the fire of the Holy Spirit upon us as in the day of Pentecost and may we be filled with His power in such a way that people will see and know that something has happened to us; that a spiritual shift has taken place in the church and in our lives, that will cause them to come running to the church because they have heard that God is with us. Amen.

Prayer

Heavenly Father, even as we renew our faith and belief, and glorify your Holy Name, trusting in your infallible designs for our lives, we are oftentimes clouded by our emotions and the struggles we face each day. Our minds long for your assurances that all is well and our thoughts scatter into disarray and plunge into despair.

You have granted to us the Advocate, the Comforter, your Spirit of Truth, who has been a counselor to our Lord Jesus and a source of courage to the apostles, who can illumine our hearts to regain faith in your promises and trust in your mercies, with recognition of the truth. The Holy Spirit has reprovved the world of sin, stirred our souls to righteousness and shielded us from the wicked enemy.

Come, Holy Spirit, come and be a new reality. Free us from fear. Give us courage to speak of your marvelous ways and of your hope so that we may live each day fully. Awaken and revive us so that we may be bold to be the body of Christ's presence in the world, renewing our life together, renewing the world. Enable the bending of what is rigid, the reversal of what has gone astray, the freshness of new possibility.

Come, Holy Spirit, come and be a new reality. Come as comforter and offer us and all people relief, consolation and companionship. Tend to our woundedness. Restore us to life that we may be healers. Empower our prophet's voice that it may be heard throughout the land retelling the gospel vision, praying for the unity of all true spirits.

Wind of the Spirit, blow through us and your whole church on this day of Pentecost: Blow through us and renew our faith. Re-awaken our love for God. Let your flames warm our hearts with trust in Jesus Christ and dare us to do great things in his name. Wind of the Spirit, blow through us and renew our faith.

Wind of the Spirit, blow through us and give us energy to serve you as the body of Christ working in the world. Open our eyes to recognize needs for ministry and mission around us. Open our hearts to welcome newcomers and meet those we do not yet know. Open our hands to share in tasks that need doing and open our lips in prayer and praise. Wind of the Spirit, blow through us and renew our energy to serve. Wind of the Spirit, blow through us and give us understanding for all those whose lives seem so different from ours.

For those facing situations we've never encountered. For those with whom we've disagreed. For problems and challenges we face at home, at work, and in the world still struggling with the effects of the pandemic. Wind of the Spirit, blow through us and give us new understanding.

Wind of the Spirit, blow through us and bring healing for all who face pain or illness, discouragement or disappointment. For all who know sorrow, sadness or grief. For those who face stress and pressure, especially as they recover from the impact of the pandemic. Wind of the Spirit, blow through us and bring healing and peace.

Wind of the Spirit, bless the gifts we offer so that they accomplish surprising things in Jesus' name. Bless our lives, too, so that our words and actions may bear witness to Jesus' love and mercy each and every day

Wind of the Spirit, blow through us and bring us the compassion we see in Christ Jesus. Blow through us and equip us to serve the world you love in his name. Blow

through us and refresh us as your faithful followers. Unite us across our differences as together.

Wind of the Spirit, we implore you to aid us in surviving against the malicious attacks of Satan by dissolving into nothingness the hatred and violence we have met with from the world, by lavishing the love of God among all people, by applying the promises of the Gospel to them, by witnessing their adoption, and sealing them up to the day of redemption.

Help us to propagate the all-embracing message of the glorious gospel of Grace, the profound Truth of the glory of Christ in his Resurrection and Ascension into heaven, the singular benefits of the dispensation of recompense on the day of Judgement to believers, whose faith will save them and bring them into the eternal land, to live forever in Jesus' Name, for the everlasting praise and glory of the Father as we pray the words Jesus taught us saying:

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

Benediction

May God's Holy Spirit surround you, and those whom you love. Rest now, in that calm embrace, let your hearts be warmed and all storms be stilled by the whisper of his voice. And may the peace of God be in your heart, the grace of God be in your words, the love of God be in your hands and the joy of God be in your soul and in the song that your life sings. Amen.