

## THE DAY OF PENTECOST

May 31, a.D. 2009

John 15: 26-27; John 16: 4b – 15

O Glorious Day of Pentecost! For on you the promised Paraclete, the Comforter, was given to us and kindled in us the fire of your love. The blessed work of our Lord Jesus sees its fruition on the Day He gifted us with the Holy Spirit. His incarnation, birth, Epiphany, Suffering, Resurrection and Ascension sees its culmination when dry bones come to life by the breath of God. All of our Lord's blessed work leads to the sound of a great rushing wind filling the room, cloven tongues of fire resting on the twelve, powerful preaching and massive conversions. Truly a glorious Day!

So now I want to be filled with that Spirit and live the life of a Christian in glory and victory. I want to be one of those super-Christians who is admired for his strong faith, whose sermons bring about thousands of conversions and witnessed by the speaking of tongues. A Christian that God can use and one that God would be proud of. A Christian who inspires others to think that it's cool to follow Christ. So come Holy Spirit and fill me up. Start a fire in my heart and let me turn the world upside down.

Are you ready too? Look back at your life and count the days that looked like the flame-filled, glorious Day of Pentecost. How many of them are there? Is that what the victorious Christian life looks like? If so, than my life doesn't add up. The truth about my life is that there are more days that find me discouraged, fearful and fretting not wanting to get out of bed in the mornings.

I find the world to be like the valley of bones that Ezekiel saw, a world that is dry and dead. Lives filled with scars, families torn apart, countries ravaged by poverty, natural disasters and the carnage of war.

I find the church less and less talking about truth, but more and more selling whatever is popular and what is popular is whatever makes people feel good.

The victorious Christian life seems unreal and out of reach. Until I turn to the Word of God. In the Gospel according to John chapter 15 and 16, there isn't one mention about cloven tongues of fire, great spiritual victories that the disciples win over the forces of evil and extraordinary spiritual gifts of healing, power and wonder.

There is mention of a vine and branches and that the branches cannot do anything apart from Christ. Believers are to love one another and receive the promised Holy Spirit.

The blessed apostles actually experienced the tongues of fire and were able to preach the gospel to capacity crowds. But there is more. The first four verses of chapter 16 were left out of the text. It jumped from 15: 27 to 16:4b. Is there any thing important left out? (Read vv 1 –4) Life for the apostles was not going to appear very glamorous or victorious. Our Lord's suffering and bloody cross would be their suffering and cross in this world. So much for glory and fame!

But we are not left alone in this world. When the Holy Spirit comes he will convict the world of sin and of righteousness and of judgment. Jesus explains what the Spirit has done in your life and what the victorious Christian life looks like.

First of all, the Spirit gives me faith in Christ. Without the Spirit, I could never believe that the cross of Christ was good for me and for the world. Faith is never something that came from within me but was given to me as the Spirit's gift.

The gift of faith is perfect because it comes from God not me. Therefore you have been given a perfect faith in Christ. Not that you stop sinning but that you feel sorry for your sins and are convinced that nothing could ever separate you from Christ. His forgiveness is so complete that all sin is taken care of. He paid the bill. Now the greatest sin is not believing that it is so.

The world wants to convince me that all religions are good and sin isn't that bad. It teaches that you can find a piece of the truth in every religion and if you put them all together you'll get the whole truth. It also is proud to boast that every person is good if you look inside and that every good person is going to heaven. But the Holy Spirit convinces me otherwise. Only sinners are going to heaven, who find forgiveness and peace in Christ alone. Not themselves or their impressive accomplishments. It is a horrible sin to reject Christ and by doing so is the very thing by which the world dies and is destroyed.

This leads to the second conviction of the Spirit. Righteousness. How are we to believe in someone we cannot see? Christ ascended to the Father and is no longer bodily present. The world thought it was doing God a favour when it put Christ to death on the cross. But the Spirit gives you the assurance that this death of Christ is the very way that

you are holy and righteous. The world doesn't know where to find righteousness. But the Spirit leads you to hear the Gospel, returns you to when God baptized you with real water and finally feeds you with our Lord's body and blood that is our righteousness.

Finally, the Spirit convicts the world of judgment. The world has no idea who or what was judged when Christ died on the cross. Christ from his cross forever ruled Satan out of order when it comes to accusing you of sin. Christ also judged your sin as permanently done for from his cross and gave you his victory over all sin when He baptized you into His glorious name.

There you have a clearer picture of the victorious Christian life. One that remembers baptism, where we are given the new birth as God's dearly loved children whereby we die with Christ every day and so to rise with him. A life that doesn't grow away from Christ but grows more and more into Him, yearning for heaven and cannot get enough of Jesus relying more and more on him and less and less of itself. The Spirit takes what is Christ's and gives it to you.

And so it is good that Jesus went away from us. For He has sent you His Holy Spirit. The Lord and giver of Life. For in Him all things are yours for Christ is yours and you are his. His victory is yours. You may not look it. You may not feel it. And you may not think it. But the Spirit has revealed it to you that it is so. Amen