

## **Spirited**

Concordia Pulpit Resources 6,2, and CPH Tract "You Will Receive Power"

***Joel 2:28-29 And afterward, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days.***

Today is a day of celebration, and this is one that belongs to the Church alone. I know this is Memorial Day weekend, and it is good for us to remember those who gave their lives for us to give us the freedom that we enjoy. But Memorial Day is actually tomorrow. I'm talking about a different celebration, a big day in the Church year, one that hasn't been commercialized. That is not true of other celebrations in the Church Year. You know what I mean. Other holidays have chocolate bunnies and Santas and have almost been severed from their religious significance. But I have yet to chocolate doves or flames being sold at Pentecost. I'm sure its coming, and it may have already started, but at least it is not widespread. This is a holiday that still belongs to the Church, and rightly so. By the way, you do know that our word "**holiday**" originally comes from "holy day," a day that should be separate and distinct. That certainly describes **Pentecost**, the birthday of the Christian Church. It should be a celebration, a party for Christians. We celebrate together today the Festival of the Spirit of God. This should be a day of excitement, joy and thanksgiving.

On Pentecost, you think of tongues of fire, the sound of rushing wind, the disciples speaking in different languages. Just remember that all of that came from the power of the Holy Spirit. That Spirit is vital and essential for who we are as followers of Jesus, for our theology, our faith and our life. He is the Lord and Giver of life, the one who spoke by the prophets. But the power of this world seems to always be on our minds: physical, mental, economic, social. From sports we hear of "power forwards", "power plays", even a drink called "powerade." The business world and the political arena also speak of "power plays", but add phrases like "power lunches" and "power struggles." There is even an adage, "Money is Power." But the power of this world has as its motivation greed and selfishness. That is a far cry from what Jesus promised and then delivered to His disciples: ***I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high.*** (Luke 24:49)

That power is the Spirit that was poured out on Pentecost, just as was promised through Joel. When I hear those words “**pour out**” a couple of things come to mind. One is that God is not being stingy. He didn’t say he was going to sprinkle His Spirit, or that He would put a dab here and there. He said His Spirit would be **POURED OUT** on all people. And that also reminds me of **Baptism**, how we pour water on the head of the person, making them God’s child without distinction, just as Joel said the Spirit would be poured out on men and women: *for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.* (Gal 3:27-28)

The Spirit that is promised to all people in today’s text from Joel is the same Spirit of God that empowered our Lord, as Peter testified to Cornelius: *God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and ... he went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him.* (Acts 10:38) It was this same Spirit who filled the previously timid disciples, enabling them to testify boldly for Jesus. Instead of cowering in a room afraid, they went out and proclaimed to a Jerusalem filled with Jews that the Jesus whom they had crucified was risen and ascended. They told what He told them, how He came as our substitute to die in our place. They spoke of His promise of life and forgiveness to all who believe in Him. They encouraged the people to repent and believe the Good News. And over 3000 people did that day.

Our Goal as followers of Jesus should be to be as **SPIRITED** as the disciples were on Pentecost. I’m not talking about that feeling that cheerleaders try to foster at a sporting event, or even about an emotional high. When I say we should be SPIRITED, I’m talking about our lives being controlled by the Spirit of God. This is our goal because we know what God has done for us and given to us through Jesus Christ. He lived a perfect life, suffered at the hands of sinners, endured an awful execution so he could offer you a full pardon for sin, the promise of forgiveness, and the certainty of heaven. *So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature ... Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.* (Galatians 5:16, 25) Or as a contrast to a corrupt life, Paul encourages believers: *Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit.* (Ephesians 5:18)

This message is for any and all circumstances. The situation in Joel's day was desperate. The economy was in ruins. Locusts had destroyed the food for humans and animals. There was a feeling of helplessness among the people. The people had turned away from God. But God remained faithful. Through Joel, God issues a call to repentance, encouraging His children to pray for mercy. God hears, forgives, restores, blesses, and promises to pour out His Spirit.

Some would say the situation in our day is desperate. Who knows about the economy? We are just coming out of a drought that is still impacting much of our country. Natural disasters seem to occur on a regular basis. Each of you have your personal trials and struggles that you face day after day. The message for you is the same. Call to God, asking for mercy. He will hear, forgive, restore and bless you. He promises to pour out on you His Holy Spirit. That is what you need. You need to be SPIRITED. God's Work is to be SPIRITED.

- You need to be **Spirit-Led**. We are able to call to our Father with faith in Jesus, faith we would not have had it not been for the Spirit of God leading and guiding us to accept Jesus: ... *no one can say, "Jesus is Lord," except by the Holy Spirit. (1 Cor 12:3)*
- You need to be **Spirit-Fed**. Each time you go to the Word, the Spirit of God is at work, feeding you God's truth. He also feeds you through a special meal. Earlier I said today is a birthday party, but instead of cake and ice cream we are serving unleavened bread and wine, through which God gives us the very body and blood of our Lord for the forgiveness of sins.
- Your lives should be **Spirit-Said**. In Scripture, when the Spirit was poured out on people, they were empowered to speak God's truth. Their words are "Spirit-Said" They let God's Spirit control what they say and do. We all need more of that in our lives.
- The message is to be **Spirit-Spread**. Jesus sent His Spirit to us to spread Gospel. He worked faith in us, and the message of Jesus is further spread by believers like you and me whose lives are controlled by the Spirit. We proclaim the Gospel as the Holy Spirit enables us. The Spirit enabled Joel to call God's people to turn back to God and worship Him. The Spirit enabled Peter and the disciples to proclaim the Good News of Jesus to the Jews assembled in Jerusalem. The same Spirit empowers you, calling you to breathe the life and breath of Jesus into your world as a Witness for Christ.

So many that you and I come into contact with every day are Spirit-Dead. Such people are spoken of in Scripture. *The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned. (1 Corinthians 2:14).*

By the grace of God, you and I are not spiritually dead. We may act that way at times, but that is not who we are. His Spirit has worked faith in Jesus Christ in your hearts, assuring you of forgiveness for all sin. With that in your lives, you should resolve once again today on the Festival of the Spirit to be Spirited, Spirit-led, Spirit-fed, that our words be Spirit-said, so the message of Christ will be Spirit-Spread.