

**You got the POWER!©
Pentecost**

**Acts 2:1-21
DeHaven Gates**

Rev. Dr. Sharlyn

Today is such a special day in the life of the church! With the coming of the Holy Spirit upon the disciples of Jesus, the Christian Church was born. Today is the birthday of the church.

The disciples were faithfully and obediently waiting in Jerusalem, as Jesus as instructed them. Waiting go to be clothed with power. And Jesus was faithful to his promise to send the Holy Spirit among them.

It was the day of the feast of Shavoat – 50 days after Passover and celebrating the giving of the Law – the 10 Commandments to Moses on Mount Sinai. Many Jews were gathered in Jerusalem for this great festival – people from all nations were there. People who did not all speak the same language.

Suddenly, Luke tells us, the Holy Spirit came upon the disciples like the rush of a mighty, violent wind. Like tongues of fire upon their heads. And they began to speak and to preach in all the languages that were represented there on that day.

They were accused of being drunk. But Peter eloquently pointed out that it was only nine o'clock in the morning. They weren't likely to be drunk at that time.

And then he began preaching about Jesus, telling them about who Jesus is and what happened on the day he was crucified. He preached about God's mercy and forgiveness and how Jesus took our place there on that horrific cross. And he preached about the power of God raising Jesus from the dead. He preached salvation for all who would believe.

And Luke says over 2,000 people became believers on that day. They returned to their countries and told the Good News of salvation there. And the Church of Jesus Christ was born.

And we, the Church, is still very much alive today. We still have the Holy Spirit among us, giving us the same gifts the disciples received on that day. Maybe not as dramatic, but definitely as powerful. We just need to tap into the gifts the Spirit gives us.

Those gifts are:

LANGUAGE

The ability to communicate with others who spoke a different language.

Today, we usually don't need to be able to speak a foreign language. And if we do, we have the gift of education and teachers. But, I had an experience when I was in Mexico. I had been doing a training, when I worked for the Upper Room ministries, in Costa Rica -with an interpreter – and then in Mexico.

In Mexico, I had an interpreter but I also had picked up some Spanish and was able to hear and understand and speak a little in their language. I'm sure it was like a little baby learning to talk but one thing I learned when I went to other countries was that, if you just try to speak the language where you are, they love it and they will do everything they can to help you.

So, while we were celebrating 10 years of the Chrysalis movement in Mexico, I was asked to read the Great Thanksgiving for Communion ... in Spanish! I was not skilled in reading in Spanish and was very hesitant. But they encouraged me to do it and so, of course, I did my best.

Afterwards, Pricilla – who was my host – said that I read it in perfect Spanish. That every word was understandable – as if I had always read in Spanish. I promise you I had not. She and I agreed it had to be the help of the Holy Spirit.

But it isn't just about speaking in a foreign language. We all know that different age groups, people in different geographical areas, people from cities and rural areas all have a little different way of saying things.

When I was in North Carolina, my friend there would talk about something being “Monday week.” I said “HUH?” “You know. Monday week,” he said. I had no ideas what Monday week meant.

It just meant a week from Monday.

In Minnesota, there were many different ways of saying things. They called snacks a “Little Lunch” and casseroles were “Hot Dishes.” And their favorite expression was “Oofda.” Which was described to me as someone dropping their chewing gum in the chicken pen. “Oofda!” it was sort of a Norwegian thing, I think.

Not only is speaking and understanding the language important but, in communication, being able to be a good listener is equally important. In pre-marital counseling I have an exercise with couples where they repeat back what they heard the other say. They think it's a little cheesy but when you really get into a situation where you need to hear and understand, a little practice ahead of time never hurts.

The Holy Spirit gives us the gift of language when we set out to talk to others about the matters of faith. We can trust that we have that gift of speaking a language others will understand and of hearing what fears and confusing and joy the other might be experiencing.

The Holy Spirit also gives us

INSIGHT

They were able to see into a situation and to know what to do.

If we depend on the Holy Spirit to help us, we can trust that we will be able to look deeply into a situation and have insight as to what is going on and what people need to be able to connect with the story of faith.

The Holy Spirit gives us the ability to interpret Scripture – even to remember a Scripture verse or story that will apply to the situation we are seeing at the moment.

Just recently I was with a parishioner who was struggling to make a decision. As I was praying with them, a Scripture just came to mind and I said it. It seemed to be just the thing the person needed to hear. And the decision was made.

There have been times when I get in my car in the morning and ask for the Holy Spirit to take me where I should go. A name or a face will begin to appear in time and, if I am being alert, paying attention, I will call that person or go see them and discover they needed that call at that time.

I believe that gift of insight is there for all of us to draw from.

One of the gifts of the Holy Spirit is the gift of

BOLDNESS

Showing or requiring a fearless daring spirit

Think about the places and situations the disciples went to after the coming of the Holy Spirit. No longer were they afraid or hesitant to preach and heal and help others. They faithfully and obediently went wherever the Spirit led them.

The disciples found themselves on ships, in villages, in the desert, in prisons – in all kinds of places and in all those places people became believers of Jesus Christ and the good news of salvation.

We too, have been given the gift of boldness. But we have to be willing to accept that gift and to step out in faith and use it for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord.

And one of the most important gifts we have is the gift of

JOY

They were filled with joy because of the risen Lord

They praised God in all situations

Regardless of where the disciples found themselves, they praised God with great joy. Paul and Silas had been beaten and were thrown in prison, yet Scripture tells us they sang songs of praise and joyfully gave thanks to God.

In every situation disciples and martyrs and missionaries, and other faithful Christians have been joyful witnesses in the face of great adversity. What better witness can we be, than to give joyful praise to God in every situation. God is worthy of our joyful praise. We are a strong witness, when, even when we've been beaten down, when it seems we are fighting a losing battle, we are still joyful in the Lord.

We have every reason to be joyful because, as Paul says, "whether we live, or whether we die, we belong to God." Nothing can separate us from his love. "Rejoice in the Lord always," Paul says. "Again, I say, rejoice!"

By that way, that does really mean always. All the time.

And last, but certainly not least, with the coming of the Holy Spirit we, the Church, have

POWER!!!

(Here we have some people jump up with "I Got the Power" and the song. They will dance with joy for a minute.)

Don't forget it. You are the Church that was born on the day of Pentecost. You are baptized with the same Holy Spirit that came upon the disciples on that day. You have every gift, every power they had.

You are the witnesses for Jesus. You are a character witness. You know him. He has been with you, helping you, leading you, loving you, forgiving you.

You have the gifts of language, boldness, insight, and joy to use in telling the good news to others in a loving and compelling way.

And believe me, brother and sisters in Christ, you also have

Got the Power!

So use it. Today and always for the sake of the continued growth of the Church, which ultimately means the spiritual growth of believers and new believers hearing and receiving the gift of salvation.

You Got the Power!!!!

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