



Pastor's Note

Come, Holy Spirit!

The Day of Pentecost, the third of the three great festival days on the Christian calendar, falls during this month, so naturally, our minds turn to the topic of the Holy Spirit. I find it interesting how often I get asked about the Spirit's ministry – over the past couple years as we have gathered at the Coffee Peddler for our “ask your pastor anything” sessions, I've been asked to explain who the Holy Spirit is on several occasions. We seem to have a pretty good grasp on the Father and the Son, but the work of the Spirit is mysterious.

The Good News of the Spirit's mysterious work, however, is that now, with His presence in and with us, we are able to have a *real, personal relationship* with God Himself. Without the Spirit, that is impossible. Without the Spirit, we would be disconnected from God, for when Jesus ascended back to the right hand of the Father forty days after His Resurrection, God's presence was no longer on earth – and we cannot climb up into heaven any more than we can climb up to the moon. God had to *come down to us* again, which is what happened on the Day of Pentecost.

For on that great day, the Spirit descended upon those few believers who were still faithful to Jesus Christ, who were huddled together in fear behind a locked door in Jerusalem; He descended in power – in a mighty rushing wind and with tongues of fire – and just like that, those fearful men and women were transformed. Just like that, the Spirit gave birth to a new Body of believers – the powerful Church of Jesus Christ, bound together as one in spite of all the boundaries of race, class, and language that used to divide us. Without the Spirit, the followers of Jesus were powerless; they had no more than the teachings of a Man who was no longer among them, like so many other world religions. They had an example to follow, a philosophy to teach, a history lesson to present – but that's it. With the coming of the Spirit, however, those same believers now had a *relationship to commend – a personal, saving relationship to proclaim*. With the coming of the Spirit, these newly-empowered believers were then able to proclaim the amazing message that *it was now possible to know God – not just to know about Him!* With the coming of the Spirit, the Church now had true *communion and fellowship* with Jesus Christ, her Savior – and that fellowship was no longer restricted by geography. Believers all over the world can have this fellowship; believers in every corner of the world can have God truly *with* them. And with that Good News, and with that incredible, relational power, the Church went forth and turned the world upside-down, growing to the more than 1 billion followers she claims today!

And friends, *we are part of that same Church, for we have that same Holy Spirit, living in and with us if we believe in Jesus Christ!* That is why we celebrate this festival day – that we have *God with us*. We celebrate that God wants more than our obedience – He wants our love. He wants a real, personal relationship with us, His creatures. And He has done all that is necessary for that to be possible. We now have His power to lead us and guide us, to comfort us and chastise us, to teach us and give us wisdom. We have the potential to grow and change, to overcome sin and to form new habits of holiness. We have His courage, His joy, and His peace. We have Him to open the Word to our understanding, and to make the sacraments effective. And we have Him to guide us in our prayers when we do not know what to ask for. With the Spirit, we have a vivid sense of God's presence in our lives; we have a purpose to live, for we have fellowship with the One who made us. We have God Himself – Hallelujah!

So be sure to come and celebrate the Day of Pentecost on June 4. Be sure to wear red; it's the liturgical color for this special day – a reminder of the tongues of fire that settled upon the believers on that day. Afterwards, join us for some delicious birthday cake as we celebrate the birthday of the Church, who was born with the Spirit's coming. For God has given us the greatest gift of all – Himself! And that is worth celebrating! To Him alone be the glory!

In Christ's Love,

Joshua