



MORRISON ZION EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

www.mzluth.org

May 28, 2023

Pastor Randy Ott

The Festival of Pentecost

First Lesson: [Joel 2:28-29](#)

Psalm of the Day: Psalm 51b

Second Lesson: [Acts 2:1-21](#)

Gospel Lesson/Sermon Text: [John 16:5-11](#)

Rejoice in Your Loss and Gain

Welcome to worship today at Morrison Zion Lutheran Church. We exist to glorify God. We have set out to do this by gathering around the Gospel so that we may grow in the Gospel and go to others with this Gospel.

Grace, mercy and peace are yours through the empowering work of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

In Christ, dear fellow redeemed:

I had a friend once tell me, "You Lutherans don't value the Holy Spirit." I explained to him why I thought he was wrong about how we stress the work of the Holy Spirit because ***no one can say, "Jesus is Lord," except by the Holy Spirit.*** [\(1 Corinthians 12:3\)](#) But sometimes in practice I wonder if we do forget the work of the Holy Spirit. Maybe my friend was onto something.

We talk about Jesus a lot, and rightfully so. He lived and died for us. We talk about longing for the day when we'll see Jesus face to face, which is very Biblical. It's what the whole [Book of Revelation](#) seems to be about. We talk about the blessing of the Father in sending Jesus to be born at Christmas. At Christmas and Easter we kind of focus on the Father and the Son, then it gets to be Pentecost and because we don't get chocolates from a bunny or brightly wrapped gifts, we kind of go "Oh, uh, how about that? It's the third festival, a major festival, of the church year. Who knew?" We seem to forget about the Holy Spirit.

If you listen closely to the words of Jesus from [John 16](#), when they are there in the Upper Room, He is talking to a group of men that seem to be petrified. They are filled with grief. Jesus had just said "I'm about to be betrayed. I'm about to be killed." They are filled with a sadness that they probably couldn't even process at that point in time. Then Jesus, in what I read to you a little bit earlier, says to them, "This is a good thing that I'm going to be going away and I'm not going to be around you anymore. It's a good thing that my visible presence will depart from you."

Did you notice why He said it was a good thing and why they should rejoice in their loss? What was the gain that they would have that would cause them to rejoice, that would sustain them, change them, make them something more than they were and make them a group of people who would change the world? "Unless I leave, the Advocate won't come to you." The Advocate is the Holy Spirit. Jesus says "It's for your good that my visible presence is going to be gone (on Ascension) and then Pentecost will come and your whole world will be absolutely changed and it will be changed for the better because the Advocate will come. He will be poured out on you. And you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." All they could see at that moment in time was the loss.

Jesus was the one that had sent them out two by two, but He was the one that had done most everything. They were just there observing. They were there listening. They were there asking questions that showed they didn't understand a thing yet. Even before Jesus ascends into heaven, they go "Hey, at this time are you going to establish the kingdom that we want here on earth, because we want to rule on your right and your left. That's the thing we've been arguing about by the way." They didn't get it.

Then ten days later, the Advocate comes, the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, the Counselor, the one who stands beside them to help and guide them and make them more than they were on their own. All of a sudden they are talking languages they don't know. Peter stands up and addresses the crowd without a foot in his mouth. That had to be a new experience for him. And the Spirit works through them so that thousands of people are baptized that day and come to believe that Jesus is the only answer for sin. The same guys that didn't have a clue all of a sudden are powerful instruments in the hands of the Holy Spirit. It was for their gain that the Holy Spirit came, because the Holy Spirit, through them, was going to convince the world in regard to their guilt, convince the world about righteousness, and convince the world about judgment. Isn't that what it said in there?

The Holy Spirit would do it, but who did He do it through: simple fishermen, tax collectors, sons of Thunder, loud, boisterous guys who all of a sudden got it when the Advocate was poured into their hearts. They convinced the world because of sin (by telling people) that if you are not connected to Jesus in faith, you won't be in heaven with Him. The judgment about His righteousness: you have to be absolutely righteous to enter heaven and you can't do it. The only way it can happen for you is if the Spirit gives you the gift of faith, through baptism like 3,000 people received that day. Judgment was there. There is only one way into heaven. And the disciples understood that if people weren't connected to Jesus, they were going to hell. They spent the rest of their lives sharing Jesus, and for some of them, it wasn't that long.

James, one of the three that was there on the Mount of Transfiguration, dies in the [Book of Acts](#). But they were willing to give their lives because they understood that without a connection to Christ, everyone else was lost and gone to hell and Jesus' work, which He had to accomplish before the Spirit could come, which He did accomplish for the sins of the whole world, is God's only plan for the message to get out. It was the Spirit working through them, so they were desperate to share Jesus with people. They put their lives on the line. They gave their lives because they wanted people to know Jesus. The Spirit changed them.

Do you ever forget the Spirit's power? Do you ever think the Spirit's power is only for called workers? My experience has been that many in congregation feel that way. *If only we'd get more people into our school, then they could believe.* I don't know, how about you just talk about Jesus? Jesus' visible presence is gone. He isn't going to do it, but He has sent the Spirit into your hearts as He gave you the gift of faith. He has poured the Spirit into your hearts more and more as you spend more and more time with the Word and with the Sacrament and reflecting on your baptism. He has equipped you to have this gain of the Spirit's power as you speak God's Gospel message, His Law and His Gospel, because if you don't, the people that you see that don't believe in Jesus are going to hell! Is there that desperation in us to share Jesus or do we just think "Well, that's why we have two pastors. That's why we have five teachers. We don't really have to talk about Jesus"?

Whenever you think that way, the devil is convincing you not to rely on the Spirit's power. The devil is convincing you that the Spirit has not been poured out on you, that you do not have this gain that Jesus promised to you. You are calling Jesus a liar every time you think this!

And Jesus still loves you. The Spirit is still desperate to be poured into your heart as you think about your baptism, where you were clothed with that holiness, that righteousness that the Spirit wants you to know can't come from you. As you are convinced that your sins are forgiven through the body and blood of Christ, the Spirit is desperate to share that message with you because that's how He plugs you into His power. In His power, you and I can do the same thing those fishermen and sons of Thunder did.

We can change the world. We can change the world as we speak the Gospel. We can change our area where we live, in our community. The work of the Gospel is not done just in faraway places and exotic locales. It's done in Brown County, Wisconsin, right where you are sitting and right where you will be sitting tomorrow, and Tuesday, and Wednesday. It's done as God's people speak about their Lord and Savior, Jesus, in a way that isn't rude, arrogant, or obnoxious but that is kind and loving.

The early church grew and spread like wildfire because God's people spoke and because God's people lived their faith. They didn't isolate themselves in little, holy huddles.

When the plagues came, they took care of the people that had been persecuting them. They lived and loved in everyday situations. You tell me that won't stick out like a sore thumb in our culture today if you love and show kindness and mercy to people that don't agree with you. Tell me that won't stick out. I'll tell you that is the Spirit's opportunity for you to share the power of Jesus Christ.

Rejoice in your loss and gain, but don't forget about the gain of the Holy Spirit, who lives in your heart. Amen.

And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. [\(Philippians 4:7\)](#) Amen.