

They Were All Filled with the Holy Spirit!

GOSPEL READING: John 20:19-23

19 On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being shut where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you." 20 When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. 21 Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I send you." 22 And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. 23 If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained."

SCRIPTURE READING: Acts 2:1-11

1 When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. 2 And suddenly a sound came from heaven like the rush of a mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. 3 And there appeared to them tongues as of fire, distributed and resting on each one of them. 4 And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. 5 Now there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men from every nation under heaven. 6 And at this sound the multitude came together, and they were bewildered, because each one heard them speaking in his own language. 7 And they were amazed and wondered, saying, "Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? 8 And how is it that we hear, each of us in his own native language? 9 Parthians and Medes and Elamites and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, 10 Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, 11 Cretans and Arabians, we hear them telling in our own tongues the mighty works of God."

Meditation: Do you know and experience in your own life the gift and power of the Holy Spirit? After his death and resurrection Jesus promised to give his disciples the gift of the Holy Spirit. He said to them, *Receive the Holy Spirit! (John 20:22)* Jesus knew that his disciples would need the power of the Holy Spirit to carry out the mission entrusted to them. The gift of the Holy Spirit was conditional upon the ascension of Jesus to the right hand of the Father. That is why Jesus instructed the apostles to *wait in Jerusalem until you are clothed with power from on high (Luke 24:49)*. Why did they need *power from on high*? The Gospels tell us that Jesus was filled with the Holy Spirit when he was baptized at the Jordan River: "And John bore witness, 'I saw the Spirit descend as a dove from heaven, and it remained on him... this is he who baptizes with the Holy Spirit'"

"And Jesus, *full of the Holy Spirit*, returned from the Jordan, and was *led by the Spirit* for forty days in the wilderness... and Jesus returned in the *power of the Spirit* into Galilee" (Luke 4:1,14).

Just as Jesus was anointed with the Spirit at the beginning of his ministry, so the disciples needed the anointing of the Holy Spirit to carry out the mission entrusted to them by Jesus. The Holy Spirit is given to all who are baptized into Jesus Christ to enable us to live a new way of life - a life of love, peace, joy, and righteousness (Romans 14:17). The Holy Spirit fills our hearts with the love of God (Romans 5:7), and he gives us the strength and courage we need in order to live as faith-filled disciples of the Lord Jesus. The Spirit helps us in our weakness (Romans 8:26), and enables us to grow in spiritual freedom - freedom from doubt, fear, and from slavery to our unruly desires (2 Corinthians 3:17; Romans 8:21). The Spirit instructs us in the ways of God and guides us in living according to God's will. The Spirit is the source and giver of all holiness. Isaiah foretold **the seven-fold gifts that the Spirit would give: wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, piety, and fear of the Lord** (Isaiah 11:2).

The gift of Pentecost - the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, and the spiritual gifts and blessings of God - are made possible through the death, resurrection, and ascension of the Lord Jesus. After his resurrection Jesus "breathed" on his disciples and gave them the Holy Spirit. Just as God breathed life into Adam, so the gift of the Holy Spirit is an impartation of "new life" for his people. With the gift of the Holy Spirit a new

creation begins. God recreates us for his glory. Jesus' gift of peace to his disciples was more than an absence of trouble. His peace included the forgiveness of sins and the fullness of everything good. Do you want power to live a faith-filled life as a disciple of Jesus? Ask the Father to fill you with the power of his Holy Spirit (Luke 11:13).

Basil the Great (329-379 AD), an early church father, explains the role of the Holy Spirit in our lives:

"The Spirit restores paradise to us and the way to heaven and adoption as children of God; he instills confidence that we may call God truly Father and grants us the grace of Christ to be children of the light and to enjoy eternal glory. In a word, he bestows the fullness of blessings in this world and the next; for we may contemplate now in the mirror of faith the promised things we shall someday enjoy. If this is the foretaste, what must the reality be? If these are the first fruits, what must be the harvest?" (From the treatise by Basil on *The Holy Spirit*)

The Lord Jesus offers each one of us the gift and power of his Holy Spirit. He wants to make our faith strong, give us hope that endures, and a love that never grows cold. He never refuses to give his Spirit to those who ask with expectant faith. Jesus instructed his disciples to ask confidently for the gift of the Spirit: "If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!" (Luke 11:13). Do you thirst for God and for the abundant life he offers through the gift of his Spirit?

Psalm 104:1, 24, 29-31, 34

1 Bless the LORD, O my soul! O LORD my God, you are very great! You are clothed with honour and majesty

24 O LORD, how manifold are your works! In wisdom have you made them all; the earth is full of your creatures.

29 When you hide your face, they are dismayed; when you take away their breath, they die and return to their dust.

30 When you send forth your Spirit, they are created; and you renew the face of the ground.

31 May the glory of the LORD endure for ever, may the LORD rejoice in his works.

34 May my meditation be pleasing to him, for I rejoice in the LORD.

Daily Quote from the Early Church Fathers: *The Holy Spirit at Pentecost*, by Leo the Great, 400-461 A.D.

"To the Hebrew people, now freed from Egypt, the law was given on Mount Sinai fifty days after the immolation of the paschal lamb. Similarly, after the passion of Christ in which the true Lamb of God was killed, just fifty days after his resurrection, the Holy Spirit fell upon the apostles and the whole group of believers. Thus, the earnest Christian may easily perceive that the beginnings of the Old Covenant were at the service of the beginnings of the gospel and that the same Spirit who instituted the first established the Second Covenant." (excerpt from *Sermon 75.1*)

OPENING PRAYER: - Lord Jesus, I thank you for the gift of Pentecost and for the new life you offer in the Holy Spirit. Fill me with your Holy Spirit and set my heart ablaze with the fire of your love that I may serve you in joy and freedom. Amen.

CLOSING PRAYER: - Lord, we pray for the victims of the recent Cyclone in Australia that those effected can rebuild their lives and homes after the forces of nature have turned against them. Also, the wars overseas that these people have the strength to go on and the leaders of these countries find a peaceful resolution to the wars. Amen.