

St. Peter Lutheran Church
May 24, 2026
The Day of Pentecost
John 14:23-31

Following Christ's resurrection from the dead, the Gospels report Him appearing to His disciples. In each of those reports, Jesus gives instruction to the eleven—they are to **go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that** Jesus has commanded them. They are to **go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned. ...Repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.** And they, the apostles, are witnesses of these things. So the disciples have a clear commission—they will be sent as His witnesses to all the world, preaching the Gospel to the ends of the earth, baptizing, teaching, administering the very body and blood of Christ.

But though they had their clear marching order, they were not to go immediately out into the fray. Rather, before Jesus ascended into heaven, he told the disciples they were to wait **in the city of Jerusalem until** they were endued with power from on high. Jesus had assured them, even before His suffering and death, that it was to their advantage that He go away, for He would send to them the Helper. They were to wait for the Promise of the Father. They were to wait in Jerusalem to be baptized with the Holy Spirit. For without the Spirit, their preaching would be to the wind, their baptizing to no end; indeed, without the Spirit, no one would believe their testimony. It is the Spirit who is the Lord and giver of life. It is the Spirit who convicts the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. He works faith when and where He wills. And He does this work through the activities which Christ sends the apostles to do—preaching, baptizing, absolving. The Holy Spirit will use these means of grace, this external Word, to bring in a great harvest—to bring sinners out of darkness into light, to remove people from Satan's kingdom and transfer them to Christ's—to make a holy people of God. If we are to possess the riches of Christ, the Holy Spirit must come and teach our hearts to believe the Gospel preached.

That's just what we see on the Day of Pentecost. On that day, the eleven have been made the full number of twelve again with the addition of Matthias. The apostles were poised and ready—the marching order of Jesus given—and they were **all with one accord in one place**. They were of one mind, the mind of Christ. They had unity of the Spirit, and this Spirit was soon to be poured out on all flesh.

Suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

So the apostles receive the promised baptism of the Holy Spirit, and the event is both heard and seen. Heard as of a mighty rushing wind and seen as divided tongues, as of fire. Jesus, when speaking with Nicodemus, had likened the Holy Spirit to wind that blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. Now this mighty Wind was poured out, and would move from Jerusalem, to Judea, to Samaria, to the ends of the earth.

But this Wind is not so mysterious as it cannot be known where the Spirit is speaking. No, the baptism of the Spirit was seen as divided tongues, as of fire. The Holy Spirit comes through the external Word—therefore the vision of the tongues. And the Spirit that comes through the Word preached is a purifying fire, making those who hear Him holy. The Spirit gives the gift of faith, that we might believe in Jesus, and believing, have life in His name. He still moves rather mysteriously, as the Church flourishes here at one time and there at another time, seeming to move on as quickly as a warm summer shower, but we can know for certain where the Church is, and where the Spirit is active—and that is where the Gospel is being taught and the Sacraments are being administered—the charge given to the apostles by Jesus.

The emphasis on the Spirit coming through the Word is seen with that special miracle of Pentecost—that the disciples were able to speak in other languages. This was not merely so that they could chum it up with all the people from all over who were gathered in Jerusalem for Pentecost. This miracle occurred so that the disciples could tell all of these different people of different languages the **wonderful works of God**. This gift of speaking in other tongues was given so that the Gospel could be preached to all the nations gathered in Jerusalem that day—the beginning of the Gospel going to the ends of the earth.

So, on that Pentecost Day, the Spirit was given, whom Jesus promised to send from the Father. The old Israelite festival of harvest was blessed with a spiritual and eternal harvest. For on that day, Peter preached boldly in the power of the Holy Spirit, and on that day 3,000 souls received Peter's preaching gladly. 3,000 souls that day heard the apostolic witness concerning Jesus, believed, and were baptized. This enormous ingathering continues now in the preaching of this Gospel both to the ends of the earth and to the end of time. **And it shall come to pass that whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved. Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved.**

The Holy Gospel today also speaks of the connection between the Holy Spirit and the external word. Jesus said, **“If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word.”** Those who love Jesus will hold His Word sacred and gladly hear and learn it. We need to get serious when it comes to the issue of Sunday worship. You do actually need to go to church. If you love Jesus, you go to Church—you go where His Word and Spirit are given. If you don't keep these things, you really don't love Jesus. Jesus himself says as much—**“He who does not love Me does not keep My words.”** But if you do love Jesus, you'll go to Church, you'll gladly hear His sacred word, and the Father will love you because you love His Son, and both the Father and the Son will come to you and make their home with you. Every act of God is a Trinitarian act. When the Spirit through the Word

enlivens us toward God in faith, we are a temple of God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. God dwells with us. The Spirit comes through Jesus’s word, and Jesus’ word is not His but the Father’s who sent Him. Those who by the working of the Holy Spirit love Jesus are found assembled where Jesus is present with His gifts—where the Word is preached and the waters of baptism are poured and the heavenly manna is eaten and the Blood of the Son of God is poured out.

In our Gospel, Jesus is promising a joy to be given to the disciples who are now fearful and downcast—a peace to come to them after passion, resurrection, and ascension—this joy and peace will come to them by the Holy Spirit. He says, **“These things I have spoken to you while being present with you. But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.”**

Jesus calls the Spirit the Helper or the Comforter. By this name, we know the Spirit exercises His office in those who are in need of help and comfort. The disciples heard Jesus’ words that He was going away and they were filled with sorrow. They heard His words of dying and rising and did not yet understand.

When Christ is risen from the dead and appears to them, He says, “Peace be with you...Receive the Holy Spirit.” For the Spirit teaches inwardly in the heart the words of Jesus, plants them home, and bring peace and joy to anxious hearts. The Spirit teaches the downcast sinner that Christ’s death atoned for his sins and Christ’s resurrection from the dead is his justification before God. The Spirit brings to the sad sinner the remembrance of all things that Jesus said, so that the words of the Gospel are received in faith and great joy. The Spirit, by the words of Jesus, comforts and gladdens troubled and fearful hearts with a joy that cannot be taken away. He imparts a peace which the world cannot give. Not a peace the world can offer, but the peace of Jesus, who reconciled us to the Father.

The world’s peace means no affliction or burdens in this life. This is not Jesus’ peace. He allows affliction and trouble to remain, but gladdens our hearts even in our suffering with eternal treasures that can’t be taken from us. The peace wrought by Jesus’ sacrifice means God is not angry. God is our gracious Father. He loved us even while we were still sinners, sending Christ for us. God’s love is poured out into our hearts by the Spirit as He beautifully explains the truth of Jesus’ words to our hearts. Jesus says that the Spirit will teach us these things better than He can do with words, and we will have no need of further words than what He has spoken.

This help and comfort of God’s Holy Spirit makes us new, for now we know God as our loving Father who has secured our eternal good by giving His Son. We know nothing separates us from His love which is in Christ Jesus. We are no longer driven by the law and fear of death, but are released from the law. By what law? The law of Christ. **For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made [us] free from the law of sin and death.** And by the love of God

poured out into our hearts by the Spirit given to us, new lives of love sprout forth. We love, because He first loved us.

This work of the Spirit continues our entire life through. The Holy Spirit remains our Helper and Comforter in this life, for His work is not complete in this life of death and woe. Affliction remains, sin burdens us, death scares us, and the Law condemns us. Sorrow and peace are mingled for us now, but in all things, the Spirit is our Helper, that in the midst of dying is life; in the midst of trouble, peace and joy. And the good work God begun in us in this life, He will bring to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.

Jesus continues and says, **“You have heard Me say to you, ‘I am going away and coming back to you.’ If you loved Me, you would rejoice because I said, ‘I am going to the Father,’ for My Father is greater than I. And now I have told you before it comes, that when it does come to pass, you may believe.”** Christ will go away as He enters into His glory through His suffering—He will go to the Father. They don’t yet understand the trouble that is to come upon Jesus and His ascension to the Father, but Jesus gives them the words now, so that when the Spirit comes, He will comfort them by these words. They will remember He spoke them and be filled with joy. Christ will come back to them through the Holy Spirit. His suffering and death will become their greatest comfort. They will know that He lives and shares His eternal treasures with them. Indeed, they will recognize the great advantage of His going away, for His kingdom with the Father in His glory is far greater than his kingdom before the resurrection.

I will no longer talk much with you, for the ruler of this world is coming, and he has nothing in Me. But that the world may know that I love the Father, and as the Father gave Me commandment, so I do. Arise, let us go from here. The ruler of this world is the devil, who had waited for an opportune time to come against Christ and gives it His all with the abuse and crucifixion of Jesus. But the devil has nothing on Christ. On all other men, he did have claim—for they are sinful and deserving of eternal death. But on Christ he has no claim. Christ dies not as a helpless victim, but as the Lamb of God who willingly lays down His life for His friends. By His Passion, Christ shows the world that He loves the Father, for He takes the cup given Him from the Father, and He drinks it. **As the Father gave Me commandment, so I do.** So Christ gives himself into death carrying our sins, burdens, fears, doubts, and troubles. And on the third Day He rises, leaving them all in the grave. In Him, there is no sin, no death, no trouble, no fears. In Him, we have and hold the same by faith—forgiveness of our sins, the promise of the resurrection, deliverance one day from every evil, and life everlasting with the defeated enemy of death swallowed up forever.

The Spirit brings these treasures of Christ to us in Word and Sacrament, making us alive to Christ, comforting and helping us in our battle against sin, death, and the devil, and preserving us in the true faith unto life everlasting. On this Pentecost Day, we bask in the gifts of the Holy Spirit here in Divine Service. The disciples waited in Jerusalem for power from on high. And when the Spirit was poured out, the boldness of their proclamation could not be tempered. The

power of the Gospel for salvation to all who believe was unleashed. 3,000 souls were added that very day by the power of the Holy Spirit. But the great harvest of Pentecost had only just begun. We too have been added to the number and we pray God's continued blessing on us, that He would take not His Holy Spirit from us. **For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.** By the Spirit's help, we continue steadfast and immovable, proclaiming this Gospel against every spiritual force of evil in the heavenly places. We are not dissuaded by those who plug their ears to the Spirit's voice and lash out with hardened hearts against Him and His preachers. We can endure the slander and lies of those who no longer hold the Word of God sacred and so show that they don't love Jesus. We are not overcome with our troubles and our fears. Indeed, the apostles were able to suffer even unto death with the comfort of the Spirit. We march boldly on, comforted and helped by God. Amen.