

(Acts 2:1-12, NIV84)

When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place.

Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them. Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven. When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard them speaking in his own language. Utterly amazed, they asked: "Are not all these men who are speaking Galileans? Then how is it that each of us hears them in his own native language? Parthians, Medes and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome (both Jews and converts to Judaism); Cretans and Arabs—we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues!" Amazed and perplexed, they asked one another, "What does this mean?"

As I was coming home from last night's ascension worship I realized that my gas tank was nearing empty. So, I stopped to fill up. I knew I had things to do today, places to go, people to see. Having gas in the tank will allow me to get where I need to go.

A car without gas is dead. Likewise a Christian without the Spirit is dead. I by no means want to insult the Holy Spirit, but He is like the gas in our tank -- He empowers us, He energizes us, He emboldens us to do the work we are called to do as Christians. And what is that work? First and foremost we are to be witnesses of God's grace, shown to us in the redemptive work of our Savior Jesus Christ. We testify that "God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16). Additionally we serve as God's loving hands and feet -- going where He directs us to go and doing the good works that He has prepared in advance for us to do. We are enabled to do this vital work by the power of the Holy Spirit who works in us through the Word of God.

In ten days we will celebrate the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost. We don't merely celebrate that day as an event in history. That day marked a paradigm shift for the church. We don't look back at Pentecost to sing a rousing rendition of "Those Were the Days." Instead, empowered by the Spirit through God's Word, we continue the work begun on Pentecost -- communicating the message of Christ's love in word and deed to people who, just like you and I, so desperately need to hear it.

Working with you by the Spirit's power in Christ,
Pastor Golm

May 22

The Miracle of Pentecost

And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon-each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost. Acts 2:3-4

The story of the first Pentecost need hardly be repeated here. Its details can be recalled by reading the Scripture portion suggested above. The importance of this festival for the faith and life of the Christian can hardly be overemphasized.

To appreciate this significance, we must go back a little more than seven weeks before the miraculous event took place. It was the night before his crucifixion, and the mood was somber as Christ spoke to his disciples in what might be called his farewell address. Their hearts were heavy as they sensed the direction of their Lord's thoughts. Again and again he referred to the Comforter whom he would send them from the Father.

He said, for instance : "I will pray the Father, and he shall send you another Comforter ... even the Spirit of truth." A few moments later, he confided: "The Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost . . . shall teach you all things." And a few moments later: "The Comforter . . . shall testify of me."

The Greek word for "comforter" can be translated variously. Literally, it means a person who has been called to one's side to be of help -- as an advocate, a spokesman, or prompter. It was only moments before his ascension into heaven that Christ told his disciples not to leave Jerusalem until this promise of the Comforter (namely, the Holy Spirit whom he would send from the Father) had been fulfilled.

The miracle of the first Pentecost is the fulfilment of that promise. Of the assembled group we read: "They were all filled with the Holy Ghost." And the rest is history. Empowered by the Spirit of God, the disciples went out into all the world, heralds of the King, proclaimers of the Kingdom. You and I have been enlightened and empowered by the Holy Spirit. In a very real sense, today and every day is Pentecost. God is giving us his Holy Spirit through his Word. It is for us to proclaim that Word to the nations. God grant it, for Jesus' sake! Amen.