



Sunday May 24, 2026

Seventh Sunday of Easter

So, today, we celebrate Pentecost, the great feast of unity, of coming together in one in Jesus Christ by the Holy Spirit, and in a time where we live in such sharp divisions in our country, in our world. You know, I look around me and I say, people seem to always be on edge, and each other's throats for the slightest of matters. There's road rage. We have searches and random stranger on stranger violence, no provocation in subways, in airplanes, in playgrounds, just crossing the street you take your life into your hands, right? The difference along political and economic and social lines has grown deeper and more controversial by the day. It reminds me of a joke I heard. Now, this joke, the heads up, it's not a "haha" kind of joke, it's kind of edgy, it's on the dark side for my taste, but I find it captures the spirit of the times that we are living in. So, it goes like this. I was walking across the bridge one day and saw a man standing on the edge about to jump off. I ran over, I took his hand and I said, "Stop. Don't do it". "Why shouldn't I?" he said. I said, "Well, there's so much to live for." And he said, "Like what?" I said, "Well, are you religious or atheist?" He said, "Religious." I said, "Me too." Are you Christian or Buddhist? He said, "Christian." I said, "Me too." Are you Lutheran? Are you Catholic? Are you Protestant? He said, "Protestant." I said, "Me too." Are you Lutheran or Baptist? He said, "Baptist." I said, "Wow. Me too." Are you Baptist, Church of God or Baptist, Church of the Lord? He said, "Baptist, Church of God." I said, "Me too." Are you original Baptist, Church of God? Are you Reform Baptist, Church of God? He said, "Reformed Baptist, Church of God." I said, "Me too." Are you Reform Baptist, Church of God, Reformation of 1879? or Reform Baptist, Church of God, Reformation of 1915? He said, He said, "Reformed Baptist, Church of God, Reformation of 1915." I said, "Oh, you heretic." I gave him a shove.

Now it's kind of a dark joke, but it makes it's there to make us feel a little uncomfortable. But it shines a light on the reality of the nature of our fallen spirits. No matter how much we have in common, our social life, social media chooses to focus on what is different, no matter how minor it is. And we look at the trajectory in the Bible from the sin of Adam and Eve, the fighting



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between Cain and Abel, the brutality of human beings, leading to Noah and the flood, and that fighting that continued between the brothers of Jacob and Esau and Joseph and his siblings. The constant warfare we read throughout, among Israel and Judea in the Middle East, then and also now, although the Bible is a book about promise, it's also a record of the broken families, the broken societies, the broken nations, unable to somehow to figure out how to get along until the grace of God intervenes. So, on this feast of Pentecost, we celebrate the healing gift of the Holy Spirit poured out on God's people. It is the antidote to the conflicts we find ourselves in the midst of. The hallmark of Pentecost is unity among many cultures. Pentecost calls us to live our faith boldly and embody what Paul teaches that we have a variety of gifts, a variety of services, a variety of activities, but one spirit. The basic experience of Pentecost is that through the power of the Holy Spirit, all people can be healed and called forth in unity in our diversity, held together in perfect harmony by that spirit of Jesus Christ.

The intention of the gift of the Spirit is clear from our texts. The Holy Spirit enables us to engage other people, other languages, in ways that people can feel heard and respected. The gift of the Holy Spirit was intended for the common welfare of all people. In the early church, the spirit gave the gifts of prophecy, tongues, healing, teaching, wisdom, knowledge, faith, working miracles, interpretation of prophecy, and tongues, the building up on the people of God. The focus of the work of the Holy Spirit is not for an eagle boost for individual gain. The outpouring of the Holy Spirit is consistent with the very life of God that Jesus models for us in the gospels, a life of loving sacrifice meant for the healing and upbuilding of all.

Pentecost is about everyone, young and old, men and women, no matter what economic, social, political, racial, ethnic, or religious orientation, sexual orientation that everyone, everyone has a dream. Everyone has been endowed with a dream, a vision. Everyone has a prophetic word to share. Everyone has a gift that is important for the good of all. And what's that saying? All for one and



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one for all. That's the spirit of Pentecost. So, if our church is to survive and thrive and to regain its prophetic stance in the world, the message of Pentecost must be embraced. We live in a world that has seen unprecedented change in the last 150 years. It is said that, you know, that 90% of what has been created has come about in the last 150 years. Amazing. Never before has the world held so many people, so many cultures. Never before has communication been so comprehensive. Never before has the possibility of connection and travel been so great. If a little virus like COVID-19 or Ebola can affect the world the way it is, think about what the outpouring of our Holy Spirit can do for us because we are called to release this power of the Holy Spirit through us and we realize that Paul's declaration that there is neither Jew or Gentile, neither slave or free, neither male or female, for we are one in Jesus Christ.

So, here today is my Pentecost dream. That your voice, your voice be a channel for the Holy Spirit so that people of no faith persuasion, people raised in the church, but have left the church will say, "Hey, you're speaking my language. You are speaking addressing my spiritual hunger." Here is my Pentecost dream today that you and I can hear the voice of Jesus and that our hearts can burn with the fire of the Holy Spirit and the barriers that separate us will come tumbling down. Here is my Pentecost dream that people of different racial and ethnic differences, of all nationalities who speak Russian or Indonesian or German or Japanese, Italian, Spanish, English, Chinese, Korean, Arabic, Hebrew, Wasas, Wahili, Yorubu, Zula or many of the 6,912 known living languages of the world can say, "I feel heard by you." Here is my Pentecost dream that two people meeting on the bridge. This whatever their religious backgrounds can overcome pain and finally embrace each other as brother and sister. Because of Pentecost, we have so much to live for. We are one spirit, one body, in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.