

Many members. One body united in Christ.

The Feast of Pentecost

St. John 14:23-31

24 May, Anno Domini 2026

Beloved of God upon whom the Holy Spirit has descended in the waters of Baptism that you may be partakers with Christ in all things,

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

We have many times talked at length about the events of Pentecost which we were blessed hear again today. So let's give our attention to the teaching of our Lord Jesus which foretold of Pentecost so that we can have a right understanding and therefore properly rejoice in and celebrate the fullness of the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Strangely, the lectionary doesn't include the question of Judas which Jesus is answering. Judas (not the Judas who would betray Jesus), after hearing Jesus talk about leaving them and going to the Father and about manifesting Himself to those who love Him, is a bit confused about how Jesus is going to manifest Himself to the rest of the world. How can Jesus manifest Himself if He is going away, if He isn't here?

Judas' question is rooted in our slowness of heart and failure to understand what is truly good. Judas is thinking that the best way to have Jesus is to have Him bodily, or what is often referred to as locally, present. That isn't entirely wrong. Of course, there will be nothing better than the eternity after the resurrection when the whole Christian Church will be bodily, locally, immediately, and forever with Jesus, beholding Him face to face, hearing His own voice. We long and groan for that and rightfully so. To be with Jesus and away from this sin-stricken world of war and death and inflation and lies and bickering and disease and the host of other evils that our sin has unleashed on creation will be a joy beyond all imagination and a glory so profound that even the deepest of our suffering isn't worth comparing with it.

But that will only be the reality in the resurrection. And that can only be the reality because Jesus did not remain bodily with the disciples. He went away which is to say that He went to the cross. There, by shedding His Blood, He atoned for the sins of the whole world, the very purpose of His coming into the world. And by doing so, only by doing so, is it possible for us to have the hope of the resurrection to eternal life rather than live in the certain terror of eternal torment. And so that the

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good news of this salvation might go forth to all the world, so that He, our Savior, might stand eternally before the Father as our Great High Priest and Advocate, Jesus also ascended bodily into heaven to sit once again at the right hand of power and majesty but now as our brother, interceding for us before the Father because He has shared in our sufferings and been tempted in every way we are so that He can sympathize with our weaknesses.

How then is Jesus manifested to the world? How does He make Himself known? How can the world know Him if they can't see Him? Jesus said to the disciples "Whoever hears you, hears Me." What our Savior has accomplished and will bring to all its fulness on the day of His return, the Holy Spirit carries into all the world through the witness of the apostles. Okay, but where are they? Where is their witness to be found because they too have departed this life to rest in Abraham's bosom as they await the resurrection of their bodies?

Here we come to it, one of the greatest blessings of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit - the Bible. The written word of the New Testament is the enduring preaching and teaching of the apostles proclaiming the mighty works of God. As the Holy Spirit brought to their remembrance all the things that Jesus had done and taught during His earthly ministry, He not only opened their mouths to speak that good news in synagogues and marketplaces and homes, He also inspired them to write the very words which were read to you only moments ago. And not merely ideas or generalities, but the very words themselves. That means that the Bible isn't the words of mere men. They are the words of God Himself who, in His mercy, used the mouths and hands of men to give them to you. This is what is meant by the inspiration of Scripture. These words, like those spoken into the darkness in the beginning and which brought forth everything from nothing, are living, powerful words. They do exactly what they say. Only a divine word could do that. Only a divine word could bring you to fear God's wrath and repent of your sin. Only a divine word could take away the guilt of your sin and make you clean by simply declaring it to be so.

The apostolic word is Jesus' word because the Spirit of Jesus is the one who inspired it to be spoken and written by the prophets and apostles. God in His infinite wisdom and mercy has chosen to manifest Himself to you and to the world through the prophetic and apostolic Scriptures - the Bible. And He does this because He doesn't want there to be any question, any ambiguity. Because the Bible is God's word and not Moses' or Matthew's or Paul's we can be absolutely confident that it is both inerrant, that is, there isn't a single error in it as well as infallible, that is, there is not a single thing that is false or contradictory. Anything that appears to be

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an error or contradictory or false, only appears that way to our sinful nature and the inherent unbelief that plagues heart, mind, flesh, and soul. This is why after hearing the Bible read we say “This is the Word of the Lord.” And thanks be to God that it is! Every last word of it. God does not make mistakes. He does not lie or contradict Himself. He did not give the Scriptures to obscure the truth from us but to reveal it because He truly does want all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. This is why we can be certain of every doctrine we confess. It is the doctrine that God, not man, has spoken. To say that is not arrogance. It is to believe Jesus.

This is why you need to pray before you read the Bible and before you come to church to hear God’s Word. We need the Holy Spirit to enlighten the darkness and drive away the unbelief of our hearts so that we might understand and believe all that we hear, even and especially those parts that speak against us and our flesh. St. Paul, speaking by inspiration of the Holy Spirit, writes beautifully in 1 Corinthians 2, “For who knows a person’s thoughts except the spirit of that person, which is in him? So also no one comprehends the thoughts of God except by the Spirit of God. Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God. And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom by taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truth to those who are spiritual. The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned.” (1 Corinthians 2:11-14)

Without the Holy Spirit we can neither understand nor confess that which God has revealed in the Bible. If we approach the Bible as something that we must bring into line with reason, as ancient writings that need to be brought into agreement with modern ideas, then they will remain dark to us. It is the height of arrogance for sinful, finite man to think that he can sit in judgment of what holy, infinite God has said.

Your eternal life and salvation are far too important to God for Him to leave them obscured and unknowable. Because of the corruption of our hearts we could never understand or figure out God. And so God has manifested Himself to you in such a way that you can be certain about who He is, what He has done, and what He has said. This is why Jesus says “If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word...” (John 14:23) Jesus’ word, the Bible, is His self-revelation to the world. To receive His Word is to receive Him. To doubt it or seek to add to it or take away from it in even the smallest way, is to call Jesus a liar and to reject Him. It is blasphemy because lies are of the devil. Jesus - all that He is and did and said - is the Truth.

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Anything contrary to Him is a demonic lie.

We cannot say we love Jesus and at the same time be ashamed of what He by His Spirit through the prophets and apostles has said in the Bible. Rather we will hunger and thirst for it at all times. If we love Jesus, then there will be nothing more precious to us in all of creation than His word. If we love Jesus, then we will devote ourselves to hearing, reading, studying, and learning His word at home and at church. If we love Jesus, then we will love and rejoice in even those things which He says which make us uncomfortable or which point out our sin because we want to live according to the light and truth which are only from Jesus and are only found in His word. We will strive by the Holy Spirit to conform our every thought word and deed to what we read in the Bible. We will not be embarrassed to speak out against things that are contrary to what God has said in the Bible like evolution, abortion, greed, sexual immorality, divorce, homosexuality, pagan philosophies, and false gods. We won't make excuses why we can't actually do what Jesus says. We won't tolerate any doctrine that is in any way not in keeping with what Jesus said because to obscure what Jesus said is to obscure Jesus. If we love Jesus, then we will not try to know Him in any other way than through the Bible. We will make time to read it, commit as much of it to our hearts as we can, and learn about it.

This is how the Holy Spirit works. This is the true blessing and joy of Pentecost. We have the Divine Word. The words of the Bible are the very means by which you not only know Jesus but receive Him. The Bible read and heard is exactly how the Father and the Son come to you and make their home with you. It is the words of the Bible by which Jesus speaks and gives you peace. It is how He protects you against temptation, how He teaches you to confess Him before friend and foe, how He enables you to forgive those who trespass against you, how He removes doubt and fear and anxiousness and worry.

But if we refuse this word, if we will not daily open our Bibles and read them, if we will not gather to hear them read to us then we do not love Jesus and neither He nor the Father will make their home with us and we will be left in our sin and our fear. If we are too busy with our jobs, our studies, our sports, our families, our friends, our Twitter and Facebook feeds, or anything else to read and hear the Word of God, then faith will wither and die and the Jesus, who we were too busy for in this life, will grant us to spend all of eternity in bitter judgment without Him or His word surrounded by the demons.

Dear children of God, the Bible that you are blessed to have sitting on your shelf at

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home and that you can now even have read to you as you're driving down the road is exactly how your Lord Jesus Christ manifests Himself to you, teaches you, comforts you, and breathes life into you. The words of the Bible are the very breath of God whereby the Holy Spirit does His work of calling, gathering, enlightening, and sanctifying the whole Christian Church on earth. The words of the Bible, the witness of the prophets and the apostles, are how the Holy Spirit makes you holy, declaring you forgiven of all your sins for sake of the Blood of Jesus and stirring up in you the will and the strength to do those good works of love which are truly pleasing to Father. It is by those words of Jesus which are recorded for us in the Bible that the plain water of the font is made a life-giving water, rich in grace and washing of the new birth in the Holy Spirit. By the same means are plain bread and wine made the Body and Blood of Jesus which forgive all your sins and strengthen you in faith toward God and in fervent love toward one another. Hear every word of the Bible and treasure them above every good and every pleasure that the world tries to offer you. Come to the various Bible classes that are offered here (except for today, ironically) to further drink in the riches of the Bible. Indeed, love and treasure them more than life itself because they are life. Fill your ears with them, fill your children's ears with them, fill your neighbor's ears with them in the joy and confidence that these words are the living words of the living God, the peace which passes all human understanding, and the means by which the Father and the Son come to you and make their home with you. As surely as you give your body meat and drink each day, even more so, give both your body and your soul the true food and drink of God's Word. Let no day pass where you do not read or hear the Bible. Listen with attentive ears. Ponder it. Speak about it. And pray that the Holy Spirit would give you faith to believe all that you hear and read and cause your love and understanding of your Lord and His gracious work to deepen each and every day. In this way the glorious work of Pentecost continues in our midst today and the Lord Jesus Christ makes Himself known to us that we might have true and abiding peace now and for all eternity.

In the Name of +Jesus.

Pastor Ulmer

(We stand.) The peace of God which passes all human understanding keep your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus our Lord.