

## “Fruit of the Spirit”

Rev. Brian R. Louis, Faith Presbyterian, May 19, 2024

**2** When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. **2** And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. **3** Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. **4** All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability.

**5** Now there were devout Jews from every people under heaven living in Jerusalem. **6** And at this sound the crowd gathered and was bewildered, because each one heard them speaking in the native language of each. **7** Amazed and astonished, they asked, “Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? **8** And how is it that we hear, each of us, in our own native language? **9** Parthians, Medes, 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 Arabs—in our own languages we hear them speaking about God’s deeds of power.” **12** All were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, “What does this mean?” **13** But others sneered and said, “They are filled with new wine.”

**14** But Peter, standing with the eleven, raised his voice and addressed them, “Fellow Jews<sup>a</sup> and all who live in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and listen to what I say. **15** Indeed, these are not drunk, as you suppose, for it is only nine o’clock in the morning. **16** No, this is what was spoken through the prophet Joel:

**17** ‘In the last days it will be, God declares,  
that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh,  
and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,  
and your young men shall see visions,  
and your old men shall dream dreams.

**18** Even upon my slaves, both men and women,  
in those days I will pour out my Spirit,  
and they shall prophesy.

**19** And I will show portents in the heaven above  
and signs on the earth below,  
blood, and fire, and smoky mist.

**20** The sun shall be turned to darkness  
and the moon to blood,

before the coming of the Lord’s great and glorious day.

**21** Then everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.’

Holy Wisdom, Holy Word.

Today we celebrate Pentecost, the giving of the gift of speaking different languages to the apostles so they could spread the Good News of Jesus Christ to people around the world. What a miracle that was, the sending of the Holy Spirit down upon the apostles to give them the skills and courage to live out the command of Jesus to spread the gospel to all the corners of the earth. The fruit of the Spirit also gave them the power and courage to go out on this mission that proved dangerous to the early disciples, many of whom were martyred.

While the story in Acts about Pentecost is all about the Holy Spirit, this isn't the first appearance of the Spirit, one of the three persons of the Trinity, in scripture.

The Spirit is not just a Pentecost or New Testament phenomenon. The Holy Spirit is there from the beginning. In Genesis, 1:1-2, the text states that the "In the beginning, when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was a formless void, and a darkness covered the face of the deep while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters." Wind in this context, the Hebrew word, *ruah*, can also be interpreted as "the spirit of God," in addition to a wind, or a "mighty wind." So from the beginning of the Bible, you can argue that the Spirit was there.

The Spirit is mentioned a fair amount in the New Testament. For example, in the gospel of Luke in chapter 4, we hear that after his baptism, Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness." Last week we heard Jesus promise the apostles that the Holy spirit would come to them and that they would be baptized with the Holy Spirit.

And in Paul's letter to the church in Galatia, the apostle writes of the "fruit of the spirit," -- love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, <sup>23</sup> gentleness, and self-control. (Gal. 5:22-23). Elder Judy Pike said in a sermon a few years ago that you could do a whole sermon series on the "fruit of the spirit." And she's right. It's a good idea. I want to spend a little time on the fruit of the spirit this morning.

Now the fruit of the spirit helps us all individually, doesn't it? If we have all of these fruits of the spirit, that's pretty good, isn't it? It helps us to be better employees, better fathers, mothers, grandmothers, grandfathers, friends, employers. The fruit of the spirit helps us be better people, period.

Pentecost also marks the birthday of the church of Jesus Christ. The church, the body of Christ. The fruit of the spirit we receive from the spirit helps build up the church. We ideally use these fruits to be together, to work together, to do the Lord's work. How can we bring this fruit of the spirit to bolster the church? Whether the universal church, our denomination, or Faith Presbyterian? I want to go through some of the fruit of the spirit that we need to strengthen the church.

Come holy spirit, come.

First, is Love. In a church, there must be love. We must care for each other; we are commanded by Christ to love each other. We give rides to doctor's appointments. We send get-well cards, or birthday cards to each other. We check on each other if we haven't seen each other for a while. We pray for each other. We love each other. We wish the best for each other. As Judy preached at covenant in 2020, "The Spirit empowers Christians to move beyond the smile of a positive attitude. He leads believers to rejoice because of the assurance that nothing "will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord".

Joy. If we are open to the spirit and the power of the spirit, we will feel joy. We can feel joy in worship, where the music that Janis is playing, or the singing of the choir being directed by Debi moves us in a way that helps us transcend our very being, where we are transported to a place of bliss, for even a moment or two, where all we feel is the power of the spirit moving through us through the power of the music. Joy. In those moments we feel joy, we don't think of any of the problems we may have, all we feel is joy. We feel this joy together as a faith community in worship, for worship ideally is a joyful occasion.

Come holy spirit come!

The spirit can fill us with peace as well. The peace from feeling the love and comfort of God. The peace of being in a community of people who care about each other. There is a comfort to being in a place together where we care for each other. Here in this church, every Sunday I get to see people offer each other the sign of peace to each other. There is always joy and laughter. I see the hearts of you all out there full of peace and love when you exchange the sign of peace.

In being church, we also need the fruit of patience. We may all love each other, but perhaps we do not like everyone, and that is OK. That is human nature. Some folks we like a lot, some folks we don't, or we disagree with. In the Presbyterian Church we have a lot of committees, and decisions take time sometimes and that can be frustrating. We must pray for the Holy Spirit to provide us with patience.

Back in the first century when Paul wrote that letter to the Galatians, he knew the members of the church there, like everywhere else, needed the fruit of the spirit to live among themselves and serve God, and also to be a congregation and to live out through the power of the Holy Spirit the gospel of Jesus Christ into their community.

Come Holy Spirit, come. Bring down upon us the "fruit of the spirit," -- love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, <sup>23</sup> gentleness, and self-control. Bring it down so we can live better lives for ourselves and those around us, and also for the good of the church, the body of Christ.

"All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability" (Acts 2:4). May we all be filled with the fruit of the Holy Spirit today and every day. Come holy spirit, come! Amen.