

Pentecost 2020 - Galatians 5:16-25 - "The Holy Spirit Put Christ in Your Heart!"

It's not too hard to picture God the Father ... on his sapphire throne, all-powerful with legions of angels. It's easy to picture God the Son ... taking on our human flesh and walking our dusty roads. But God the Holy Spirit — now that's a challenge. He's invisible. And when he made himself visible it was in fire that didn't burn, wind that didn't destroy and as a dove. Hard to pray to a bird, right?

Since it's so hard for us, as Christians, to picture the Spirit, we tend to think about him a lot less. But his work is irreplaceable for us, our families and our church. Our salvation depends on him!

- It is the Spirit who takes Christ's work of saving the world and brings it to your heart personally.
- It is the Spirit who caused the words of God to be written by prophets and apostles so you can have the Word of God.
- It is the Spirit who uses the Word, or a combination of water and the Word to create your faith and convert you.
- It is the Spirit who uses the Word, or a combination of wine, wafers and the Word to strengthen your faith.

This Spirit, who once powered the sights and sounds of Pentecost - tongues of fire, sound of wind, speaking in other languages - is still hard at work within you and me today. And so, on this Pentecost, remember: **"The Holy Spirit Put Christ in Your Heart!"**

- 1) To rescue you FROM the acts of the sinful nature, and
- 2) To rescue you FOR his spiritual fruits.

(1)

The Apostle Paul wrote the words of our lesson to Christians in the province of Galatia - modern day Turkey - about 18 years after the Pentecost account of Acts 2. He details of the Holy Spirit's work. But before he does that, he's explains why people need the Holy Spirit.

We live in a world where people keep records of what they do – on Facebook, Instagram and blogs, famous people, and not so famous, tell us again and again where they are and what they're doing. Cell phones take pictures and record anything they do at any time.

Imagine if someone kept a record of you. What if every time you did something hurtful or harmful or wrong – someone recorded it? What if every time a sinful word passed over your lips, or a sinful thought crossed your mind, someone recorded it? And it had the time and date stamped on it.

Here's what they would have recorded: **The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy, murders, drunkenness, orgies and the like.**

Did that list make you uncomfortable? You know why, don't you? That's not just any disgusting and despicable list. That's your disgusting and despicable list. Mine, too. We'd be so embarrassed and ashamed if what goes on in our minds would be broadcast.

Living in your flesh, there's sinful things like: **sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery.** Left on your own, you'd sink deeper into things like: **idolatry and witchcraft.**

What's that? You'd never sink that low? OK, then what about the cracks in the surface of your everyday life - **the hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage** – you've been known to throw fits from time to time? You're well acquainted with **selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy.**

Then there's those things you'd really rather hide: **murders, drunkenness, orgies, and the like.** To know that all of that lives inside of you and me – that's disturbing.

You may have done a good job of hiding those things from people, but God's got them, all of them, on tape. He can't overlook them. He hates them. He punishes those who commit them.

While that may be a scary thought, there's something even worse: **I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.** What's even more scary is those who are still involved in these sins cut themselves off from God when they refuse to come clean of their sins and get clean with their Savior.

If you're still involved with sin ... Confess it ... Quit it ... Get rid of it ... Find your way out of it, because it will kill you – eternally.

(2)

Some will say, *"I'm trying to stop my immorality. My selfishness is out of control. My jealousy is killing me. I hate my anger. I want to quit my drunken habit. It's so hard. I feel helpless."* And just when it seems like you can't say *"No!"* to sin anymore and when the power seems gone – remember the font. That's where Christ pushed your sinful nature under water, and the Holy Spirit placed Christ in your heart, and gave you a new life. What Jesus did at your baptism, you can do with his power every day when you repent and trust his forgiveness. Imagine that: being baptized ... everyday!

Those who belong to Christ Jesus ... that's you ... have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires. The Holy Spirit put Christ in your heart, to rescue you FROM the acts of the sinful nature - that's the pushing under water. And at the same time, the Holy Spirit put Christ in your heart to rescue you FOR his spiritual fruits - that's the other list in our lesson: **But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.**

Those are some mighty tasty fruits or virtues. They're God's fruits or virtues. And, as far as God is concerned, you've produced them because Jesus Christ produced them and you belong to him by faith.

When God the Holy Spirit called you by name and put you in the family of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit at your baptism, he took your sins, loaded them onto Jesus' shoulders, and hammered them to the cross. Your sinful nature is drown and has been exchanged by a new nature that produces his kind of fruit. That's the work of God the Holy Spirit in you!

So, it's no wonder that ...

- you're becoming more **loving!** Now, when somebody else is suffering, you're not thinking, *"Well, at least it's not me,"* you're thinking, *"What can I do to help?"*
- you're full of **joy.** Now, when you wake up, no matter what how you feel physically or emotionally, deep down inside, you can say, *"God made me and all that I need and he's given me the opportunity to serve him. Am I blessed, or what?"*
- nothing rattles you, you're at **peace.** Whether it's someone dying, or you getting sick, or a family member getting in trouble, or things not working out the way you expected, you can still say, *"I belong to Jesus and he'll make sure I can get through this."*
- you can exercise **patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.** That's who you are now as God the Holy Spirit works in you and on you.

The Holy Spirit – the same one that came at Pentecost – has entered your heart and calls it his home every time you hear or sing, read or remember the good news of Jesus. So ... **let's keep in step with the Spirit!** Better yet, **let's live by the Spirit,** after all, he put Christ in your heart, too!

We pray: Thank you Spirit for your incredible gift and your wonderful work within us. Amen.