

In the Name of the Father, and of the ✠ Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

They didn't prophesy of fantastic miracles or of future events. They didn't foretell the end of the world or identify signs of the coming doom. They didn't babble in unknown languages or fall over in emotional frenzies. They spoke clearly, in known languages, that men heard and understood without an interpreter. They preached Christ. For that is the work of the Spirit that God has promised.

Men from many countries and tongues heard, in their own languages, the Eleven speaking of the wonderful works of God. It is the reversal of the curse of Babel, the removal of the confusion of tongues. The unity of the faith, the unity of the Church, is in the Christ of whom they taught. The Spirit doesn't point men to themselves. The Spirit doesn't empower men to self-edification. The Spirit points men to Jesus Christ. That is the work of the Spirit – to work through fallen, faltering men to bring the saving knowledge of Christ to the ends of the earth.

The wonderful works of God begin with the creation, but all God's works point to the new creation. That new creation began when God entered this fallen creation by taking on Flesh. The Holy Incarnation of Christ is the greatest of the Wonderful Works of God. So our Lord, in teaching the Eleven before His death, promised that the Holy Spirit would bring to their remembrance all things that He had said to them. And on Pentecost did that Spirit come.

The same Spirit would work through the Eleven and through their disciples to preach and teach to others the Word of Christ, and to record His life and teachings in the Holy Scriptures. That is how the Spirit works – not apart from means, but through the Word of God and the Holy Sacraments.

So there, in the Upper Room, before going willingly to His arrest and trial and cross, in love, the Lord taught the Eleven about the coming of the Holy Spirit. He taught them that the Spirit would indwell them. This indwelling He ties to the keeping of His Word. The one that keeps His Word the Father loves, and the one the Father loves God comes and makes His home with him.

But the spiritual is not first, rather the natural. The Spirit of the Living God, the Spirit that hovered over the waters when the world was spoken into being, the Spirit that guided the Patriarchs and the Prophets, the Spirit that David prayed would not be taken from him, the Spirit that caused Moses and the Prophets to record the Holy Scriptures, the same Spirit would come, sent by the Father in the Son's Name.

But the spiritual was not first, rather the natural. First, before the Spirit would come in special measure on the Day of Pentecost, God would take on flesh. For the first man was of the dust of the earth, the second Man is the Lord from heaven. And as was the man of dust, so also are those who are made of dust. And dust returns to dust.

The Lord speaks of peace, a peace that surpasses man's understanding. And yet it seems that this world is anything but peaceful. Yes, there are wars and rumors of wars, these are the promised signs that we live in the end times. But the turbulence and strife of this fallen world

comes by more than missile and bomb. The uncertainties of this fallen world, the conflict and anger and hatred and perversity, has touched you too.

So families are broken, friends are betrayed, coworkers are lied to, and jealousy and envy overcome the sinful. Even inside the visible church there is strife and dissension, indeed especially inside of the visible church. For that is where the ruler of this world wages his most hurtful wars. Denominations divide Christendom, and division inside of denominations cleaves and separates. False doctrine is taught seemingly unchecked. The saving Word is obscured and twisted.

Your worry, your doubt, your sins, and your trust in worldly falsehoods that contradict the clear Word of God, are all signs that the turmoil and strife of this sinful world have affected you. The sinner has no peace. And were it not for the grace of God, were it not for His surpassing, boundless love, no man would be saved. But in that love, God Incarnate atoned for your sins. He paid for your transgressions. He settled your debt with God. He left that Upper Room and went the Way of Gethsemane and Gabbatha and Golgotha. But before He left, He promised that the Spirit of God would come.

According to His Promise, on the fiftieth day, seven weeks after His resurrection from the dead, ten days after His Glorious Ascension, the Promised Spirit came. It is not that the Spirit ever left the Church. He was present at the creation. The Patriarchs and Prophets, Abraham, Moses, David, Isaiah, and Elijah had the same Spirit. But now the Spirit is poured out, as the Prophet Joel prophesies, on all flesh, that whoever calls on the Name of the Lord shall be saved.

The same Spirit is poured out on you, you who believe in Christ, you who believe that He is the Son of God, you who believe in His Wonderful Works, you who believe that He died and rose and ascended for you. The Spirit poured out on the Eleven at Pentecost is poured out on you. As water is poured over you, as the Word of God is proclaimed over you, the Holy Spirit fills you.

You who are natural receive the Spiritual. For as is the heavenly Man, so also those who are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly Man. And that image, the image of God, the image lost in the fall, is restored in you as His Spirit makes you His home. For flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God.

So we shall all be changed. This corruptible will put on incorruption, and this mortal will put on immortality. And this begins with the indwelling of the Spirit of God, God in you. And in that indwelling, you have unity in the Spirit, unity in the Holy, catholic and Apostolic Church, unity in Christ.

In Christ, your sins are forgiven. And where there is forgiveness, there is the Holy Spirit. It is He who works the faith necessary to repentance and contrition. It is He that calls, gathers, and enlightens and sanctifies the whole Christian Church on earth. It is He, the Spirit of the Living God present and active in the creation, that brings the regeneration and rebirth possible only in Christ crucified, risen and ascended, possible only in Christ Jesus through the Holy Spirit.

It is the Spirit, the Helper, the Comforter, that brings to you the Words of Christ, that by the Father's love the Triune God make His home with you. So you, beloved of God; you, redeemed

of Christ, have the seal of God, the Spirit of Promise, the Guarantee of your inheritance until the redemption of all who believe in Christ, God's purchased possession, to the praise of His glory. You are reconciled to God. Yours is the peace that passes all understanding, the peace the Lord Himself promised, that your heart and mind be kept with Christ Jesus, the peace of the sure knowledge of God's love and forgiveness, the peace that God alone can give.

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