

Rev. Thomas Emery
"Pentecost" John 20:19-23
Salem Presbyterian Church
Sunday, June 8, 2014

The context of this passage is spiritual warfare. Satan comes to "steal, kill and destroy," but Christ comes to "give life more than abundant." Satan started with trying to kill Christ, but Christ defeated death. Next, Satan tried to corrupt and to stop the message of Christ. But, Christ gave the Holy Spirit to preserve the message of Christ and to give courage to Christ-followers to share the Good News in the midst of fear.

One of the least understood principles of scripture is the baptism and in-filling of the Holy Spirit. Many miss the greater blessing of experiencing God, because they believe that salvation is the baptism and what you get, is all there is. This is not what the Bible teaches. The Bible does teach that we receive the Holy Spirit at the moment we surrender our hearts to Christ (1 John 3:9, Romans 8:9-10, 1 Corinthians 6:19). God puts His Spirit within us, and we are born as a child of God. However, this is not the end, but the beginning.

TEACHING POINTS

Teaching Point One: *Christ has entrusted His mission in the world to His true (Reformed faith) "Invisible Church" believers within the Church.* The Holy Spirit directs true believers.

Teaching Point Two: *The in-filling of the Holy Spirit is more than baptism.* Satan tries to render the church inept, and we need to know the meaning of Pentecost to have a stronger church.

Teaching Point Three: *Seek God with your whole heart to be filled fully with the Holy Spirit.* Those who truly seek God will be blessed with an in-filling of His Spirit to do His will. Jeremiah 29:13 says, "And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart."

THIS WEEK'S MEMORY VERSE

And after he said this, he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive anyone's sins, they are forgiven; if you retain anyone's sins, they are retained" (John 20:22-23 NET).

ACTION POINT

Jesus breathed on them and said: "Receive the Holy Spirit." From that moment on, they were not on their own. They were, and we are, sustained by this same Spirit to preach, heal and feed the hungry. We are to preach repentance for sins because "the Kingdom is at hand." When someone is filled by the Spirit, they will recognize that this blessing is not for them alone, but to equip and empower them to do God's will.

The apostles were filled and immediately had the power to preach and the boldness to stand before their enemies and proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ. As the Body of Christ, we are His very hands and feet in this community and the world. Wherever we walk or whomever we touch proves once more the love of God and gives proof of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. Please pray to be filled with the Spirit!