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Text: John 14:11-17

May 23, 2010  
The Day of Pentecost

### PENTECOST POWER

Did you get all your shopping done? Is your home decorated for the holiday? You know, we spend a lot of time getting ready for Christmas. Ask any child how many days before Christmas and you will get an immediate answer. Christmas comes with a flurry of activity.

So does Easter. We spend six weeks getting ready for Easter. We call it Lent. We go to midweek services. We spend extra time in prayer and Bible reading. And then Easter comes and it is a time of feasting and celebration.

But Pentecost is different. Pentecost sneaks up on us. We don't make a big deal of Pentecost. I doubt if many of you decorated your homes for Pentecost or that you're going to any Pentecost parties today.

Yet Pentecost ranks right up there with Christmas and Easter as a major festival of the church. And well it should, for Pentecost is a celebration of the gift of the Holy Spirit!

The Bible readings for today teach us that the Holy Spirit is an awesome gift. Did you hear what Jesus said in the Gospel reading? It is truly mind boggling! "The one who believes in me will also do the works that I do and, in fact, will do greater works than these," says Jesus.

Greater works than Jesus? How can this be? How can ordinary folks like you and me do greater works than Jesus? Just think of all that Jesus did. Fed 5,000 people. Healed 10 lepers. Raised Jairus' daughter. And on and on it goes. You and I can do greater works than these? That's what Jesus says. How can we possibly do that? The answer is simple - the Holy Spirit!

The Holy Spirit is God at work in the world today. The Holy Spirit is the power of God. The Holy Spirit is the energy of God. When the Holy Spirit comes to you, you are plugged into the power and energy of God. Wow!! What a gift! No wonder Jesus said that you will do greater works than he did.

But do you sometimes wonder why you are not accomplishing very much? Do you sometimes wonder why your faith is not as bold and strong as it should be? Do you sometimes wonder about all this power and energy that you are supposed to have?

There are times I ask myself these questions. The answer for me is simple. I don't use the power. I unplug the Spirit. I don't let God's power and energy flow through my life. Too often I am like the disciples before the day of Pentecost. They were hiding behind locked doors. Reluctant to reach out. Afraid to get involved in the mission of Christ.

But something amazing happened on the day of Pentecost! The disciples were filled with the Holy Spirit and after that there was no stopping them. They boldly shared their faith with others. They brought thousands of people to Christ. They healed the sick. They helped the poor. They turned the world upside down!

And the same thing can happen with us! You and I can be filled with the power of the Holy Spirit and we can do great work! That's the promise of Pentecost!

If you are not living up to your potential as a disciple of Christ, don't be discouraged. Know that this gift is for you. That's the first step. The gift of the Holy Spirit is not just for the original disciples. The gift

of the Holy Spirit is not just for a few select followers of Christ. The Holy Spirit is for everyone! And that includes you and me.

Second, claim the gift. Even though you may not have had an experience like the disciples had on that first Pentecost, the Holy Spirit has been given to you. The Spirit was given to you when you were baptized just as the Spirit was given to Lily yesterday evening when she was baptized. When you were baptized, you were baptized in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. That means - you were connected to God. You were connected to the power of God. You have been plugged into the Holy Spirit. So claim the gift!

And use the gift! This is the critical step. Many of us have the gift but we fail to use the gift. When we don't use the gift of the Holy Spirit, then it is like getting a gift for Christmas but not opening it, or getting a new power tool but never plugging it in and turning it on. You have the gift. Open the gift. Plug it in. Turn it on. Use the gift.

Put the Holy Spirit to work! The Holy Spirit is the power which God gives to live the way Christ lived. The Holy Spirit is the energy of God to do the work of Christ.

So step out in faith. Worship God. Love the neighbor. Care for the people around you. Tell others about Christ. Feed the hungry. Help the poor. Give assistance to the people in Haiti. Get involved in the church. Support the work of the church around the world. Be an active partner in the African mission. Stretch yourself. Dare to act for God. The Holy Spirit will go to work. Don't wait till you feel empowered. The power will come when you step out in faith. You can be sure. It is the promise of the one who gave his life for you!

You have the power! Put this power to work!