

Whitsunday 2022

And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues, like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them.

**In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.
Amen.**

FINALLY! The day had arrived! The Holy Ghost had come and the Church was born. For Peter and the others who didn't have a clue before now, it all started to make sense. The parables, and sayings, and prophecies, of Jesus made sense. From this point on, their mission was clear. The Spirit that enlightened those early Apostles, is alive and well today in this Church; in each of us.

At both Morning and Evening Prayer the Prayer Book gives us a versicle and response which reads, "O God make clean our hearts within us/ And take not thy Holy Spirit from us." The two obviously go hand in hand. You see, in biblical terms, the heart is the seat of the will-the heart is the part of us which decides what we will think, and say, and do.

We receive the Holy Ghost in Baptism, Confirmation, and Ordination. After reception of those sacraments, the Holy Ghost works within us

to make our hearts clean. A completely clean heart means a perfect will. And a perfect will is one which always does the will of God. Our wills are not perfect yet, but He is working on us as much as we will let him.

To pray that God will not take His Spirit away also brings to mind the image of Saul, the first King of Israel. God gave Saul his Spirit when he anointed him as king. When Saul disobeyed God, God took his Spirit away.

We know from our studies, that Saul went into a steep mental decline because he could no longer communicate with God. King Saul lived in the days of the old order, When God gave his Spirit only to certain people for certain lengths of time to do certain tasks—for example it was the Holy Ghost who “spoke by the prophets” of Israel.

Since God gave the Spirit this way, there was always the possibility that he would take it away. But one of the prophets foretold the day when God would give his Spirit to the world so broadly that everybody everywhere could have as much of it as he wanted.

The Prophet Joel writes, “It shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters

will prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young man shall see visions.”

God did just that ten days after Jesus had Ascended into heaven-fulfilling the promise Jesus said he would fulfill. That day the Jews were celebrating the Feast of Pentecost-fifty days after Passover-the day on which God gave the Law to Moses on Mount Sinai some fourteen hundred years before.

The Spirit came as fire-God had shown himself to Moses first as a burning bush. The Spirit came as wind-the words “spirit” and “ghost” mean “wind” as well as “breath.” Jesus had said of the Spirit, “The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof but canst not tell whence it cometh or whither it goeth.” And the Spirit came as languages spoken by people who had never had learned them-in an exact reversal of the linguistic chaos that resulted from the building of the tower of Babel.

But perhaps the most astonishing thing that happened that morning was that Saint Peter preached a coherent sermon. Peter, always well-meaning, but headstrong, we might even say a blunderer- This Peter knew by the power of the same Holy Ghost that these happenings were the predictions of Joel.

To the scoffers who said the men who spoke in tongues were drunk, Peter says-It's too early for anyone to be drunk-what is happening here is that God is doing what Joel said he would do. And it is all happening because of Jesus-The same man you put to death just weeks ago. God raised him from the dead-just as King David had prophesied in the psalms.

Peter ended his sermon, an extremely short one by the way, with these words, "This Jesus God hath raised up, whereof we are all witnesses. Therefore being by the Right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed for this, which ye now see and hear...therefore let all of the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ."

Do you see? He gets it! Before the Spirit, he was clueless. We celebrate that this day!

Peter not only explained what was going on, but also in the process accused his listeners of being guilty of Jesus' murder. Saint Luke tells us his hearers were "pricked in their hearts" and said, "What shall we do?" Peter says, "Repent. Be baptized and ye shall receive

the gift of the Holy Ghost.” The result of that sermon? The result of the Spirit? Three thousand new converts!

So, back to this idea of a “clean” heart, that is a heart that is “pricked” just as the hearts of the Jews were on Pentecost. To begin to do the will of God is to realize that you will NOT do the will of God if left to your own devices.

But the great news is, through confession and repentance, God forgives. Through the power of the Holy Ghost, your heart can and will be changed.

As we close, remember that the Spirit of God is in us and he wants to help us. Jesus says, “The Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance whatsoever I have said unto you.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

Amen.