

Pentecost – 2025

Genesis 11:1-9

Acts 2:1-21

John 14:23-31

How many of y'all are clumsy? Some folks have two left feet on the dance floor. Some folks could trip over a splotch embedded in a tile floor. Jerry Lewis made a handsome living pretending to be clumsy on the big screen. Some folks are verbally clumsy when you put them behind a microphone. We've all had days when we are all thumbs. What typically happens when a clumsy person uses super glue? Who here *hasn't* glued their fingers together using super glue. The technical term for the adhesive in super glue is cyanoacrylate. The internet advises using warm, soapy water to unstick your fingers. I saw a commercial for something called Flex Glue on the tele. Amazing what this stuff can do. If all the King's horses and all the King's men had had some Flex Glue, then ole Mr. Dumpty could be walking down Redlands Blvd. today.

What holds us together? For two thousand years, Christ's church has been through some pretty stiff storms. What holds us together? Love, truth, life – do those things hold us together? There is a unity that exists in Christ's church. Is that unity based on a bond? All of us come from diverse backgrounds and yet we are truly one. Why is that? Is Christ's church merely some sociological enterprise? Two thousand years is a long time. Politics have changed, nations and wars and plagues and worldly ideology have all come and gone and Christ's church remains. Why is that? We are bonded to Christ. You believe that; you confess it; you thank God for it. That is a vertical bond – you to him. Each of us is a sinner and Almighty God had bound Himself to us, made us His temple (1 Corinthians 6:19). It is a bond unlike any other. Death can't undo it. Humanly speaking, it grows stronger in adversity. And there is a bond between us. We are, corporately, the body of Christ. A horizontal bond exists in Christ's church. We are brothers and sisters in Christ. Why is that?

Today is 50 days after Easter. Today, we commemorate the coming of the Holy Spirit upon the infant church. Today, we celebrate the Feast of Pentecost. Two thousand years ago, fifty days after the Lord Jesus rose from the dead, the Holy Spirit blew the fire of His love into the worshipping assembly. People from all over were gathered in Jerusalem. A multitude of languages were represented – a diversity of peoples – and the rushing wind of the Holy Spirit invaded that ancient congregation. The Gospel was heard. The enlivening Word of Jesus' death and resurrection captured the ears, captured the hearts of those who needed that Holy Word – each in their own language. It was dramatic. It was humanly inexplicable. It was miraculous. Jesus had promised that day. "Stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high" (Luke 24:49). The Holy Spirit had hovered over the waters at creation. The Holy Spirit had descended upon the Virgin and overshadowed her, and she conceived the Messiah. The Holy Spirit descended upon the Lord Christ as He was baptized in the Jordan. Now the Holy Spirit gives birth to the church, the body of Christ, the holy domain of the crucified King. Tongues of fire alight on those assembled to attest to God's miraculous activity. And Peter preaches.

The Holy Spirit attends the proclaimed Word of God and faith erupts within the hearts of men. There is a bond here. No man-made glue could hold Christ's church together given all that we've been through. This is no human institution. There is absolutely nothing about God's

Word that has its origin in the mind of man. We value Christianity not so much because it provides pithy answers to life's difficult questions, but because Christianity is God laying claim to His beloved children. There is a bond here. Christ's church perseveres through the ages because God is continually laying claim to His children. There is a bond here. This bond goes way beyond cyanoacrylate. This bond goes way beyond Flex Glue. The Holy Spirit is here. He is our bond. The Holy Spirit unites us to Christ and He unites us to one another.

The Holy Spirit teaches us. You have learned absolutely nothing regarding the Love of God that is in Christ Jesus apart from the Holy Spirit teaching you. What else have you learned? Has the Holy Spirit taught you humility? Jesus said that the Holy Spirit will take from what is mine and make it known to you (John 16:14). Have you learned of Christ's humility? Has your spirit been enlarged as you have learned about the Greatest who made Himself the least (Matthew 23:11)? When you are low, when you are bearing your cross, when you feel forgotten, forsaken, has the Holy Spirit reminded you that He who was rich became poor so that you, by His poverty, might become rich (2 Corinthians 8:9)? Has mercy sprung from your mouth for the benefit of someone else and you wondered where such blessed words, blessed compassion came from? The Holy Spirit teaches you, reminds you of what our Lord has done, where He is present for us now, how our lives are enriched by His blood.

And still we forget. And still we drink from the cistern of the world and its vanity. And still we blithely dismiss the Word of God as we venture off to feed our stomachs with temporal food and ignore the banquet that God lays for us in the Scriptures. Have you reached peak wisdom so that you no longer need the guidance of the Holy Spirit in your life? Have you mastered Christian virtue so that you no longer feel the need to apply yourself to the wonder of Christ's life laid bare *for you* in God's holy Word? For the last twenty years, perhaps longer, Americans seem to be content to limp spiritually. Run, Forest, Run! As Forest Gump unleashed the power in his legs, the shackles of his braces were thrown off. Satan wants you shackled. The power in your legs comes from God's Word and the last thing that we want is to limp. When Christ's church limps, others are not helped. When we disdain the study, the steadfast, resolute, eager examination of God's Word we are vulnerable to Satan's shackles. As the Holy Spirit brings to our memory the work of Christ, those very events are made prehensible. The fruit of the Spirit is brought into our lives. The blood of Christ is brought into our lives. Jesus' death and resurrection are brought into our lives. From Christ's holy cistern – that is where we will drink.

We confirm four young people today. There is a bond between them. I have seen it. This bond is Spirit born. They are a microcosm of the church. They are humble and bold and devout and honest and both appreciative of what they have received and eager to grow. I enjoyed teaching them because they were interested in learning. I enjoyed their company because the light of Christ shines in them. Imagine our Lord speaking to them directly. On this day of their Confirmation, imagine our Lord speaking these words directly to them: "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid" (John 14:27). Marriage, careers, children – it is in their future. Unimagined joys, the love of a spouse, the willing sacrifices made to bless their offspring – it is in their future. And adversity; God's tools for crafting in us the character of His Son involves adversity. Jesus calls us to deny ourselves, pick our crosses and follow Him (Matthew 16:24). That isn't abstract language. As a Christian, what were you thinking when you were 12, 13 years

old? What have you been through since then? How have you navigated adversity? Can you see the Holy Spirit at work in your past, sustaining you in dark moments, loving you when you felt forlorn, directing you toward Him who is the Light of the world? Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, and self-control – it the virtue of Christ the King *and* it is the fruit of the Spirit. God is at work in this vineyard to produce the fruit that He desires. The Spirit binds us to the Lord of Life. The Spirit binds us to one another. We walk together. As the body of Christ, we walk together. Brothers and sisters, the family of our Father, we walk together and we are profoundly blessed.