

In the Name ✠ of Jesus. Amen.

St. Peter writes, “*You have not seen [Jesus, yet] you love him. ... you do not now see him, [yet] you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory, obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.*”

“*Seeing is believing,*” human wisdom proclaims. Thomas is not so different than we. “*I won’t believe unless I see Jesus and touch Him,*” Thomas said. I doubt I would have been any different. The prophet was asked, “*Son of man...*” —that’s how the Lord talked to Ezekiel— “*Son of man, can these dry, dead bones live?*” I would have answered, “*I’ve never seen it happen before. My eyes tell me, ‘No!’*”

And I would have needed to repent — as I often do, for I would have been trusting my eyes, and not the Lord. Much better was Ezekiel’s answer, a word of possibility and faith: “*O Lord GOD, you know.*”

For when it comes to the faith, “*hearing is believing.*” For we know that the Lord accounts those blessed “*who have not seen and yet have believed.*” We know that “*faith comes by hearing the word of Christ.*” We know that’s why Jesus’ words were recalled and written down for our sake: that the Spirit might be put upon us, that we might know and believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, that is, that we might know that He is Lord, and that by believing, we might have life in His name, that we might know that Jesus has prepared a place for us and will come again to take us there, that we might know that this is the Lord’s doing, and not ours, and that it is marvelous in our eyes.

This is what the Spirit is all about, and so also what Pentecost is all about—it’s not an exultation of the Spirit for His own sake—the Holy Spirit wouldn’t stand for that—but a fulfillment of Christ’s promise to His church and an exultation of Him. The Holy Spirit comes from the Father, sent by the Son at Pentecost. He comes on the chariot of Christ’s word. “*Prophecy over these bones ... O dry bones, hear the word of the LORD. ... Prophecy to the breath ... Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe on these slain, that they may live.*”

And so it was that 10 days after Jesus ascended into heaven, with the promise, “*I will send Him to you,*” 50 days after He rose from the dead—which is why it’s called Pentecost for fiftieth—the Holy Spirit came down upon the disciples with power—in the sound of a mighty rushing wind and with fire and with a word to be spoken.

And this word is a word given to Him to declare—Jesus’ word. “*He will take what is mine and declare it to you.*” These are the words spoken by Jesus, brought to us by apostles and evangelists; these are the words that proclaim Jesus, and His death as sacrifice for sin, and His life as a precursor of our own resurrected life.

These are the Holy Scriptures that carry the breath of the Spirit, the Lord and Giver of life supplying the “*words of eternal life,*” spoken by the eternal Word of God in whom is life. The word of life is not “*produced by the will of man.*” Beware of those false teachers in churches that say the Spirit is breathing out new doctrines today that contradict what He has said before. They are wrong, and those are words and doctrines that lead to death. No, the word of life came from men speaking “*from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.*”

And that word bears witness to Jesus — throughout the Scriptures. So that the Spirit of Truth, breathing resurrection and life into dry bones, does so that you might know that Jesus is Lord; that you might live. Of course, Jesus isn’t mentioned by name, but in the verses that follow “*my servant David*” is who “*shall be king over them.*” This is Messiah language for Ezekiel wrote some 400 years after David. The prophet speaks of the one shepherd and of His one flock. You can connect the dots. Through Ezekiel, the Lord speaks of making His dwelling among the people — God with us — that He “*will be [our] God and [we] shall be his people.*” He speaks of the everlasting covenant of peace—a new testament that we know Jesus fulfilled by His birth and death and resurrection, and delivers to us by His body and blood in humble bread and wine.

The Second Reading, too, though it focuses largely on the Pentecost event, ends with Peter’s statement that, “*everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved,*” quoting from the prophet Joel. But then Peter goes on to explain in the following verses who that Lord is: “*Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs that God did through him in your midst, as you yourselves know—this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men. God raised him up, loosing the pangs of death, because it was not possible for him to be held by it.*” If Peter’s Pentecost Day sermon is any indication, and I think it is, Spirit-filled preaching preaches Christ crucified, Christ victorious over sin and death.

And Jesus Himself taught in the Gospel that the Helper He will send, the Spirit of Truth, is being sent to bear witness about Him and give glory to Him. He says further that the Spirit would do it by convicting us of sin and righteousness and judgment. That is, first, He would preach to us God’s law that humbles us and reminds us that like dry, dead bones, we are born dead in sins and trespasses—and our own sins only add to the desert of our death. This law teaches us that dry bones don’t decide to follow anyone. Rather the Lord speaks life into us; His grace makes alive — it is the Lord’s doing and His alone to make alive and to preserve us alive.

For the Spirit also convicts us of righteousness, and that is the righteousness that was won by Him who descended from the Father and into the humility of

servanthood, serving even unto the death of the cross. But it's the righteousness of this Suffering Servant that is now highly exalted, and has returned to the Father, sending the Helper down to us, that by His work in the word of Christ proclaimed, in the cleansing water and word of Christ, in the word of life and peace eaten in the Supper that creates and sustains faith, we have been given Christ's righteousness, and life eternal awaits.

The Spirit finally convicts us of judgment, reminding us that the ruler of this world's accusations fall on deaf ears. Jesus is at the Father's side as our Advocate and Defender. We have been accounted righteous through faith in Him. Oh, Death and Sin may still sting. *"This world's prince may still scowl fierce as he will."* *"He can harm us none. He's judged; the deed is done."* Thanks be to God who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

*"You have not seen [Jesus, yet] you love him. ... you do not now see him, [yet] you believe in him."* Dear friends, this is what Pentecost is, not a festival that gives Jesus a day off, but a festival to remind us of the Spirit's work in our midst to proclaim Christ and His word, to create and sustain our faith in Christ, and to comfort us with a *"joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory,"* until at length we obtain *"the outcome of [our] faith, the salvation of [our] souls."*

In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.