

have the power and authority to invite everyone we know and more. We just need to speak. Inviting them to know Jesus, to know of his love for them, to know of the life he brings and that death isn't the end, for Jesus has kicked in the doors of death and issues his free gift of eternal life.

Let us pray.

Jesus, thank you for the gift of the Holy Spirit. Keep me open to his leading that I might risk speaking the word you have commissioned me to tell others. Keep us all restless with the status quo, always wanting to go where you send us, to go out and tell other people about you so that they too might come to know you intimately. Today remove our doubt, bind up our fears and release in us a great surge of your love for people that we are compelled to go out and tell others. Amen.

Christ Church Lutheran

Worship Times - 9.00am & 10.45am
Pastor: Tim 0427326553
Edmund 0429041957

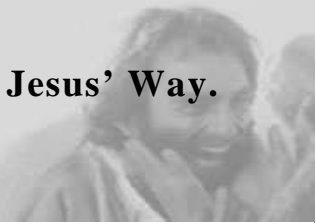


Reaching Out with the Love of Jesus that All my Know, Worship & Grow in Christ

11 May 2008

The Art of Communication Jesus' Way.

Pentecost Sunday



“They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to PRAYER.” Acts 2:42

One of the marks of a disciple is that we are devoted to prayer. We’re not the only ones devoted to prayer, today we are reminded that God also has devoted himself to a close intimate relationship with you, marked by open conversation. Pentecost always reminds me of the wonderfully close intimate relationship Jesus has won for us to live.

In the Old Testament I see a God who wants to be close to those he loves, but he can’t. He fears getting close to them, because he might destroy them in a burst of righteous anger. God can’t tolerate injustice. He can’t passively standby and ignore it. He’s got to act.

So we have that image of the Children of Israel as they wonder through the wilderness arranged in their camps, with God pitching his tent on the outer.

“Now Moses used to take a tent and pitch it outside the camp some distance away, calling it the ‘tent of meeting’.” (Exodus 33:7) At the end of Exodus we read; “Then the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle... So the cloud of the LORD was over the tabernacle by day, and fire was in the cloud by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel during all their travels.” (Exodus 40:34,38)

God wanting to get close, but still there is this distance. We have Moses who can go into the presence of the LORD and when he comes out his face is glowing. But even there the people balk

at the LORD’S closeness and get Moses to cover his face till the glow fades. So close, yet so far.

Then we have the great celebration of Pentecost. We see that distant cloud of fire move. Move toward the disciples, breaking into individual flames and resting on each of them. Not consuming them, but filling them with the LORD’S very presence. They didn’t receive some nebulous power, but the very presence of God in the person of the Holy Spirit. God himself – mind blowing.

Jesus death and resurrection has made a huge difference. Our sins are forgiven. Now the LORD can get up close and personal with his people, no longer pitching his tent outside the camp, but he now pitches his tent within each of us, his disciples.

None of us need a Moses to speak to God for us because he's too scary to approach. In Jesus a huge change has happened. "In Jesus and through faith in him we may approach God with freedom and confidence." (Eph. 3:12) In Jesus our lives are flooded with God's personal presence in the person of the Holy Spirit. "They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them." (Acts 2:3) God present with each of them, with each of Jesus' disciples.

Now all Christians are prophets, for we have been commissioned by God to speak for him. That's what a prophet is; one who God has commissioned to speak for him, revealing his will and then empowering them with His Spirit.

That's precisely what we see Jesus doing in the Gospel reading: "Jesus said, 'Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.'" That's our commissioning. "And with that he breathed on

them and said, 'Receive the Holy Spirit'" We go in his power and authority. We don't do this in our own strength, but God is with us in the person of the Holy Spirit. "If you forgive the sins of anyone, their sins are forgiven, if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven." (John 20:21-23) This is God's will that we have been empowered

The disciples were devoted to prayer

to speak forth.

This is no longer the preserve of a few, we all have the Spirit, we all are sent, we all have Jesus' words of forgiveness to speak. Words that are full of Jesus' power and authority. This is not empty puffs of wind, but the roaring wind of the Holy Spirit. We all are Jesus' prophets for we all have been empowered and commissioned to speak for him.

What an amazing change took place that Pentecost Sunday. This is the final

blow to finish off the whole Old Testament temple worship. No longer is it the place to come to, but now the presence of God and his word is going out to all people. Jesus' people are a sent people, going out into all the world with his word of life, taking God's very presence with them, so that where ever we stand becomes holy ground, for the Holy Spirit is with us.

What power and authority we move in; "the gates of hell will not overcome it. I

(Jesus) will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven." (Matthew 16:18-20)

What power and authority Jesus sends us out with. We kick in the gates of hell, rescuing people, that they too might be filled with the Holy Spirit and be sent out by Jesus to speak forth his word setting people free.

What a powerful restless body the church is. Always needing to go out, never content with the status quo for that is our very nature, we have been sent out, in the power of the Holy Spirit, to speak God's words of life. To actually bring the forgiving grace of Jesus into people's lives, rescuing them from sin, death and the devil. That deadly trio who have been defeated in Jesus, they can't stand against Jesus power and authority. The very power and authority we wield with the Holy Spirit.

What a change Jesus ushered in that first Pentecost Sunday. The letting loose of his powerhouse movement, which nothing can stand against.

That reminds me of Ezekiel who in a vision was commissioned to prophesy to a valley of bones, bones that were very dry (Ezekiel 37). From a human perspective, what a waste of time. These very dry bones can't hear, let alone come to life. Ezekiel

spoke forth the word of the Lord; "and breath entered them; they came to life and stood up on their feet – a vast army." (Ezek. 37:10) The word we are commissioned and empowered to speak is a life giving one.

Jesus has commissioned each of us to prophesy, and our society may look

Jesus has commissioned and empowered you. Speak Out

like the last place anything is going to happen, but at Pentecost Jesus sent the Holy Spirit filling you with his presence that you might go out in his power and authority speaking his life giving words.

Don't forget, the power isn't in your ability, but Jesus' words carry his power and authority, and are filled with life through the very presence of the Holy Spirit. We don't need more training for Jesus' words to be effective. We just need to speak them.

Pentecost reminds me that Jesus has commissioned and empowered me to go and do his will, in the power and presence of the Holy Spirit. It cost Jesus his life for this outcome, I'm a hundred percent sure he's not going to give up now.

So when I ask Jesus for the right words and actions for a particular situation and take the time to listen, what will Jesus do? Continue to give me what is needed to do his will, so that his

kingdom continues to grow and his will is done. That's precisely what he has commissioned and empowered us to do. To join him in rescuing people who are in danger of missing out on his grace, his mercy, his unfathomable love. Missing out on joining with Jesus in his wonderful celebration of life.

I want everyone I know to be part of Jesus' celebration of life, starting today. And we've got the key. We've got the official invitation. We