

Sermon – May 31, 2020  
“Day of Pentecost”  
Crown of Life Lutheran Church  
Pastor Dave Schilling

Grace, mercy, and peace be to you from God our Father, and from our resurrected Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen

Let's pray, "O Lord, speak to each of us wherever Your love finds us this morning, speak to us in our minds, speak to us in our hearts, speak to us by the words of my mouth, and in the thoughts we form. Speak, O Lord, we, your servants, are listening. Amen

Pentecost was a once-in-history event when the church was born. So, today we will consider three things that we learn from the historical event that we call "Pentecost."

First, we will see that the church was created by God. Then, we will see that the mission of the church is to communicate God's love to a lost and dying world. Finally, we will learn that the goal of the church is to establish a unique fellowship. Now, let's get started.

When we celebrate the birth of Jesus, all the world seems to pause and celebrate Christmas with us. When we celebrate Jesus' resurrection from the dead, most of the world recognizes the Easter Celebration as a very special day on the calendar for our church.

But today's celebration which we call Pentecost is hardly recognized by anyone outside the church. Yet, this day is important to us, since it is the birthday of the Church. We thank God for the opportunity to be part of the celebration.

The first chapter in the Book of Acts tells us of Jesus meeting with the apostles on the Mount of Olives, and telling them that they are to be His witnesses to all the world. He also tells them that they are to wait in Jerusalem until they receive power from on high.

Then, Jesus ascends out of their sight, and the Apostles go to Jerusalem to wait and pray.

As we read in our first lesson this morning, it's interesting to note that some of the people who were there listening to the Apostle's speaking in their languages on that first Pentecost Day reached the conclusion that the apostles were drunk.

They simply saw the immense excitement and joy that was expressed by the Apostle's on that day.

It is similar to the story about three prospectors who found a rich vein of gold in California during the gold rush days. They realized what a great discovery they had, and decided, "We've a really good thing going here as long as no one else finds out about it." So, they each took a vow to keep it secret.

Then, they headed for town to file their claims and get the necessary equipment to mine the gold. True to their vows, they didn't say a word to anybody. They filed their claim, bought the equipment, and headed back to their mine. But when they did, a crowd of people followed them.

And the reason they followed them was that the expression on the prospector's faces had given them away. Their faces were aglow in anticipation of the wealth that soon would be theirs. People knew that they must have found something special. So, a crowd followed them out of town.

A famous motivational speaker was once asked about his most difficult speech. He answered, "Well, it was when I was asked to speak at a national convention of undertakers. My topic was to explain to them how to look sad during a \$20,000 funeral."

You see, when there IS joy inside, it is hard to keep it from showing.

That first Pentecost day celebration indicated that the early Christians discovered unspeakable joy in the Church. For example, again and again, Paul writes, "Rejoice in the Lord. Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say, Rejoice!"

So first, let's talk about how the church was created by God Himself.

When the day of Pentecost arrived, the disciples were all together in one place.

#### VIDEO "The Day of Pentecost"

So, the disciples were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages. (Acts 2:1-4)

The Church is immortal. Before the foundation of the world, God had the Church in His mind. And He promised that even the gates of Hades would not prevail against it. So, Jesus came into the world, and after His death, burial and resurrection, the Church is formed 50 days later on Pentecost.

Sometimes we act as if we think that Simon Peter called a meeting of the apostles and said to them, "Now we are here today to vote on whether or not we ought to start a Church."

As we just heard again, that is NOT AT ALL how it happened. The Bible says, "Suddenly, a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven."

God started the Church. God created the Church. It is HIS Church, not ours. We are just a part of it. And it is essential for us to realize that.

I heard that several years ago many radio stations were running some commercials for two major Christian denominations. And both sets of commercials were advertising for their members to come back to them.

One commercial actually said that the denomination realized that they had made a mistake. "We drifted away from the foundation upon which the Church was built, and now we are returning. We are turning back to the Word of God. Please come back home again." And that is basically what the both commercials said.

I find that interesting because for many churches, even today, the temptation has been to look at what is happening in the world, and then try to get the Church in step with the world. The thinking is that people will be more apt to join us, if we looked more like the world. And that is just as WRONG as it can be.

The Church may never be the most popular institution in the world because the Church goes counter to popular culture on many fronts.

You see, God wants the Church to stand for truth, to be unshakable in our presentation of the Gospel ... and He wants that because the Church belongs to Him.

It is His Church, not ours, and He sets the rules for His church. He gave us truth in His Word ... the Bible. So, we see that God created the church as a sanctuary for His truth. Secondly, we also see that the mission of the Church is to communicate God's love to a lost and dying world.

Now there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men from every nation under heaven. And at the sound we just read about, the multitude came together, and they were bewildered, because each one was hearing the disciples speak in their native languages.

And they were amazed and astonished, saying, "Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? And how is it that we hear them telling in our own language the mighty works of God."

All were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another...

"What does this mean?" But others mocking said, "They are filled with new wine." But Peter, standing with the eleven, lifted up his voice and addressed them: "Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and give ear to my words. For these people are not drunk, as you suppose, since it is only the third hour of the day."

Acts 2:5-15

The theme of Pentecost, believe it or not, is communication. It is really a shame that the whole idea of speaking in tongues became such a controversial issue back in the seventies. It literally tore local and national church bodies apart.

When you read about Pentecost, the truth that comes to the surface is that God gave the gift of languages to the apostles for ONE purpose, and that was the purpose of communication.

At the time, the apostles had a huge communication problem because people had come from so many different nations. And when you read the long list of nations, you realize that a language barrier certainly existed.

But because God wanted each of them to hear the message in his own language, He performed a miracle, and He gave the apostles the gift of languages so that they could COMMUNICATE His message.

The mission of the Church is to communicate the message. Now if God wants to give us a miracle to do that, praise Him for it.

But you see, today, we are still having communication problems. We are translating the Bible into different languages, and we're trying to win converts from different countries, train them, and then send them back as missionaries to their own people.

We must do whatever we can do to communicate, but the MISSION HAS NEVER CHANGED, and the moment we become a Christian, God commissions us to share this simple message

with our little section of the world.

Have you ever heard the name "Rockin' Rollin" Stewart? Okay, let me ask you another question. How many of you have ever watched a college or professional sporting event and have seen a giant sign with the words "John 3:16?"

How many of you have seen that? That's amazing!

Rockin' Rollin Stewart is responsible for that happening. His story appeared in Peoples Magazine years ago, and it is a fascinating story.

Rollin Stewart was an alcoholic. Then, he met Jesus, became a practicing Christian, and God healed him of his alcoholism. One day, the idea struck him that if he could just get into major sporting events, and put the Word of God in front of the people and cameras, it would be seen by thousands, if not millions of people.

So, for a number of years Rockin' Rollin Stewart and his wife, Margaret, and a friend named William James, lived a very spartan life. They averaged driving 55,000 miles a year in an old beat-up van, telling their story, and using the money they collected to buy tickets for major sporting events to hang a large sign or sheet in the stadium saying, "John 3:16."

There is no way to know how many people turned to this passage as a result of those signs hung in athletic stadiums.

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life." John 3:16

Hanging signs in public may not be your thing, but the point is, here is a man who heard God's command to tell the world.

You see, when you and I are saved by the blood of Jesus, and added to His family, then God expects us to do the best we can to communicate that message to the lost and dying world as well.

That is the mission of the Church ... the mission of each one of us.

So far, we have learned that God created the church, and that our mission is to communicate God's love to the world.

Finally, we are going to see that the Goal of the Church is to establish a unique fellowship.

When the people heard the words of Peter, they were cut to the heart, and responded to Peter and the rest of the apostles with, "Brothers, what shall we do?"

So, Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself."

"And with many other words he bore witness and continued to exhort them, saying, "Save

yourselves from this crooked generation.” So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls.”

Acts 2:40-41

Can't you just picture these early Christians after they first hear the good news about Jesus? On the Day of Pentecost there are 3,000 new converts, and they suddenly experienced something that had never been shared before.

All of them know that they are guilty, and they have crucified Christ with their sins. But now they have repented of their sins. They have been baptized. They have been redeemed, and they have been given the gift of the Holy Spirit. Suddenly, they are part of a new society.

They have come out of a world of slavery and superstition. They have come out of a world of selfishness and greed and dishonesty.

Now they are part of a new fellowship where they can share things about themselves with others whom they know will listen and be kind and compassionate toward them.

Suddenly a whole different atmosphere prevailed because here were 3,000 changed people that God had made different and new.

They were "born again." No wonder their number quickly grew to 5,000, and then into multitudes as the Church spread throughout Jerusalem. More and more people were attracted to them. It was different from anything else in all the world.

The Church must ALWAYS be that. Most institutions are only interested in what they can get from you, but the Church wants to give to you.

Many will take advantage of you, but the Church is where you can come and hear the truth, and be ministered to, and have many needs met in your life.

We are to be a different people, a different culture. Perhaps similar to ... an oasis in the midst of a desert, a shade tree on a summer day, a place to come and to know that you won't be rejected, that you'll be accepted and loved in the midst of the family of God.

Pentecost tells us that. The world changed after Pentecost because of the Church's influence on that world. And it ought to be the same today.

This morning, whatever trials and burdens you have going on in your life, know that within these walls there are people just like you with similar issues. So, we can all be here without pretending.

We can just be ourselves with all of our warts and blemishes and scrapes and scratches. We can find love and acceptance here because God created the church with a mission to extend His love to everyone, so we can experience a unique fellowship ... a family of God. Amen