

St. Luke Ev. Lutheran Church
Sermon by Pastor Anthony E. Schultz
Pentecost June 12, 2011 Joel 2:28,29



“Afterward, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days.”

People of God – rescued from the flaming lake of fire in hell by the innocent blood of the very Lamb of God:

I flew my American flag on Monday – and thought about my Uncle George! Monday was the 67th anniversary of the D-day invasion. Thousands upon thousands of American soldiers piled out of landing crafts onto the beaches of France. Literally thousands of them were killed by German machine gun fire that rained down on them. Private Hal Baumgarten was a part of that invasion. He said, “Lots of people – when they are sick – when they learn they have a terrible disease say to God, “*Why me?*” Private Baumgarten said, “I say to God – *why me* – for the exact opposite reason. I was wounded 5 times – and still I survived! I say to God every single day of my life – *why me?* Why did I survive when so many others all around me died?” Why me? Who am I – to be so blessed that I know Jesus died on the cross to wash away all my sins? Why am I so blessed that from infancy on – I have known the Holy Scriptures able to make me wise unto salvation for Jesus’ sake. This Pentecost Day we give thanks and praise to God:

The LORD Gives Us His Spirit!

- 1. How glorious!**
- 2. How practical!**

The part of God’s Word we are concentrating this Pentecost morning – from the scroll of the Prophet Joel. What does that mean to us? What’s the memory hook for the scroll of the Prophet Joel? Grasshoppers! Locusts! That’s what you need to think of – when you think about Joel – plagues of Biblical proportions – of locusts – the crushing judgment of the Great I AM! Prof. Eickmann wrote The People’s Bible for Hosea, Joel, Amos. He wrote about the plague of locusts. The mommy desert locust lays eggs under the warm desert sand in “pods” of about 100. There as many as 100 pods – that 1,000 eggs per square foot – *1,000!* The eggs hatch – usually after it rains. Little grasshoppers – 1/2 inch long – begin to move – looking for anything green to eat! A locust weighing 3.5 grams eats its own weight each day. A swarm of locusts? A billion bugs! 100 swarms may be on the move together in a plague – that’s 100 billion bugs. A swarm may cover 200 miles in a day! The locusts grow until they are the size of your index finger. They can bounce off your face – tangle in your hair and grab at your shirt with twitchy legs! All the while you can hear them eating – literally millions of jaws grinding and chewing – they sound like

when you scrape the peel off of carrots. When I was in Kindergarten there was a plague in Ethiopia where they lost 167,000 tons of grain to grasshoppers – enough to feed a million people for a year! This alone is a preachment of the law – as these bugs ravaged the land – leading to hunger and famine! Sometimes the painful literal physical grief was a powerful symbol of the spiritual problem that infected the heart and soul of God’s people!

The part of Joel we are concentrating is a powerful Gospel promise – made by grace alone – because God is always good to His people – in spite of their sins. I went to Bible Class a little while ago – at *Cross of Glory* by Detroit. We talked about a survey of pastors in different Church bodies – and their attitudes about abortion and adultery and “hugs and kisses” and living together before you are married and about being gay or addicted to all sorts of drugs and alcohol. We talked about how some sins are almost built into us – weaknesses and tendencies towards certain sins. Sometimes it almost seems like *it runs in the family*. I will never forget the Voters’ Meeting I was at – long ago and far away – where two men were so angry at each other it was terrible! I thought I need to get between them before somebody punches somebody. Someone next to me said – “Don’t worry – they are brothers. They get like this all the time – every since they were little. Their dad was just like that!” That might explain it – but it doesn’t excuse it or forgive it. Sometimes there are families where there are bad tempers – or drinking or lies or drug abuse or a painful combination. Sometimes people get caught up in – am I to blame for this – or was I born this way? Are my actions willful and malicious or beyond my control? The fact is we are spoiled by sin – through and through. There is nothing in me – that is in my flesh that is good. Dead in trespasses and sin is dead! The Gospel brings life and light. Jesus’ forgiveness is our only hope!

“Afterward, I will pour out my Spirit on all people.” The Holy Spirit is poured out – through the means of grace – that is the Gospel in Scripture and in the sacraments – baptism and Lord’s Supper. There are lots of people who say – I feel very close to God when I am out on the lake fishing! And I get that! You see the power and wisdom and greatness of God – when you are out on the lake up north – and an eagle soars above you – way above you – with motionless wings – very slowly around and around. And then – in a moment – the wings fold up – and the eagle dives – 32 feet per second/per second – faster and faster it heads toward the water. At the last possible moment – the wings explode out – the head goes up – and the talons come down – hammer the water – into the big fish. The wings pull up and up – fresh fish for the little baby eagles in their nest – up in the penthouse! Yes, you see the power and wisdom and greatness of God in that! But it’s not God’s Word! It’s not law and gospel! Our faith grows when we sit around the camp fire and read God’s Word. Our faith grows when we come to Church on Thursday night – when we know we are going to be gone on Sunday. Our faith grows when we receive Lord’s Supper. The Holy Spirit is poured into our hearts – through the means of grace!

Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions. Your sons and daughters will prophesy – proclaim, preach and teach and share God’s Word! We see that when our children and grandchildren announce God’s Word! We saw that on Ascension – last Thursday night – when the children of our Trinity St. Luke’s Lutheran Grade School – read and proclaimed God’s Word! Our sons and daughters prophesy

when the young people in the choirs from Lakeside Lutheran High School and Luther Preparatory School come here and sing. Our children prophesy on the Sunday before Christmas and Christmas Eve – when they say, **“Unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior which is Christ the Lord!”** This Word of God is fulfilled when sons and daughters graduate from Martin Luther College and from our Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary – and are assigned by District Presidents and School Presidents and the President of our Synod – actually are assigned by the Holy Spirit – in answer to the prayers of the Church! Sons and daughters in class rooms and Sunday School rooms – proclaim law and gospel – feeding Jesus’ lambs and sheep!

Your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions. This is of course Hebrew poetry – remember? The thought repeats – the thought is made vivid by opposites – roses smell sweet – skunks smell stinky – or it goes up steps. I like apple pie – I really like pecan pie – I like warm pie with ice cream melting even more – and I like poppy seed torte best of all. Get the steps? **Old men will dream dreams** – seeing an angel – hearing a message from their Heavenly Father. There are several examples. Can you think of them? When the carpenter Joseph found out that the Virgin Mary had a baby in her tummy – he planned to divorce her quietly – so as not to expose her to great public disgrace. **“But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, ‘Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.’”** Matthew 1:20f ESV. The Apostle Paul saw a wondrous vision. Do you remember that? **¹ I must go on boasting. Although there is nothing to be gained, I will go on to visions and revelations from the Lord. ² I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago was caught up to the third heaven. Whether it was in the body or out of the body I do not know – God knows. ³ And I know that this man – whether in the body or apart from the body I do not know, but God knows – ⁴ was caught up to paradise and heard inexpressible things, things that no one is permitted to tell. ⁵ I will boast about a man like that, but I will not boast about myself, except about my weaknesses.** 2 Corinthians 12:1f NIV. Paul had a thorn in the flesh – something painfully difficult and frustrating – just so he wouldn’t become proud and puffed up from the visions he had seen. And the Apostle John saw wondrous visions of Heaven. You know them. **After then I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands...”** Revelation 7:9f ESV. **Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.** Revelation 21:1f ESV. There is powerful comfort in the visions – which you can see too – when you read your Bible! Imagine what powerful changes there would be in our families, our congregation, our community, our world – if God’s people would make just a little time each day and read their Bible!

Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days.” Jesus will give you opportunity to tell people about him. It happens all the time. You just need

to be ready. We were driving to Detroit the other day. We stopped for lunch at IHOP – the International House of Pancakes. I always order the same thing – the Swedish Crepes – with tangy little Lingenberries and a side order of crisp bacon. I had a cup of coffee – and this is the part I really liked. The waitress started to pour the coffee – and then she held the cup lower and lower and the pot higher and higher. She didn't spill a drop. I don't think that's showing off either. It's doing something very simple – exceedingly well! It's doing something very ordinary – very *very* well! And you know what? When someone says that was really nice – I really appreciate that – you can say, "I'm doing this – because Jesus is my Savior!" It's the guy at the Detroit bus stop *dancing!* Detroit is a tough place – it really is! And here's this guy – at the bus stop – closer to my age than not. Wearing a white T-shirt and a big piece of bling around his neck – waiting for the bus – dancing! I like that, too! There has to be joy in your heart to have such happy feet. It's almost like a musical – kind of a one man flash mob! It's a happiness in your heart that just overflows.

I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Last Monday was the 67th anniversary of D-day – the invasion of the beaches – as the Allies counterattacked! Do you know any Nazis? Have you ever met a Nazi soldier? When I was in High School I worked for a flower and seed company. I spent the summer replacing broken pieces of glass in green houses. One of the men in charge of growing African Violets was a little man named Gottfried. Gottfried was a little man who walked with a painful limp. The fact was – Gottfried was a German soldier in WWII. He was a prisoner of war. When he realized in the final days of the war that Germany had lost – he surrendered to American soldiers – solely to make sure he didn't become a prisoner of War of the Russian Army. The Russians so hated the German soldiers they would do unspeakable things to them. Well, the American soldiers were in such a hurry to get to Berlin they turned all their prisoners of war over to the Russians. Gottfried and his best friend were afraid. They were sure to die at the hands of the Russians. They would have to escape – or die trying. That night they said they needed to go to the latrine – at the edge of camp – and suddenly started running – literally running for their life! The Russians shot at Gottfried with machine guns. They hit him in the legs again and again – and still he ran. He hid in the forest and tried to tend his own wounds – until the war was ended – and he made his way to America! Gottfried – the German soldier – would you hate him? Or would you have pity on him? We were God's enemies – born dead in trespasses and sins. Still God the Father loved us. The Father sacrificed his one and only innocent Son Jesus – that we might have forgiveness for all our sins. Jesus died and rose again – so that we might have eternal life by grace through faith. Jesus gives us his Holy Spirit – so that we might forgive everyone who has ever sinned against us. Jesus gives us his Holy Spirit – so that we will bear fruits of faith that give glory to Him every day of our life. Amen!

To God alone all glory!

Rev. Anthony L. Schulz