



MORRISON ZION EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

www.mzluth.org

June 5, 2022

Pastor James Enderle

Festival of Pentecost; Teacher Farewell

First Lesson: [Genesis 11:1-9](#)

Psalm of the Day: Psalm 51

Second Lesson/Sermon Text: [Acts 2:1-21](#)

Gospel Lesson: [John 15:26-27](#)

The Believer has Faith: The Spirit Empowers the Church

Welcome to worship today at Morrison Zion Lutheran Church. We exist to glorify God. We have set out to do this by gathering around the Gospel so that we may grow in the Gospel and go to others with this Gospel.

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and from Jesus Christ, our Lord:

This week my wife and I were outside. If you follow my wife on social media, she'll post sometimes about what our kids are doing when they're playing out in the back yard. We were talking about how thankful we are to have a playground in our back yard. Not just a little playground, but we have the school's playground in our back yard and there is so much room to run around. It's a huge blessing. Especially if you know where we were before and how little room there was in China.

As we were talking about all the blessings of this room to run around, my wife saw a post by a person that she talked with in Shanghai who detailed all the events of what happened during the 75 days of them being in quarantine just recently. When we were in quarantine at the beginning of Covid, we could still go to the grocery store. You could pick up food from stores, but they were locked in their apartment complexes for 75 days. They have three kids. One is a new baby. They were talking about needing to get bigger-sized clothes and trying to find different clothes from people in the apartment complex and not getting fruits and vegetables for three weeks. After they got out, it was the first time in 75 days that they were able to talk face-to-face with someone from a different apartment complex. We thought we're kind of glad to see how God has worked in our lives to bring us here, where we know our kids need that space to run around. They have a lot of energy. We said, "Could you imagine living in one of those small apartments, being locked in there with our kids for 75 days? I couldn't imagine that."

That's when we had an opportunity to look back and even though we miss some of the things and food and life of how things were in China, there were times of struggle, but

you look back and you're thankful for how God has worked things. There are times in our life that maybe when it's going on we don't really know what God is working or how it's all going to work out and what His plans are. Sometimes later we can look back and clearly see. Other times it's a little bit harder. Maybe we never have a clear picture of that. Maybe for some of our teachers, when they were assigned to a city or a church in Morrison, with an address of Greenleaf, maybe they never heard of those places and said "Huh, where am I going? Where is God sending me, to this place in Greenleaf? What's life going to be like there? What is God working through all of this?" All of you maybe have similar things where you kind of say "How is God going to work this? What are His plans in this?"

As we look at [Acts 2](#), we're going to see that God is working in things and He has a clear mission. The Spirit, as we talk about on Pentecost, has a clear mission of what He is accomplishing. But the truth is that the way God works isn't always clear. We see that in our lives and we struggle to understand and comprehend how He works. He is much greater than us. We don't always get it. For the disciples, I think this is really true.

If you remember, shortly before this their lives had kind of been turned upside down. They were following Jesus for three years. He taught them all the time. They were really close to Him. Then all of a sudden He gets arrested. He gets crucified. And the motions of going through that, of having this person you love and this teacher killed, but then three days later they see Him alive. He is spending time with them and teaching them, and then later they say "Okay, now are you going to bring about your kingdom? Are you going to get rid of these Romans?" The disciples were still a little confused at what Jesus meant about His Kingdom.

But around this time Jesus tells them a few things. He says, "Wait in Jerusalem." He starts talking about leaving them again. "Wait in Jerusalem until I send the Spirit, what I have promised you. He is going to tell you the truth and teach you what you need to know." Then what does He do after that? He leaves them. He ascends into heaven. Again, put yourself in the place of the disciples. You have this teacher. You lose Him. He's back and then He's gone. You're probably wondering, "How is God going to work through this? What are His plans?"

Then we see the day of Pentecost. It says, ***"When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them."*** I think as we see these events, they are definitely very special and unique, but I wonder, why did God do it this way? Why did He have this all happen?

Again, I put myself in the place of the disciples when Jesus said, "Okay, wait in Jerusalem and I'm going to send you the Holy Spirit." What is that going to look like? What does He mean by all of this? They are sitting there and all of a sudden they see a flame resting on your head and you're not on fire. Then people start noticing it on their heads and they are saying "Okay, maybe this is what Jesus is talking about. What He promised us is finally going to happen." So they start getting a little bit of clarity in what is going to happen.

But notice how the people react to what happens. For those around them, as people are speaking the different languages, it says that they are utterly amazed. A little bit later it says, ***Amazed and perplexed, they asked one another, "What does this mean?" Some, however, made fun of them and said, "They have had too much wine."*** For Christians, it's hard for us to know God's plans at times. It's not clear how He works in our lives. We're not God. We can't always understand. But imagine and put yourself in the place of people who are maybe a little further from God, who aren't in His Word and looking to see how God works. Maybe they are really struggling. Maybe you're really struggling to see how God is working in your life. For us, even the people closest to God, it's hard. But when people aren't in church or in God's Word, it's hard to be looking for Him and there are a lot of questions in life about what our purpose is. Does God love us? Who is God? What is He doing?

So what does God do? How does God get a message out to people? Peter talks about this here. He says, ***"In the last days, God says, 'I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy.'*** He speaks about His servants and what they will do. They will teach and share about Jesus. Here we know that His servants are disciples, but I think when Peter is talking about this he's not just talking about Pentecost. He's talking about the future as well. I think it's clear that WE are His servants.

We're called to serve Him and to share about Him. We get the opportunities to do that in so many ways; maybe in your daily life as you go about your work. Maybe as a called servant; as a Called Worker you get to do that in school, in teaching. Maybe in your home as you show that. Sometimes this can be stressful, but God gives us confidence and help. As He says, ***"Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy."*** As His servants, we know something very important. His servants have His Spirit. We are serving Him, but we're not alone. We've been given the Holy Spirit that teaches us, encourages us and helps us. It creates faith in us.

If you look to our Old Testament story about the Tower of Babel, were they looking to be servants? Were they filled with the Spirit? They were in fact doing the exact

opposite. They were looking to serve themselves and make a name for themselves. They were trying to do it all themselves and not serve anyone. It's easy to see that in the world today, where the world says "Follow your desires. Your happiness is everything that matters." But as His servants and filled with the Holy Spirit, we know who we are. We look at God's Word and see how we've fallen short. We see that we make mistakes and that we're sinful, but we see that God loves us. That's really what it's all about.

The Spirit works through that Word, the Gospel that Jesus died for us and redeems us and forgives us. That love that we have, what do we do with that? As servants we can love and serve others. We can serve God in thanks for what He has done. So we serve others, pointing them to Jesus. We are filled with, not selfishness but because of what God has done for us we seek to be selfless, to serve our family, to serve in work, to serve those around us so that they get glimpses of that unconditional love and maybe they ask and say "Why are you doing that?" Or maybe they share some difficulties and you are able to share the good news of Jesus and His love. To share that we don't always understand how God is working, but we do know He has a plan. He has a plan and a purpose for us all.

At the end it says, "***And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.***" The greatest mission the Spirit has as He works in us and works through us is to point us to Jesus, because it's clear that Jesus saves. When we go out, when we share about our faith, is it all about me—of course not. We're not there to save others. It's not MY work. We are sinners just like everyone else and I can't save anyone, but I point people to Jesus, who has saved others. He died on the cross and said, "***It is finished.***" [\(John 19:30\)](#) Their sins are taken away." To know that peace; that even the sins that I struggle to forgive of my own self and those things that I hold onto, the guilt and difficulties, they've been washed away. Jesus saves us! As we go, we are filled with the Spirit to show and to explain and to clarify that to others.

But what is a cool thing is when Jesus ascended He also told them that He surely will be with them until the very end of the age. [\(Matthew 28:20\)](#) The Spirit is working. The Spirit is with us. But don't forget that Jesus is working as well. Yes, Jesus died and His work is complete, but we don't believe in a dead God. Jesus continues to work and to serve and to love and to save. He is out there helping us in our mission. Just as the Spirit works and fills us, so Jesus is out there working in His mission.

So as this year has gone on, there is probably a time as a church body, as the school, where we had a teacher take a call and then a teacher get engaged and you're probably thinking, *what is God going to do with this? How is God going to bless us when TWO teachers take a call?* Well, we know that God continues to work and God continues to provide. And for those teachers, we know that God has used them here at this church and the Spirit has worked through them to share that good news; to teach the truth of God through His Word, but also to educate and show that love. The Spirit has been

with them to show true love to these students and to this church and to be a part of this church. We thank them for that. But we can also be confident that God will continue to provide for us and for them. For us, in our church and school here, as we serve as others served, but for them as they go forward. It's not all up to them and things here are not all up to them or just a few people, but it's the work of the Spirit. It's the work of Jesus and we're just blessed to be a part of it.

So as we go forward, we know that at times we're going to struggle with how God works. There are times when it's not very clear. We may never really see it at the end. But what is clear is the Spirit's mission and that we are His servants and we are blessed; blessed to share the news that Jesus saves, that He gives us peace for now and in eternity—a peace that the world surely needs. Amen.

And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. [\(Philippians 4:7.\)](#) Amen.