

**Pentecost Year C, 2010**  
**Acts 2:1-21**  
**Sermon for Advent LC**  
**May 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2010**

**“You have the Holy Spirit”**

Dear sisters and brothers, grace to you and peace from God the Father and our risen Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

I think life would be a lot easier if everything always went the way it was supposed to. You know if people didn't die until we wanted them too, if everybody was paid a fair wage and had employment, if justice prevailed rather than war and oppression, if our church budget was a surplus and if our church softball team could continue its winning ways. And the list could go on and on- but we know that's not the way it is- people do die when they shouldn't, not everyone is paid a fair wage if they have a job at all, war and oppression rule while justice and peace seem to be a sporadic occurrence, the financial reality of our church is tough, and our softball team- well...we will see! So here we are, in the midst of this time which is uncertain, unclear, and a little frightening for many. Though it would be a heck of a lot easier if this time would change, if things would be how we want them, we know too well that is simply not reality- so...here we are. What do we do with this then? How, as members of the body of Christ, as partners in ministry with the whole church of Christ do we live, work, and play in the time we find ourselves? That's a bit question- one that does not have a simple answer, but one that we truly must wrestle with- and fortunately though we feel alone at times, feel overwhelmed, maybe even feel like our faith is gone- we aren't the first, we don't go through this alone or without instruction- we have the word of the Living God with us and our texts for today speak directly to this tension of life that we know. So let's look a little bit and find our direction.

The first reading for today picks up the tension of living in uncertain times- here we get to see firsthand what the earliest church was living through. Now we need to know that Acts is the story of a church not that different from us- they were a mission church that saw some pretty good growth in its early days and faced some hardships along the way. They were feeling pretty good- they knew their Lord was raised from the dead and all seemed right on that front. But, on the other hand, they were living in a time which was scary- they were afraid of what might happen to them as the authorities were not too big of fans- they spent much time in jail or hiding behind locked doors. Things were not going as they wanted and like many of us they were a bit empty, afraid, overwhelmed and uncertain. But, in the midst of their own uncertainty and life they gathered together in one place for worship on the day of Pentecost. And then...the Spirit breaks loose- man oh man, things get crazy- I mean think about it- coming together for a nice peaceful worship when all of a sudden a huge sound of rushing violent wind breaks the silence, and fiery tongues begin to appear and the Spirit begins to move. Some of the crowd was a bit confused wondering what the heck was going on- and others figured there must have been some pretty good communion wine- but then Peter speaks the truth of all truths- he declares that what is going on in the Holy Spirit of the Living God has come, has poured down like rain on all the people and now the people are called to prophesy. He turns to the prophet Joel and proclaims the promise of a God that now has broken

loose– that will not be kept silent, that will not be satisfied with injustice and oppression and unemployment and hate, that will not rest in the midst of uncertain times– Peter in his sermon portrays a God that is alive and who now has come, through the crashing noise and the fiery tongues and the normal people gathered for worship to change all things– to call his people to prophesy, to claim the promise that God is alive, to claim the identity of people called to be alive in the Spirit! My dear friends, – that little church in Acts, was engulfed by the Holy Spirit and from that day forward never looked back. Yes, times were still uncertain, yes fear still got the best of them, yes disagreements still happened– but through it all, in it all God was there and they knew that and allowed that God to send them out. Friends the Spirit came to them and made them alive– and they responded through their life to work for change, to proclaim the Risen Lord in all they did.

So what's changed? What's happened to the Church over the last two-thousand years that we have forgotten that we have the Holy Spirit upon us, we have the God of life upon us, we have the lord of all creation upon us and we have the calling to be the church? Sure...there is no rushing wind, no fiery tongues– wouldn't it be nice ☺– but we still have Jesus, we still have the Spirit we still are the church that believes we are God's children, that believes our Lord has risen, that believes we are called gathered and sent– so what has changed? The quick answer is a lot! Sure– times have changed...but friends you have the Holy Spirit– you as Peter proclaims have the Spirit being poured upon you– all of you–that has not changed! In Baptism– what we will do in a bit to Brooke–we are marked with the cross of Christ and sealed by the Holy Spirit FOREVER– and then...we are called to let our light shine before others– friends, that is a forever calling– that is the gift of the Spirit, that is the pouring out of the God of this world upon you. So today...as we celebrate with Brooke her baptism, may you remember your baptism, your calling, your identity, your God who comes to you, who calls you, who demands that you, sealed by the Spirit get to work in these uncertain times to bring hope to life, to bring peace to life, and to bring Jesus to life– you my friends, have the Holy Spirit– what are you going to do with it? Ignore it– ignore the calling– or decide to be willing to go wherever it leads you? Be bold dear friends in your response, be bold in your identity and be bold in who you are. God needs you, God calls you, God longs for you to work for change and to proclaim the Risen Lord in all you do! So get to it!

God loves you and so do I. Amen.