

The Day of Pentecost: John 20:19–23

From Farewell Address to Mission: Christ Breathes Mission into Fearful Disciples

Today we celebrate Pentecost — the day the Holy Spirit came upon the disciples, and the church was sent into the world. Pentecost is the moment when the Gospel touched the nations of the earth.

That is why this morning we heard Scripture read in six different languages by members of our congregation. That reflects Acts chapter 2, where people from many nations heard the Gospel in their own languages for the first time.

Pentecost reminds us that the Gospel was never meant to stay in one room, one language, or one group of people. The Holy Spirit pushes the church outward into the world.

And that connects perfectly with our monthly preaching series: **From Farewell Address to Mission.**

Throughout this month, we have listened to the final words of Jesus before the cross:

“Do not let your hearts be troubled.”

“Love one another.”

“Remain united in me.”

And today: “As the Father has sent me, so I send you.”

Jesus was not preparing His disciples merely to survive His departure. He was preparing them to continue His mission. But notice how today’s Gospel begins.

John tells us the disciples were gathered behind locked doors because they were afraid. John 20:19 says: “The doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked for fear.”

They were uncertain. Confused. Emotionally exhausted. Fearful about the future. And honestly, many people still live behind locked doors today.

Some fear health problems. Some fear financial struggles. Some fear uncertain futures.

And many people fear speaking publicly about faith, even within their own families. It is easy to discuss freely with those closest to you people about sports, work, or entertainment. But religion and politics often become subjects people avoid because they fear rejection, conflict, isolation, or misunderstanding.

The disciples were not sitting in strength. They were sitting in fear. Yet Jesus comes directly into that fearful room. And the very first words He speaks are: “Peace be with you.”

Notice this carefully: Jesus does not begin with correction. He does not begin with strategy. He begins with peace. Why? Because before Christ sends His disciples, He restores them.

The peace of Christ is not simply a greeting.

It is the assurance of His presence, forgiveness, victory, and authority even when we do not know what to do.

Then Jesus does something remarkable. “He breathed on them and said, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit.’” (John 20:22) In Genesis, God breathed life into humanity. Now the risen Christ breathes spiritual power into fearful disciples.

That is the power of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit creates trust where fear once lived. The Spirit unites people who are different for the sake of the Gospel. The Spirit gives courage beyond human ability. And he gave them power. “If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them.”

These are powerful words of pastoral authority and ministry. These are the same kinds of words often spoken during the ordination of pastors or the consecration of bishops — words of sending, authority, service, and responsibility. But this mission is not limited only to pastors or bishops. All believers are sent into the world as witnesses of Jesus Christ.

So, the breath of Jesus is not only comfort. It is empowerment. Christ gives them power to continue His work despite fear, weakness, uncertainty, and even failure. While The disciples were still imperfect. Still shaken. Still processing everything that happened.

At the moment, Jesus still sends them. Why? Because the mission of Christ does not depend on human perfection. It depends on the power of the Holy Spirit. Jesus says: “As the Father has sent me, so I send you.”

Sending is not the same as observing. Jesus did not call the disciples to sit safely and watch ministry happen. He sent them to participate in His mission. And the same is true for us.

Pentecost is not a call to comfortable Christianity. It is a call to move beyond fear, beyond routine, and beyond passivity. Faith must move. Love must act. The Gospel must go.

Mission in our congregation happens through conversations, encouragement, prayer, generosity, compassion, and service.

Jesus said in Matthew 28: “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations.” (beginning where you are. Notice the first word: “Go.”

Mission and outreach are not things we wait to be told to do. The Holy Spirit within us pushes us outward to act, witness, serve, and love. So the challenge this week is to ask yourself: Where is Christ sending me? Who needs encouragement? Who needs forgiveness? Who needs practical help? Who needs to experience the love of Christ through me?

And do not wait only for announcements or invitations. Take initiative. Speak with your congregational leaders. **Ask your:** “How can I participate?” “How can I help?” “Where is there a need?”

Because a Spirit-filled church is not built by spectators. It is built by disciples willing to be sent. Pentecost reminds us: The church is not called merely to gather. The church is called to go.

And the same Christ who stood among fearful disciples still breathes His Spirit upon the us today and says: “Peace be with you... As the Father has sent me, so I send you.” Amen.