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SERMON TITLE: The Holy Spirit Comes to Town
SCRIPTURE: Acts 2:1-21
DATE: May 23, 2021
View online service at www.fpcc.org/live-stream

Read also Isaiah 44:1-10

What does it mean, FATHER, SON, and HOLY SPIRIT?

We know there is one God, the God of Israel. The Old Testament tells us how God established a nation to bear God. You heard it from Isaiah 44:

"I established a people and explained its future. . . . Did I not proclaim my purposes for you long ago? You are my witnesses." (v. 7b-8)

The Jews were to share God with the world by bearing the Messiah, Jesus.

They were to show the futility of idols—

"Who but a fool would make his own god—an idol that cannot help him one bit." (v. 10)

Israel, this small nation, defeated other nations and survived because of their ROCK, the one true God. In fact, Israel

- ✓ Survived wars
- ✓ Famines
- ✓ Pandemics
- ✓ Wilderness living

Even in the face of their failures to have faith and live by it, the people of God were carried through by God. God had a vision for them.

We have survived wars, famines, pandemics, and injustice. We have failed also, yet. . .

God has a vision for us too. You heard the vision. This dream was planted in the Old Testament and came true this very day, PENTECOST, when the Holy Spirit came to town.

The Holy Spirit makes "little Christs." This is a phrase coined by C. S. Lewis in *Mere Christianity*:

"Now the whole offer which Christianity makes is this: that we can, if we let God have His way, come to share in the life of Christ. . . . Christ is the Son of God. If we share in this kind of life we also shall be sons of God. We shall love the Father as He does and the Holy Ghost will arise in us. He came to this world and became a man in order to spread to other men the kind of life He has — by what I call "good infection." Every Christian is to become a little Christ. The

whole purpose of becoming a Christian is simply nothing else."¹

But how does God do this?

Every time someone believes, it's like Clarence gets his wings.

You know Clarence, right? In "It's a Wonderful Life" he is the guardian angel of George Bailey. Bailey, because of financial hardships, had

- lost faith
- lost purpose
- saw no reason to live.

Clarence's job was to bring **HOPE**.

God sees a great lack in us, a lack only He can fill. The Lack: We fail to see God strongly enough that the devil is overcome:

- The devil whispers distrust and unfaith in our ears all the time.
- The devil stands for giving in to desires even though desires lead us to compromise good.
- The devil promotes selfishness and self-aggrandizement.
- The devil lays on guilt.
- The devil says, "Do what you see only;" faith is a waste.
- The devil says, "Win at all costs by making sure others lose."
- The devil says, "Rely on yourself only."

You get the picture.

We are filled with sin when we follow the elemental rulers of the universe, evil authorities of the unseen world, the mighty powers in this dark world, as Paul calls them (Ephesians 6:12). Martin Luther said in, "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God:" "this world with devils filled . . . threatens to undo us." (v. 3)

But God knew our enemy and had a plan. It goes far back in Scripture. He would send the Messiah, Jesus. His Son. Jesus knew no sin. He displayed:

- The power of God
- Grace of God
- Truth of God
- Courage of God
- Faithfulness of God
- Purpose of God

¹ C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*

Jesus loved us enough to confront the devil, overcome injustice, and call us to righteousness.

*****WE STILL COULD NOT DO IT*****

We are like Clarence without his wings. When Clarence went to help George Bailey he had yet to get his wings after 200 years. He was an Angel Second Class (ASC). ☺

Can you relate? Do you feel like a Disciple Second Class?

You might relate to George Bailey who just simply could not see that the character of his life, his decision and actions utterly affect others.

Our decisions CAN make a difference! Our behavior CAN make or break our lives, but with God we can always turn around. It's never too late!

Don't we all want the good life? Don't we want to succeed at this thing called faith?

But the disciples failed at faith and at living by what they cannot see. When the going got tough they deserted. Before that they wanted to call fire down on towns that rejected Jesus. They wanted to ignore and push away children from Jesus. They could not deal with the command to forgive seven times in one day, much less seventy! They used the sword when Jesus was arrested. Then they betrayed Jesus by scattering.

What's a good God to do?

God had foreseen all of this. God was not unaware. God observes the entire human race from heaven. He made our hearts, so he understands everything we do. (See Psalm 33:13-15)

I'm going to send my Spirit, he said. What a gift! What grace!

For us to get the Spirit, Jesus had to not only save us but go away to heaven:

"But in fact, it is best for you that I go away, because if I don't, the Advocate won't come. If I do go away, then I will send him to you" (John 16:7).

The Advocate is the Spirit. Don't we all want an advocate? Someone to promote and back us; someone who supports our efforts and helps us succeed?

Jesus is one man—every person would have to go to Jesus in Jerusalem or Galilee or wherever he was. But *what if he was able to fill each person who believes with the same Spirit?* All over the world the Spirit is present—rather than confined in one place and at one time.

Through the Holy Spirit we receive power from on high to live the Christian life. Our stony hearts are changed to tender, loving hearts. How is the state of your heart? Only God can change it.

The way it is changed is surrender. That means giving yourself to God wholeheartedly. You put your hand to the plow; bear your cross; persist; pray; get up when you fail; forgive and accept forgiveness; press on in loss, pandemic, and when you don't want to.


He will help you. This is what gives us our "wings," like Clarence. This gives us a happy ending. This changes your world and the world around us. The Holy Spirit does this.

This is the plan of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit who want you to thrive.

HEAVEN WORKS FOR THIS 24-7.

The Holy Spirit was given to us this day nearly 2,000 years ago. This day marks the beginning of Christ's Church. It is the greatest gift from God.

You receive the Holy Spirit and through his power, you live. You must do the same thing as the disciples: believe and learn to live into the Holy Spirit.

Are you open to doing that? If so, receive your wings. 

AMEN