

Devotions for the Week of Pentecost – May 25-29, 2026

Monday of Pentecost – Prayer for the Week

O God, on this day You once taught the hearts of Your faithful people by sending them the light of your Holy Spirit, Grant us in our day by the same Spirit to have a right understanding in all things and evermore to rejoice in His holy consolation; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

My grandfather and his brother, two years older, grew up helping their father farm in northwestern Iowa. Every day their mother sent a lunch with them when they were out working in the fields. One day she included 5 cookies for them. Perhaps she miscounted or perhaps there was just one left over and she put it in the box. Being an odd number, there was no way to equally distribute and a disagreement ensued between the brothers. I am not sure why division of the one remaining cookie was not an option for them, but apparently it was not. The solution they reached to the impasse was to bury the single left-over cookie lest one of them have more than the other.

Today we notice that the Holy Spirit teaches the hearts of people and we pray that he would teach our hearts as well. We like to think that teaching involves the mind. It surely does involve the mind but also the whole person and especially the heart. My grandfather related that story about himself and his brother with a rueful smile. He and his older brother went on to farm together for decades and to live next door to one another until they both died in their 90's, loving brothers to the end of their lives. The Holy Spirit had taught their hearts how to love and share and sacrifice for the other.

I can imagine those two brothers, close in age, simply not being able to agree on the proper consumption of a single cookie and finally coming to this strange solution. I can imagine it because I too have brothers and sisters and there was a day when such fights might have occupied us as well. Praise God, the Holy Spirit educates our hearts. His consolation means there is not competition, not really, among the people of God. We all have the greatest treasure of all, God's love freely and fully given in Christ.

Do you have a sibling, cousin, or an old friend with whom there is some dispute? That can happen even when we are adults. Take this time of reflection to exercise some "right understanding" and to "rejoice in His holy consolation." Pick up the phone or write the letter; restore a relationship in the light of Christ's love. The Spirit teaches us that every sin stands forgiven.

Tuesday of Pentecost – Numbers 11:24-30

²⁴ So Moses went out and told the people the words of the LORD. And he gathered seventy men of the elders of the people and placed them around the tent. ²⁵ Then the LORD came down in the cloud and spoke to him, and took some of the Spirit that was on

him and put it on the seventy elders. And as soon as the Spirit rested on them, they prophesied. But they did not continue doing it.

²⁶ Now two men remained in the camp, one named Eldad, and the other named Medad, and the Spirit rested on them. They were among those registered, but they had not gone out to the tent, and so they prophesied in the camp. ²⁷ And a young man ran and told Moses, “Eldad and Medad are prophesying in the camp.” ²⁸ And Joshua the son of Nun, the assistant of Moses from his youth, said, “My lord Moses, stop them.” ²⁹ But Moses said to him, “Are you jealous for my sake? Would that all the LORD's people were prophets, that the LORD would put his Spirit on them!” ³⁰ And Moses and the elders of Israel returned to the camp.

“Well, God does love stupid people.” It was a typical thing for my friend to say. One never really had to wonder where you stood with her, especially when it came to her estimation of your intelligence. Something foolish had been done, or better said, something worthy had not been done. There was no real excuse for it. But even if there had been an excuse for it, it would have hurt her all the same. That is the funny thing about excuses. They really do not make things better. Understanding why someone hurt me does not take the sting away.

My friend had reason to be angry and upset. In fact, she was angry and upset, but that was not all she was. She was also a prophetess. For she spoke God's heart and word into this conflicted situation with coarse words rooted in baptismal authority. She was baptized; the Spirit of God had been given to her. Filled with that Spirit she was not only the aggrieved victim of another human being's sinful stupidity. She was also a saint, a child of God, in whom the Lord Jesus dwelt by the inworking of the Holy Spirit. That meant she was a prophetess, speaking God's word in this benighted world. Prophets, you must understand, do not only tell the future. More often they speak the truth of God about the present. That has implications for the future. Forgiven sinners have a very different future than unforgiven sinners.

Moses prays in this reading that all God's people would be prophets and that the Lord would put his Spirit on them. God has heard his prayer and answered it. Jesus authorizes all of us to speak God's words of forgiveness and to know that forgiveness spoken here is spoken in heaven as well (Mt. 18:18 and Jn. 20:22-23) So be a prophet today. Forgive a sinner. Do not understand the foolish frailty of your spouse, parent, child, or neighbor. Be a prophet instead. Forgive it.

Wednesday of Pentecost - Psalm 25:1-15

¹ To you, O LORD, I lift up my soul.

² O my God, in you I trust;

let me not be put to shame;

let not my enemies exult over me.

³ Indeed, none who wait for you shall be put to shame;

they shall be ashamed who are wantonly treacherous.

- ⁴ Make me to know your ways, O LORD;
teach me your paths.
- ⁵ Lead me in your truth and teach me,
for you are the God of my salvation;
for you I wait all the day long.
- ⁶ Remember your mercy, O LORD, and your steadfast love,
for they have been from of old.
- ⁷ Remember not the sins of my youth or my transgressions;
according to your steadfast love remember me,
for the sake of your goodness, O LORD!
- ⁸ Good and upright is the LORD;
therefore he instructs sinners in the way.
- ⁹ He leads the humble in what is right,
and teaches the humble his way.
- ¹⁰ All the paths of the LORD are steadfast love and faithfulness,
for those who keep his covenant and his testimonies.
- ¹¹ For your name's sake, O LORD,
pardon my guilt, for it is great.
- ¹² Who is the man who fears the LORD?
Him will he instruct in the way that he should choose.
- ¹³ His soul shall abide in well-being,
and his offspring shall inherit the land.
- ¹⁴ The friendship of the LORD is for those who fear him,
and he makes known to them his covenant.
- ¹⁵ My eyes are ever toward the LORD,
for he will pluck my feet out of the net.

I once read that a human being learns 60% of everything which he or she will ever know by the time one is three years old. Another 20% is added by the fifth birthday. In those early years we learn to walk and talk, to smile and play, to solve problems and how we react to stress, and much more. If you know a preschool teacher or young parents with small children, pray for them and honor that person. They do incredibly valuable work in their education and care of children.

As I have done before, I encourage you to read this psalm slowly and ponder each verse. Ask yourself what you imagine David is talking about in each line. As you read, you will notice that teaching shows up in several places within the psalm. What do you think we need to learn that God has to teach us? God's ways are not our ways (Is. 55:8-9). His ways are higher and much better than our ways.

Some of these things are not intellectual or things of the mind as much as they are the ways of the Lord, the patterns and habits which we probably do not think about very often. If you read a little earlier in the Isaiah 55 passage I mentioned above you will read that God connects those higher and better ways to the steadfast covenantal love he showed to the same David who wrote this psalm. Is David simply asking to love like God loves? How would that look in your life?

Thursday of Pentecost - Acts 2:1-21

When the day of Pentecost arrived, they were all together in one place. ² And suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. ³ And divided tongues as of fire appeared to them and rested on each one of them. ⁴ And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.

⁵ Now there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men from every nation under heaven. ⁶ And at this sound the multitude came together, and they were bewildered, because each one was hearing them speak in his own language. ⁷ And they were amazed and astonished, saying, “Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? ⁸ And how is it that we hear, each of us in his own native language? ⁹ Parthians and Medes and Elamites and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, ¹⁰ Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, ¹¹ both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabians—we hear them telling in our own tongues the mighty works of God.” ¹² And all were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, “What does this mean?” ¹³ But others mocking said, “They are filled with new wine.”

¹⁴ But Peter, standing with the eleven, lifted up his voice and addressed them: “Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and give ear to my words. ¹⁵ For these people are not drunk, as you suppose, since it is only the third hour of the day. ¹⁶ But this is what was uttered through the prophet Joel:

¹⁷ ““And in the last days it shall be, God declares,
that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh,
and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,
and your young men shall see visions,
and your old men shall dream dreams;
¹⁸ even on my male servants and female servants
in those days I will pour out my Spirit, and they shall prophesy.
¹⁹ And I will show wonders in the heavens above
and signs on the earth below,
blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke;
²⁰ the sun shall be turned to darkness
and the moon to blood,
before the day of the Lord comes, the great and magnificent day.
²¹ And it shall come to pass that everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.”

Have you ever noticed how God often uses some odd people to be his best missionaries? The immoral woman of John 4 or the ex-demoniac of Mark 5 come to mind. But of course, Paul's persecuting past did not make him an obvious choice for the apostolic role. This pattern did not stop with the Bible. John Newton, author of the familiar hymn "Amazing Grace" had been a slave trader before his later career as pastor and hymnwriter. Amazing Grace is not his only contribution. In LSB alone he also penned "Glorious Things of You are Spoken" "How Sweet the name of Jesus Sounds" "Come, My Soul, with Every Care" and "On What has Now Been Sown." More recently Charles Colson, indicted in the scandals of the Nixon era, became the founder of the influential Prison Fellowship Ministry.

In this reading, the people of Jerusalem saw rustic Galilean fishermen, but now Spirit-bearing disciples, and assumed they are drunk. Being a baptized and thus Spirit-filled Christian will often put us on a collision course with people's expectations. The Holy Spirit operates with a strange and surprising logic. He sees things which our human reason cannot grasp. Peter identifies for his audience why they are so surprised: God is at work.

That same Holy Spirit, poured out in every baptism and through the ministry of Word and the fellowship of God's people, is at work today. He is at work through you. We cannot expect that this will make a great deal of sense or at least it might not make sense at the time. In hindsight we can see Paul's zeal for the Torah becoming just what the Church needed as it navigated its way into a ministry to Gentiles. Newton's and Colson's past experiences gave their words an authenticity. But those are assessments we make in hindsight. It likely felt very different for people at the time and for these men themselves.

What does this out-poured Spirit of God move you to do today in this kingdom? I am excited to see it. Pray for discernment and listen to His Word. Times of unrest and upset are frequently when He has something in mind.

Friday of Pentecost - John 7:37-39

³⁷ On the last day of the feast, the great day, Jesus stood up and cried out, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. ³⁸ Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, 'Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.'" ³⁹ Now this he said about the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were to receive, for as yet the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.

C. S. Lewis famously noted that Jesus's claims either need to be rejected or accepted. There is no middle ground with Him. He either is what he claims to be, the Son of God, or we have to think him a madman or worse. This reading is one of those times. John tells us that this is the last day of the feast of Booths (Jn. 7:2). This was the festival in the Jewish calendar which remembered the exodus under Moses. A significant part of the festival in Jerusalem was a ritual which remembered the water from the rock (Ex 17 and Num. 20.) Apparently, water was ceremonially poured out of a pitcher on this last great day of the feast.

You can imagine that this would have made quite a stir when this Galilean preacher stood up and claimed that the festival was truly about "me." For Jesus is saying that he is the living water. He

is the one who gave the water long ago and the one who gives this living water which perpetually quenches thirst. After he said this, John tells us that some thought he might be the Messiah, but others wanted to arrest Jesus. Did they think him mad? Did they think him blasphemous?

John leads us right to the startling claim of Jesus for our lives. Jesus pours out the very Spirit of God on us. John tells us that when Jesus said this, it had not yet happened. But by the time he wrote and by the time you read his words, Jesus has done it. If you do not think Jesus a madman or a liar, which I assume you do not, Jesus is telling us that he gives us the Holy Spirit and out of our hearts, for the good of this world, flows an eternal spring of living water. In this time with all the challenges and blessings it holds for you, pray that God opens your heart to be that spring of living water flowing into the world.