

The Day of Pentecost -- 2021

Ezekiel 37:1-14

Acts 2:1-21

John 15:26-27; 16:4b-15

In Nomine Iesu

Beloved Saints of Christ the King,

It is such a high honor to be back with you again. Our 18 years in Rialto were made all the sweeter by knowing you and the wonderful Gospel we share. Your dear shepherd, Pastor Smith, was and remains one of my dearest friends. Ah, it is good to be home! And we should always feel that way about being in Church. This place is your home. As the Holy Spirit used the Word, joined with the flood of Holy Baptism He brought you home, into this Family.

Pentecost, the Old Testament festival of harvest, of celebrating the super abundance of our loving God, this has been honed, sharpened, pointing not to the fruit that may rot or spoil, but to the grain that has to be plucked from the ground, that is the borrowed grave of a man named Joseph. It is the fruit that comes from One Tree, it is the fruit that is Christ, crucified and risen, His body hanging on that cross, His blood shed... the King, yes, Christ the King as the Servant of all, serving not as despot but as Savior and giver not only of life, but of adoption into God's family. He is the fruit we eat this very day!

Christ Jesus is the First-Fruits of the Resurrection (1 Corinthians 15:20-23) and has made you, dear Christ the King family to be also His first-fruits. On this day when we celebrate the harvest of the First-Fruits we celebrate Jesus and His sending of the Spirit, all so that you, beloved, would be the fruit of this love.

John in Revelation 14 puts it this way:

^{ESV} Revelation 14:1,4b-5, ¹ Then I looked, and behold, on Mount Zion stood the Lamb, and with Him 144,000 who had His name and His Father's name written on their foreheads. [Here remember your Baptism!]It is these who follow the Lamb wherever He goes. These have been redeemed from mankind as firstfruits for God and the Lamb, ⁵ and in their mouth no lie was found, for they are blameless.

Beloved, take this gift to heart, that you are His beloved, His firstfruits, His church. This is your birthday, for it is the day when we celebrate the giving of the Spirit to bring forth the Bride of the Lamb. Today we celebrate the God who uses Ezekiel's voice to prophesy for bone to join together with bone on that dry plain. We celebrate the God who causes breath to come into the resurrected bones and flesh. What God did back then He continues to do here in Redlands!

We live in days of "don't" and "can't." These are days of keeping distance and masking-up, of fear, of isolation, yes, of depression and the making of dry bones. Wherever you see a dry

valley, beloved, remember how the Lord speaks. He speaks to dry bones! Remember what His Word does! It gives breath and it gives life!

We, beloved, are living in the best of times, for ours is the God who today through His Bride, through you, prophesies to dry bones! Evangelism is our breath, or should I say, His breath in you! How blessed to be His church in these days when things can seem so dark, so dim, when the world seems to be winning. We who have had the breath spoken into our dry bones now get to speak that same Word to our dead world!

This is heavenly stuff! This is our God! Behold our Savior in that Upper Room on the night in which He was betrayed and took the bread and broke it, the night when He poured the Cup of Salvation! He speaks comfort to those 12 men who soon would see their worst fears realized as He lay lifeless upon that awful tree, not 24 hours later! His gift of comfort. Yes, ours is the God of all Comfort! And yes, He comforts us that we may comfort others with the same comfort we ourselves have received from Him (2 Corinthians 1:3-4)! The name often given to the Holy Spirit is that He is called The Comforter!

Jesus will comfort these men, even as He comforts you, dear Christ the King! His Cross paved and continues to pave the way. Jesus declares that because He goes to the Father He will send the Spirit, the Paraclete, the Comforter, bear witness about all that Christ has accomplished for us, for us who are dry bones now animated with the very breath of the Spirit! This Holy Spirit has a four-fold mission: To convict the world:

- 1] of sin... to expose unbelief as the deadly pestilence it truly is.
- 2] of righteousness... that Jesus' resurrection, His finished work on the cross brings righteousness to this fallen world, to make the dry bones to live and to breathe... all in Him!
- 3] of judgement... for sin and satan have met their match! Now hear that! When things seem so dark, when evil seems to have the upper hand, fear not, for as we sing in the great hymn of the Reformation:

<i>Though devils all the world should fill,</i>	<i>This world's prince may still</i>
<i>All eager to devour us,</i>	<i>Scowl fierce as he will,</i>
<i>We tremble not, we fear no ill;</i>	<i>He can harm us none.</i>
<i>They shall not over-pow'r us.</i>	<i>He's judged; the deed is done;</i>
<i>One little word can fell him. (656, st. 3)</i>	

- 4] The fourth is not to convict the world, but to guide, to guide the Bride of Christ into all truth.

All truth is yours, dear Christ the King on this birthday celebration where we rejoice not in ourselves or our righteousness, but in the power of the Triune God whose very Spirit removes all that would keep us from Him and who guides us in all righteousness as we confess our sins!

Hear that again, All Truth is yours for you know the conviction of the Law... and then the sweet honey of the Gospel that causes bone to come together with bone, sinew and flesh to cover those bones and to have the very ruach Elohim, the very breath of God to be breathed into us. And now to be breathed to those the Lord has placed us near to love.

All of this you celebrate each Lord's Day when you come home, home here to Christ the King and you enter your home with the weight of your sin, and you lay them down at the foot of the cross, confessing them, then receiving from the mouth of your under-shepherd the very heart of God toward you... that your sins, though scarlet are made whiter than snow, though these sins be red like crimson are made to be like wool! (Isaiah 1:18)

He guides you, does this precious Holy Spirit, to not only confess your sins, but also to confess the truth that on this Altar the God of your redemption not only redeems you, but feeds you with the very Bread of Heaven, gives you to drink of the Cup of Salvation.

So fed and nourished, so forgiven, you go forth into this darkened world bearing the very Name of Christ... shining the Light of Christ upon those in the darkness... bringing the very Word of Life, to dry bones on the arid desert of a world. This is yours, you who often fear now, for He continues to convict of sin, to heal and to lead... you and so many others.

To this amazing Triune God of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit belongs all glory and honor, all thanksgiving and praise, both now and everlastingly. Even so, Amen and Soli Deo Gloria!

Guest Pastor, Rev. Eric Kaelberer