

Dear LW Brothers and Sisters,

As the world around us continues to convulse, we need, more than ever, to turn to God's Word and His Church for comfort, assurances and the means to understand the "why" of what we see non-stop on the news: if it isn't Covid, its violence in our cities.... 😊

The Pentecost text we shared last Sunday is preached every year in most churches around the world, it is both exciting and instructive. Rather than do our usual verse by verse, I chose to focus on a few verses for three emphases.

1. Acts 1: 1 reminds us of the importance of "being all together". Some versions correctly add "of one accord" as this more accurately captures the Greek. God created us to be together, especially for His purposes and in His name, but also for OUR strength and comfort as we support each other as brothers and sisters of our spiritual family. The Covid crisis has taught us this lesson hasn't it? As I visit by phone or with social distancing our members they all yearn to be together again "of one accord". We can't wait for Easter II (hopefully in August) at Living Word!! In the meantime, redouble your efforts to stay in touch with each other and if you aren't comfortable in the sanctuary yet, stay "tuned" to LW through our facebook and website. "Comfort one another"....

2. The central part of our text, verses 2 and following, record how God used an ordinary, annual Jewish harvest festival (Pentecost) to put His Holy Spirit into all those gathered and then when those who had gathered from the far corners of the Mediterranean world went back to their far flung homes they took with them the power and message of God -- it was a Spirit of God explosion! Because it was so powerful and surprising it was, at first confusing -- it caught all of them off-guard! Yet GOD USED A BIG EVENT AND CONFUSION SURROUNDING IT ALL TO BRING ABOUT HIS PURPOSE. He can do the same with the events of today if we turn to HIM!

3. Verses 19 & 20 refers to even greater and more astounding events that will foreshadow the end of times. "...blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke...", sound familiar? Isn't that all we've seen on TV this past week?? Is the end near? Maybe.....Just know this: Jesus is coming again and all the drama of our world will come to an end, and He will reign. The big question: ARE YOU READY? Now might be the time to give that question some additional thought. Clear up whatever unfinished business you have not only with others, but God Himself. Be comforted, as in our text today, GOD IS IN CONTROL!!!!!!

For your assignment this week, as I asked on Sunday, please reread and "pray" the words of the beautiful Pentecost songs we used for worship. I'll attach last Sunday's Worship Guide.

May the Lord bless, keep, protect, and comfort each and every one of you in this week to come...

Pastor

Rev. Michael W. Birnbaum