

That was the first Pentecost—
 God speaking, and the people responding with praise.

Now jump forward some 1476 years later to Jerusalem.

Again, the sound of the slaughtered Lamb of God still lingers in the ear.
 The past 50 days have seemed like an eternity, and at the same time, just as yesterday.
 50 days ago, the 12 gathered outside Jerusalem,
 they witnessed the slaughtering the Lamb without blemish.
 And everything was covered in His blood.
 50 days ago, the firstborn of God was *not* spared.
 50 days ago was the Passover.

But as Jesus says in today's Gospel,
 "the ruler of the world comes, but he doesn't have anything on Me!" (John 14:30).

When Pharaoh and his army came charging down on the sons of Israel,
 he was a picture, prefiguring Satan, charging down with all his demons against the Christ,
 the true Son of God, the promised One of Israel.

The difference between these two stories is that Israel was spared the wrath of Pharaoh,
 but Christ our Lord wasn't.

Satan is called the ruler of this world.
 He comes only to steal and kill and destroy.
 He has only one goal: to take you away from our Lord's word.

When God appeared on Mt. Sinai and spoke to His people they all responded with one voice,
 "All that you have said we will do."

This is the hardest part of the Christian faith: practicing what we preach.
 And this is why our Lord gives us Pentecost.

Throughout Israel's history Satan constantly tempts them away from our Lord's Word.

First Eve and Adam were led to believe that God didn't really say, *"you shall surely die."*
 And then Israel doubted the promise of land and food and protection and joy and life.
 The disciples doubted and were terribly frightened—even after Easter.

Jesus told them all that would take place:
 His death, His resurrection, His ascension, and the sending of the Holy Spirit.

All was spoken ahead of time, Jesus says, *"in order that you might believe."* (Jn 14:29)

And here we are today—
 50 days after the slaughtered Lamb of God on Good Friday.

50 days after the Easter Vigil, that night of darkness that became light.
 50 days after the shouts of resurrection: *Christ is risen! He is risen, indeed! Alleluia!*

Today is Pentecost.
 And just like the ancient Israelites,
 and just like the 12 disciples,
 we gather together where our Lord has promised to be.

And He is here.
 On Sinai He told His people who they are as His people.
 In Jerusalem He sent His Holy Spirit to the 12 and they declared the mighty works of God.
 And today, at Grace/Trinity in Wichita, our Lord comes to you again!

He tells you who He is—
 the God of the Exodus, the God of creation, the God of deliverance, the God of peace.
 He tells all that He has done for you; He tells of His love.

But notice in all of this, it is God coming to you, God speaking and declaring you His own.
 That's why Israel had Moses and Jerusalem had the 12 and you have a pastor—
 because God always comes to you with His Word.

That's the joy of Pentecost—
 that the Holy Spirit attaches Himself to the Word.

He comes in every language.
 He gathers together all those who are scattered.
 He undoes the curse of Babel and draws all men together around the *mighty works of God*.

And what is this Word?
 What are *the mighty works of God*?

It's the Gospel, the good news of what Christ Jesus has done *for you!*
 It's the story of His death, that final Passover.
 It's the story of His resurrection, that final Exodus.
 It's the story of His ascension to the right hand of the Father,
 where He works all things together for the good of those who love Him.

Pentecost is the day where all that Christ has done and fulfilled is given to you.
 It's when everything becomes clear, the light goes on—
 and we realize that all He did was *for us!*

Pentecost goes on every Lord's Day.
 And who wouldn't want to be at Pentecost?
 Who wouldn't want to be where our Lord comes and gathers His people?
 Who wouldn't respond: "*all that the Lord has spoken we will do!*"

And that's our prayer today: that the Holy Spirit would fill our hearts with His Word of truth, and fill our lives with His love.

We pray that our words and our deeds together give glory to God.

There's no chance of this apart from the Word—apart from the gathering around Christ.

So come, Holy Spirit! Fill the hearts of your faithful and kindle within us the fire of Your love!

Give us a right understanding in all things and peace and joy in the gifts You give.

Undo the curse of Babel and our self-made pride.

Undo the separation and scattering and the splits and the hatred.

Form us together into one Church, one Body—

draw us into Christ.

And in all of this, forgive us when we fail to practice as we preach.

In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit