

Pentecost - John 15:26-27, 16:12-15

Just after receiving his driver's license, a Minister's son wanted to talk about using the family car. "I'll make a deal with you," his father said. "Bring your grades up, read your Bible more often, and get a haircut. Then you may use the car once or twice a week."

A month later the question came up again. "Son," the father said, "I'm proud of you. I see you studying hard and reading your Bible every day. But you didn't get a haircut."

After a moment's pause, the son replied, "Yeah, I've thought about that. But Samson had long hair, Moses had long hair, and even Jesus had long hair." "True," the father replied, "but maybe you noticed that they walked wherever they went?"

We all know the kind of person we want to be, but what happens when we fall short? We all know the kind of life we want to live, but what happens when our real life does not measure up? The short answer to this question is that God adapts. Adapting one's self for the sake of another is a profound sign of love.

Tom and Alice were young and deeply in love. They had been married for four years and their friends had given up on waiting for their love to fade. These two had the ability to keep their love fresh and alive. They were easy at showing affection in public, and many people would point to them as an example of a couple who knew how to maintain romance in their relationship.

Then tragedy struck. Alice suffered a severe stroke that paralyzed half of her body. She was confined to a wheel chair. Tom became the primary care giver. The two struggled to continue loving each other in these new circumstances.

One day as Tom entered the room, he found Alice crying. “I’m so discouraged,” she said. “How can I be a partner with you when I am in this condition? I can’t love you like I did in the past.

Even the simplest things are taken from me. When you enter the room I want to smile, but I can’t do it. Only a part of my mouth turns upward, whereas the paralyzed part remains a crooked little frown.”

Tom thought for a moment and then knelt down in front of his wife’s wheelchair. He carefully twisted his own mouth until it mirrored hers. Then he gently kissed her. “See,” he said, “We still fit.”

Adapting oneself to the needs of the other is a profound sign of love. This is exactly what God does for us. In fact, this is what we celebrate today on the feast of Pentecost.

On this feast we celebrate the mystery of how the love of God comes into our lives. Pentecost is the conclusion of the Easter Season. We have already celebrated Jesus’ dying and His rising and His ascension.

But all of those powerful acts of salvation are irrelevant if they do not impact our lives. Unless we can carry within us the effects of Jesus’ dying and rising, all the power and grace of that paschal mystery is wasted.

Today on the feast of Pentecost we celebrate the truth that God has given us His own Spirit to **unleash** the power of Jesus’ resurrection in our lives. Jesus breathes on the disciples in the gospel and says, “Receive the Holy Spirit.” It is God’s own Spirit that allows the effects of the resurrection to match our circumstances.

It is not by chance that many of the great mystics of the Christian tradition have imagined the Spirit of God as a kiss. God's Spirit is that place where the love of God touches our lives. The Spirit of God is flexible in that touch.

A spirit by definition does not have bodily form. It is not a concrete thing. Therefore, the Spirit of God is fluid and can adjust to our personal conditions. The Spirit of God reshapes itself to meet the contours of our lives.

The good news of Pentecost is there is no place, no situation in which we find ourselves, into which the Spirit of God cannot come. Are you a sinner? The Spirit of God comes to you in your sinfulness and prompts you to repentance.

Have you experienced a loss? The Spirit of God comes to you in your sorrow and plants a seed of hope. Have you lost the zest for living? Is everything ordinary and routine? The Spirit of God comes into your heart and opens your eyes to see the wonder of creation.

There is no place into which the Spirit of God cannot come. There is no circumstance which the Spirit of God cannot invade.

The good news of Pentecost is that God takes the power of Jesus' death and resurrection and **adapts** it to match the conditions of our lives. This is God's promise. This is God's intention. This is God's gift. To make sure that in every time and place the kiss of the Holy Spirit will always fit our lips.

He breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit." AMEN.