



**Home : Sermons : June 4, 2006**

## **Pentecost and the Sanctifying Work of the Holy Spirit – Rom 15:14-16**

**Introduction** – Today is the observance of Pentecost Sunday, a Lord's Day seven weeks after the resurrection of Our Lord and Savior in which the promise of the Holy Spirit was poured out upon the New Covenant Church. Jesus had carefully instructed the disciples that, while they were to take the gospel to all the nations, they were not to do so until they had received power from on high (Luke 24:49, Acts 1:8).

**Diverse Languages** – In Genesis 10 we have the "table of nations" and in Gen 11 we have the story that brought about these diverse nations or tongues. It happened at the tower of Babel in judgment upon an idolatrous people to divide them and scatter them over the face of the earth. In Gen 12, Abraham is promised that through Him, all of these nations would be blessed. On Pentecost Sunday, around 30AD, the Seed of Abraham sent the Holy Spirit to be a blessing to all the nations. The New Covenant will have no bounds of territory, nation, or tongue. And the sign of this blessing was the gift of diverse tongues to all the people (Acts 2). The gospel was understood in every language represented at the Pentecost gathering (Acts 2:6ff). The discipling of the nations had begun. The firstfruits were brought in by the preaching of Peter and offered to the Lord in baptism. The nations are reunited in the church, and the enemies of Christ are made into a footstool (Acts 2:33-36, referencing Psalm 110).

**The Letter to the Romans** – Years later, Paul is writing to the church in Rome, declaring and defending his ministry to the Gentiles and their inclusion in the New Covenant church through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul is a minister to the Gentiles and he shows how the Scriptures always promised the blessing of God's mercy to all the earth (Rom 15:7-12). The hope of this inclusion in the New Israel comes from the power of the Holy Spirit (v13).

**The Real Thing** (Rom 15:14) – Paul has great confidence in the church in Rome, filled and led as it is with Gentiles, and he makes this abundantly clear. He calls them "*my brethren*," he says that they are "*full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another*," radical statements coming from a former Pharisee. Put another way, they are as much sons of Abraham as any ethnic Jew (Gal 3:7-9, 26-29).

**Bold Words** (Rom 15:15-16) – Paul shares the heart of a minister of the gospel in these verses. His letter was one of bold (even hard) words, but not out of a sense of haughtiness, rather because of the grace of God given to him. Paul has been called to the Gentiles – and the goal is a people who are a holy, acceptable offering to God (Isaiah 66:18-21, Rom 12:1).

**"Sanctified By The Holy Spirit"** – In this little phrase is the work of Pentecost. It is only in that work that the work of the gospel preached, the Word proclaimed, the sacraments administered will ever have any effect upon any person or any people. Here is my point then: Pentecost Sunday celebrates the sanctifying gift of the Holy Spirit. He has sanctified and will completely sanctify the people of God to the glory of God.

**The Sanctifying Work of the Holy Spirit** – There is a glorious union of ministry by the Father and the Son through the Holy Spirit.

**Practical Sanctification Begun** (1 Cor 6:11) – Sanctification begins at the time of the new birth. It is all of grace by means of the Holy Spirit in the name of Jesus. At that time, we were washed. We were unclean, but now we are made clean. We were sanctified, or set apart for a holy purpose. And we were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus. The Holy Spirit can grab anyone (look at the list of 1 Cor 6:9-10) – that is the point of Pentecost as well. Nothing is too unclean, too unholy, too Gentile-ish. Not even me and you.

**The Ongoing Work of Sanctification** (Eph 5:18-21, 25-27) – Inwardly, the Holy Spirit takes the Word and works it into our hearts, into our new nature. Outwardly, this manifests itself in practical, holy actions, for we are no longer slaves to sin (Rom 6:6, 14).

**Faith: The Means of Sanctification** – How is the Holy Spirit, His person and power, appropriated? It is always by faith, from first to last (Gal 3:1-4).

**Outward Means?** – There are no other means other than faith, but saving, sanctifying faith works (Eph 2:8-10). Therefore, one can look to outward means such as the Word of God (John 17:17, 1 Pet 1:22-2:3), partaking of the sacraments (1 Cor

12:13, 10:16), giving oneself to prayer (John 14:13-14), and receiving the gracious discipline of God's providence (John 15:2, Rom 5:3-5) as means to sanctification. But two questions must be asked. First, are you availing your soul to these graces? Second, are you availing yourself to these graces by faith?

**And Finally** – Back to the passage in Rom 15 again. How far is this blessing expected to extend? The Gentiles, to the ends of the earth, will eventually come to faith. For both the individual believer in Christ and (in another sense) the whole world, the Holy Spirit has been poured out upon you, so that “*we shall be witnesses to...the end of the earth*” (Acts 1:8). You have been sanctified and the work of sanctification will continue until His perfected Bride is brought by the Son to the Father on that Final Day (1 Cor 15:28).

*Dave Hatcher – Pentecost Sunday, June 4th, 2006*