



Words of Blessing

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Weekly Words **Pentecost Week 9: July 6, 2008**

Living the Word

Luke 19:1-10 Jesus went on into Jericho and was passing through. There was a chief tax collector there named Zacchaeus, who was rich. He was trying to see who Jesus was, but he was a little man and could not see Jesus because of the crowd. So he ran ahead of the crowd and climbed a sycamore tree to see Jesus, who was going to pass that way. When Jesus came to that place, he looked up and said to Zacchaeus, "Hurry down, Zacchaeus, because I must stay in your house today." Zacchaeus hurried down and welcomed him with great joy. All the people who saw it started grumbling, "This man has gone as a guest to the home of a sinner!" Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord, "Listen, sir! I will give half my belongings to the poor, and if I have cheated anyone, I will pay him back four times as much." Jesus said to him, "Salvation has come to this house today, for this man, also, is a descendant of Abraham. The Son of Man came to see and to save the lost."

Pentecost: The Journey: to Discipleship—Your Faith Comes Alive

The infilling of the Holy Spirit is how one's faith comes alive. That infilling can come at a Pentecost moment and when you are open to it. My disciples had grown in faith as they walked with me. They saw miracles happen, and people came to know me as the Son of God. As I walked through villages and healed and blessed people, I saw faith grow and bloom. It became real in people's lives. My disciples and followers shared their own stories, and the Holy Spirit filled others to overflowing with faith. More and more people came to believe, and as their faith was set on fire, the world was changed and lives were changed. The church grew, and as people came together, as brothers and sisters and friends, their faith grew but more.

How can your faith be renewed, empowered, or made real? What would you be willing to do to make it come alive? You have to be willing to let go, trust in me, and give up control. You have to be willing to give you life to me and set out on my path for you. You have to let the wind of the Holy Spirit blow afresh on you and pray for that same wind to blow on every member of the body of Christ—of me—today.

Faith is like a mustard seed. It starts small, and you nurture and feed it. When it is planted in good soil—like the churches in scripture, sharing groups, ministries, Sunday school groups, outreach ministries, and the gospel preached and lived—it is being used to build up people and my church. Your faith grows as you move through and past the hurts, disappointments, tragedies, and losses in life. You stretch yourself and go out each day, seeing yourself as one of my disciples and knowing I will help you and be with you.

What about the times you feel you erred or let me down? Peter, Paul, and others through the ages have struggled. They made mistakes or erred. Trust that God is good and no matter what you do or fail to do, I will love you. That is your faith anchor. Keep praying and believing in yourself and in me. Trust in me. Reach out to others. Be in church. Your faith will come alive!

Your faith comes alive through doing, acting, loving, and moving out of self. It comes alive when you focus on me in prayer, faith, and action. As you focus on others you will be taking steps on the path to loving all—as I do.

You will see miracles happen. Offer your prayers, read scripture, listen to me, give to others, and set love into action. Love as I do. Be in church. Use your gifts, support the ministries and gifts of others, and get children and youth involved and doing things. Let the Holy Spirit fill you and show you where to go and what to do. Smile. Feed people. Talk to the homeless and the poor. Be in sharing groups. Use your gifts and your faith will come alive. Believe me, it will.

For Sharing

Word for the week: Choose one of the following words that you believe is meant to help you this week. Share your answer with others. **Action** **Bloom** **Trust**

Scripture for the week: Choose one of these scripture passages. What does it say to you in your journey? Share your answer with others.

Luke 4:38-41 Jesus left the synagogue and went to Simon's home. Simon's mother-in-law was sick with a high fever, and they spoke to Jesus about her. He went and stood at her bedside and ordered the fever to leave her. The fever left her, and she got up at once and began to wait on them. After sunset all who had friends who were sick with various diseases brought them to Jesus; he placed his hands on every one of them and healed them all. Demons also went out from many people, screaming. "You are the Son of God!" Jesus gave the demons an order and would not let them speak, because they knew he was the Messiah.

Mark 8:22-25 They came to Bethsaida, where some people brought a blind man to Jesus and begged him to touch him. Jesus took the blind man by the hand and led him out of the village. After spitting on the man's eyes, Jesus placed his hands on him and asked him, "Can you see anything?" The man looked up and said, "Yes, I can see people, but they look like trees walking around." Jesus again placed his hands on the man's eyes. This time the man looked intently, his eyesight returned, and he saw everything clearly.

John 4:46-53 Then Jesus went back to Cana in Galilee, where he had turned the water into wine. A government official was there whose son was sick in Capernaum. When he heard that Jesus had come from Judea to Galilee, he went to him and asked him to go to Capernaum and heal his son, who was about to die. Jesus said to him, "None of you will ever believe unless you see miracles and wonders." "Sir," replied the official, "come with me before my child dies." Jesus said to him, "Go; your son will live!" The man believed Jesus' words and went. On his way home his servants met him with the news, "Your boy is going to live!" He

asked them what time it was when his son got better, and they answered, “It was one o’clock yesterday afternoon when the fever left him.” Then the father remembered that it was at that very hour when Jesus had told him, “Your son will live.” So he and all his family believed.

Action for the week: This week, write notes to or meet with two people and share something about your faith journey. Choose people or friends who are going through a time of doubt, struggle, disappointment, or questioning. Talk to them as I would. Pray and invite the Holy Spirit to fill you so your words and faith are felt. The purpose is to let your faith grow and be alive and seen. It is also to help someone else see his or her own faith made real and alive.

Decision: What situation and decision are you facing right now? Is it about a relationship, a church situation, school, or a decision about your future? Is it a decision about what to do next in your journey and where I am calling you to use your gifts? Talk to someone you know whose faith is strong and inspires and helps others. Together make the best decision you can.

Witness my love and reality: Share my words with others each week. Tell someone about your faith and journey.

Daily prayer for this week: Lord, my faith is strong most of the time, but I want my faith to be even deeper. I want it to help and encourage others. I want my faith to be unshakable and visible so others will know of your love, words, and reality through me and through your words and blessings.

The following words are for you. You will know which ones speak to you and answer your questions or prayers. These personal words are guidance for you in your journey today.

- Your faith is active and real, but it can really come alive and strong by reaching out as my disciples did and living it every day. Show faith when things happen. Offer faith when someone struggles or is worried. Pray for faith for yourself and for those who doubt. Talk to people who are discouraged and can’t see or hear me, and then pray with them, believing I will be there.

- If you are nearsighted, you can’t see unless you put on your glasses. Things seem too far away. If you are farsighted, you need glasses because things are too close to see them clearly. I want you to put on your “glasses” each day as you look at people, situations, and decisions in your life. If something or someone is too close or a situation is too much on your mind, step back. Put on my glasses of discernment and see the person or situation as it is. If you are too far away to see a person or situation clearly, move closer. See things as they are. Be confident in what you now see close up. Trust in me.

- There is a need in my church that you can help with. First, be in church, where I have called you. Come each week and be involved with one outreach or need and one prayer group, study group, book group, or scripture- or word-sharing group. Give all you can of your time, energy, passion, and support. As you give and pour out, your own faith will grow, and you will see a powerful miracle and affirmation. As you give in the place where I have called you, your journey and faith will bloom.

- When a builder builds a house, the builder gives time, gifts, talents, and faith. The builder brings in others with different gifts to make sure the house will be built strong and right. Your life, faith, and future are much like that. You have gifts that are building up my church, and you have a special call and ministry, but you need others to help you by using their gifts and strengths. Now is the time to build something together. I have all the supplies and tools you

need.

- Your angel was there, dressed simply but poorly. You offered a smile and that encouragement was what was needed. Your angel was showing you how your gifts of compassion, kindness, and faith bless people and can bless even more. Look for angels and people to help each day. Your faith will grow and you will see and hear what faith can do. Your angel is always nearby. Look!

- Healing can be a miracle moment, but it is usually a process of time, daily prayer, faith, humility, patience, and absolute belief. Pray for healing each day. Make a healing list. Contact people in need of healing and offer to pray for them. Let them know when you hear my answer. Let your faith and healing gifts be your strength and witness. You will heal many, many people in my time.

- Your faith will grow in powerful amazing ways this year. You will have some prayers and questions answered. Help others to do the weekly words. Work with people in your church where your kindness and humility is just what is needed to keep the peace. I want to see more youth in church and new people really made welcome. You have a way of helping others to see clearly.

- Change is not easy, but you can't avoid it. Changes in your plans, hopes, goals, schools, and friendships will happen. You can be frustrated and even disappointed, but this year you must gather up the strength and faith needed to go forward to some new beginnings. Paths will turn, but it can be a positive turn. A gift, call, or friendship may unfold in ways you did not plan, but you move forward. You have had some changes that you cannot control. See the positive side and know I will smooth things out, and you will see the way forward. Your changes are positive.

- New beginning! I love that and so do others. You are going to experience a new beginning and time this fall, but begin now. Each day pray and say, "Jesus, show me a 'need' this day." Keep track of what happens. Look for that need. Pray and think of others you know, both family and friends, and what their needs are. When you know you have the gift of seeing needs, you will also see how to meet them. You are my help and support for many people. Bless you.

- Use your gift of listening to be a closer and better friend and support to others. Don't get caught up in your own journey or questions so much. When you help others as a friend and really listen to them, you will find your way. Reach out to three people this week. Really listen!

- Friends are so important in life. You can deepen friendships in many ways. If you have to move you find new friends or realize you have to really work at keeping some old friends. Call or write a friend each day. See how you can affirm, support, or encourage them. Some friends need you more. Be there. Some friends may hold back, but keep going forward. The friends that went with me and followed me became my family, and we were there for each other at all times. You have such friends. Be thankful. How about working on adding three more friends this year?

- Gifts of kindness and healing? Use them each day this summer. Look for ways to help others with kindness. Pray for healing of others. (Keep a list.) You will see a miracle each week and some bonus miracles as well. Begin with someone who needs healing but won't ask. Then add a friend who needs to believe in me. Show them how to trust in both of us.

- Prayer and faith are gifts you have. Your prayers can and will produce miracles. Set up a summer prayer schedule. Add two things each day this month. Pray and read it each day. Keep track of answers and blessing. Let people know you are doing this, as they will be so happy.

- Sometimes you try so hard to be positive and supportive of others that it is hard to have faith in what you are doing if the other person does not respond. There will always be "closed doors" in life and in friendships. You can't force the door open; the person who closes it has to open it. The same goes for you. If you close the door, it is through grace and love that you open it again. I want you to have faith in me and in yourself for the year ahead. I am going to bless you in an amazing way. You will find so many new friends and so many closer friends.

- You are a good friend, and people are drawn to your sincerity and kindness. They look to you because you believe in me and your faith shows. It is alive! At least three friends in your life right now want to know me like you do. Share your story. Share these words and invite them to share the scripture with you and go to a church with you. Tell them you can also pray for them.
- “Seeing” is your gift and talent. Your faith lets you see what can be accomplished and how a person can change or be filled with the Holy Spirit. You can see someone’s disappointment become a positive experience in time. You see the good in people and how their gifts can be used in their life and in my church. You see joy and good with a simple heart.
- I was there in the store. I smiled when you were looking away. You were helping someone, which is what I see you doing all the time. I see the times you help angels, strangers, and those who seem poor or lost. I see you helping someone your own age. You were showing people my love, words, and reality. You were showing them that there is good in the world and they are loved. Bless you
- Okay, let’s get going! Whatever gifts you have to use today—healing, faith, evangelism, prayer, wisdom, teaching, leadership, or friendship—let them come alive! See how to use them in more ways and greater ways to build up and save my church. Push away things that get in the way. Be in a group that shares my words, evangelizes, and prays about how each one can use his or her gifts in amazing but simple ways to reach many, many people. I will be going out with you.
- You are good with children and teenagers. Help them this summer. Teens see you as a friend in whom they can confide and trust. Children see you as the smile and help they need. Friends see you as a loyal confidant because you call them and spend time with them. Three friends will become closer to you this summer, and your friendship will grow in special ways and experiences.
- There are people in your life who want to meet me, know I am real, know of my love for them, and know I bless and empower their gifts. As you reach out to help others, especially this summer, your faith will come alive in a powerful life-changing moment. People love you and truly listen to you. They look at your life, faith, and gifts and want to be like that, too. I am waiting.
- You are so good with children. You help them and love them. You teach them and show them how to be good and to believe in themselves. I wish everyone had the gift of faith that is really a child’s faith. That means you can believe and love as a child does. Children can see the angels that are there, just as you do. Look for angels with children and you will both see them.
- Some things can change through prayer and faith, but you cannot change everyone, because people have free will. You learn to pray and believe in changes happening through prayer and faith, but you also have to accept the things that for others reasons cannot be changed. You cannot control people or situations. You try and do your best. You pray and give it to me.
- Decisions? What to do? Pray. I will show you the right path and what to do. I will give you answers. The right doors will open and you will have all the confidence and faith you need. Next fall will be an exciting new time for your gifts, talents, friendships, relationships, and what you will be doing with your gifts in the world. Your friendships will be many. Your joy will be great.
- Enjoy summer! Walk, fish, meet in coffee shops, meet with friends, and look for angels like Charlie. Look for me. See blessings and miracles, such as the way someone smiles at you, the friend who helps you and encourages you, the kindness of a stranger, or the hug of a teenager. Summer is balm, comfort, and joy. Be renewed and do some new things. Help someone every day, and be sure to help people in your family some of those days. Be with old and new friends. You will see your angel when you least expect it. You will meet me and will feel my blessing.
- You have the gifts of humility, faith, and healing. You live those gifts and use them in ways

that are led, guided, and filled by the Holy Spirit. Keep being my witness and showing others how to follow me with all their heart. Your faith will be used to heal many, many people.

Read and pray my words to you

Please note that the Bible verses are drawn from the Good News Translation (or Today's English version), so references to a particular stopping place may not match your translation exactly.

Zechariah 4:6-7

Micah 7:7

Haggai 1:13-15

Isaiah 32:15-20

Malachi 4:2

Psalms 9:1-2

Psalms 37:3-6

John 6:16-21

Luke 17:11-19

Mark 2:21-22

Acts 5:12-16

Matthew 5:14-16

John 7:37-39

Acts 11:21-24

Mark 8:31-37

Luke 6:22-25

Mark 5:34-43

Matthew 8:23-27

Romans 5:1-5

Ephesians 4:23-24

2 Peter 1:10-11

Romans 15:18-21

Hebrews 12:1-2

2 Corinthians 1:1-4

Romans 15:12, 20-21

Philippians 1:3-6

2 Thessalonians 1:11-12

Romans 10:13-17

Note: For suggestions on how to conduct a weekly words sharing group, go to the Words of Blessing website at:

http://www.wordsofblessing.com/pdf_docs_other/word_sharing_instruct_v5.pdf

And for more details about the Words of Blessing EGGS Project, see the website at <http://www.wordsofblessing.com/eggs.html>.