



Words of Blessing

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Weekly Words **Pentecost Week 7: June 22, 2008**

Living the Word

Acts 4:32-37 The group of believers was one in mind and heart. No one said that any of his belongings was his own, but they all shared with one another everything they had. With great power the apostles gave witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and God poured rich blessings on them all. There was no one in the group who was in need. Those who owned fields or houses would sell them, bring the money received from the sale, and turn it over to the apostles; and the money was distributed to each one according to his need. And so it was that Joseph, a Levite born in Cyprus, whom the apostles called Barnabas (which means “One who Encourages”), sold a field he owned, brought the money and turned it over to the apostles.

Pentecost: The Journey to Discipleship—Compassion

When you step out into the world each day, whether you are at home, at school, working, traveling, or walking, you have the opportunity to experience, offer, and receive compassion. My words to people today are the same. It is wrong to steal, to hurt people, and to walk past the poor or wounded on the “side of the road.” Every day I see and hear about worldwide tragedies and needs. You wonder what you can do, but it seems overwhelming. How can you make a difference or show your concern and compassion? The journey I walked was one of compassion for people—my friends and family, the rich and the poor.

My children, stretch out your hands to heal and to be healed of self. Stretch out your hands when you see the pain, struggles, or needs of those you see, meet, and hear about. Reach out and pray. Help in whatever way you can. Use whatever resources, prayers, or help you can offer, even if it is only an encouraging word. Can you offer shoes, food, a coat, a blessing and smile, hope, understanding, acceptance, prayer, or compassion? Remember, the person you see could be me.

When you offer and feel compassion, your faith comes alive. The Holy Spirit is the one that teaches you and strengthens you to do all those things. The Holy Spirit gives you the gifts and compassion of my disciples so you can be my hands and heart to help others in my name.

The journey to discipleship is filled with so many things to learn and do, as I did. Through the Holy Spirit you are called and inspired to visit the sick and reach out to the lonely, the hurting, or those who are left out at school, work, or special activities. Maybe you can do more in your church to support your clergy and teachers. And what about those quiet people in church who give time to provide music or keep things clean and supplies in stock? Compassion is needed by those who are depressed, having a hard time, or struggling in school, in relationships, or at work. What about youth? They need support, friendship, and encouragement and need to have their

faith built up each day. The journey to be a disciple involves being compassionate and caring.

What am I calling you to do? I will show you in the next three weeks. Begin with understanding and believing that I ask *you* to go out each day and see the needs in the world as I do, and offer your compassion and help. Your journey will always show you where my love, words, and reality are needed and where your caring is needed. Look at the people in your life. Make a list of those who need your kindness and support. Pray for them when you see them. Do something to help them.

Remember that forgiveness is part of compassion. Love is part of compassion. And so are feeding the poor, supporting and affirming others, helping the sick, reaching out to outcasts, and helping those who have lost jobs or are struggling with school. Think of those who are lonely or are having family or financial problems. A person in a broken relationship or a person who has physical problems or an illness needs compassion from you. Everyone needs compassion. When you reach out and offer compassion as I did, your heart will be filled. You will have a new spirit. Each day set aside time to pray about a story in scripture when I showed compassion and my disciples and followers did. Then believe you too are needed to help the world.

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.

Compassion

Opportunity

Hope

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

1 John 3:16-18 This is how we know what love is: Christ gave his life for us. We too, then, ought to give our lives for our brothers! If a rich person sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against his brother, how can he claim that he loves God? My children, our love should not be just words and talk; it must be true love, which shows itself in action.

Matthew 9:35-38 Jesus went around visiting all the towns and villages. He taught in the synagogues, preached the Good News about the Kingdom, and healed people with every kind of disease and sickness. As he saw the crowds, his heart was filled with pity for them, because they were worried and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. So he said to his disciples, "The harvest is large, but there are few workers to gather it in. Pray to the owner of the harvest that he will send out workers to gather in his harvest."

Colossians 3:12-15 You are the people of God; he loved you and chose you for his own. So then, you must clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. Be tolerant with one another and forgive one another whenever any of you has a complaint against someone else. You must forgive one another just as the Lord has forgiven you. And to all these qualities add love, which binds all things together in perfect unity. The peace that Christ gives is to guide you in the decisions you make; for it is to this peace that God has called you together in the one body. And be thankful.

Action for the week: You have seen me this past week. You will see me again in the next two weeks. I ask you to respond to the needs you see. Do something to help and show your love and compassion to one special person each day this week. I will be there. You will see me.

Decision: Pause and pray quietly inside for a few moments. Think of all the people and areas of your life and all around you that need your help and compassion, and ask yourself where you think I would most want you to help. What one need would you most want to meet?

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

Daily prayer for this week: Jesus, there are so many needs in the world and so many people who are suffering and struggling. I don't know where I can help the most or where I can do the most good, but I am ready and willing to do something each day of my life to offer compassion and love to at least one person. And I pray that you will help me to see them and offer our love.

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.

- You are on a special journey this year. You are deepening your faith and gifts. Your strength will be seen and used more and more. Your path will take you to more places and people than you could guess—a school, a workplace, a person in serious need, a lonely person, and some people who are sick. Your kindness is wonderful, and I just smile with joy.

- Offering compassion and patiently listening to someone who is troubled or struggling (especially a young adult or teenager) is a way to heal, bless, and help another. Your caring and understanding help people you meet and hear about, people you know, and even that friend of a friend. I ask you to think of writing little notes that express your compassion, love, and healing prayers. Be involved in supporting a healing ministry and keeping a daily prayer list. Keep track of miracles.

- There are many ways, times, and places to pray for the power of the Holy Spirit and my grace to heal. Pray for people when you are walking, in a store, at church, at a baseball game, or in a coffee shop. Pray for people everywhere. Look for people who need healing and grace. Yes, you will be able to tell. Pray for them and believe miracles will happen, even if you do not see them.

- You have the gift of compassion, and I see you using it and living it every day. The world is so busy. People hurry along, too busy to look at the beggar in the street, the lonely person in church, or the restless child who is tired or ill. But you have the gift of compassion, and I see you use it and live it with simplicity. Your kindness helped a stranger who was struggling and a friend who needed support and friendship. Your words helped someone to not give up. Your smile blessed some people who were weary and did not feel well. Bless you, my child of compassion.

- Spring and summer are wonderful seasons that seem to blend together. It is a time of new growth. This is a season of planting for you. I ask you to use your gift of being able to talk to people about me and about your journey of faith. Invite them to your church and to a Bible study, book group, special event, Sunday morning sharing, or a workshop. Or simply invite people to meet some Christian friends to talk about the journey of faith. You have three people in particular that you can reach out to now. Remember, you may be the only way they can see me right now.

- You have the gift of healing. Yours is a special and powerful call. You have been healed and your prayers will heal others. Be more involved in a healing ministry and service. You are not

too young or too old. Bring a friend your age to a service. Be filled! There are many ways to heal. Pray. Listen to me. Be still. See healing happen. See healing miracles happen.

- I am showing you a group of people your age who are open to the Holy Spirit and to growing spiritually. They are each in a different place—some are already serious and committed and others want to be committed and filled. Pray and listen. I will show you how to bring them together so that each one can be filled, blessed, and empowered. Begin by making time monthly to talk about your faith, questions, hopes, gifts known and sought, where you feel you are called to use your gifts, and how each one can give more love and compassion to others in the world. You will see miracles. You will hear me in a still, small, but clear voice. Look. *Look*. Believe.

- Offering compassion and patiently listening to someone who is troubled, is struggling, or has questions is a way to heal and bless someone. Your caring and compassionate heart helps people you meet and hear about, as well as the people in your life. Think of writing notes that express our compassion, understanding, and prayers for people. There is one person who really needs that right now.

- This year you have had some times when you were concerned about someone in your family. You had a friendship that fell apart. You wondered how you could rest or let go of some of the many things you do as you are tired. My child, you are discovering that peace within comes from a heart and spirit grounded in faith, scripture, praise, and love for me and for others. Lean on me more in the year ahead. I will bless you each day because you will truly feel my presence.

- Come to me each morning as you begin your day. Pray for an open and peace-filled heart. Think of those who need prayers and support and bring them to me. Make this time of quiet with me a gift to you and a gift to others. Your prayers are so special, and they really help many people.

- My joy is your strength. My joy fills you and strengthens you so you can see others as I do and help people who need encouragement. My church and its people need joy. Teenagers, young people, and those who are sick need joy. Reach out to one person each day this week and offer smiles and joy in any way you can. Be creative! Watch blessings happen and faith renewed.

- Take time to go to a hospital and look around at the people in need. You can sit in the coffee shop, the lobby, or near the emergency room. Pray for the people you see. Think about what they are going through. You will see me, you will meet an angel, and you will be given a vision of what I am calling you to do with your own gifts, right now in your life. I will be there, too.

- Trust me. Be confident in your path and direction right now. Be at peace with your decisions and how you are using your gifts and talents. Believe in yourself and what you can do for others. Your family is in my hands. Believe in success in what you do and in your plans. Be courageous and know I am with you each step of the way.

- I am bringing people to you. I am sending people to you! Trust in me and we will work together. Some need a friend, others need hope or support, some need to know they are special, and others need discernment for decisions. Pray before you guide them and offer our words.

- The gift of evangelism! I hear some people sigh, but a few cheer. Some look the other way and point to the friend who always speaks up for Jesus. Others pretend I don't mean them. Which person are you? Evangelism is an exciting gift and important need in the world. Evangelists can never sit still because there are always more people to bring to me. I know you can evangelize. How about bringing just one person to me this week? Tell this person about your journey and about me. I will be with you!

- I love coffee shops, and in the summer I love to stop where people pause for ice cream. I listen to the laughter and see the joy and happiness of others, and it makes my heart so glad. I ask you to stop at one of these places each week during the summer. Look for signs of happiness. Do something kind for anyone you see there, even if it's simply offering a smile! I will be there

waiting for you.

- Your angel was there. Yes, when you least expect it, angels appear. You stopped to rest and just be. I was nearby. I smiled and you noticed me. I wanted to bless you because you are simply a caring and faithful person. You are growing in confidence about sharing your gifts and story with others. Keep trusting. Look for people who smile at you and smile back. It may be me.

- Decisions are part of the journey. You have some decisions to make each day. Yep, who will you write to, call, or spend time with? Will you get that list of things done? Will you do the chore you have been putting off? Decisions are also about one's faith journey. You have a decision each day about making time for prayer, calling a friend who needs encouragement, or helping out with something at your church. You could even write a note to cheer someone up. I ask you to really think about the decisions you are making each day and be more aware of me.

- As a Christian you do not really choose your gifts. And when you know what they are, it is the Holy Spirit filling you so you can use them in the best way and place. Then it is your decision to follow the direction you are led to and called to. How can you know how I am calling you to use your gifts now and where? Listen to my voice. Pay attention to the invitations and listen to what people say to you in affirming what they see you doing. Listen. Pray. Trust. Be active and involved in a faith community. Share my words with others. Then live out your call and gifts.

- I love the joyful noise people make when they are in church at a Christian gathering, workshop, or healing service or when they share my words with someone and tell someone about my love and reality. When you really let go and are happy, chattering, and sharing, I feel your joy and love, and so do others, especially your family and friends.

- Rest in the spirit. You have heard of that? You can do this at gatherings, when you have been blessed or filled with the Holy Spirit, but you can also make time each day at home, school, or work and at coffee shops, hiking trails, fishing ponds, lakes, or hospitals. Simply sit and be still and be filled. Trust in me. You will love doing this so much that you will do it each week. Watch for me.

- You have many talents and gifts that you use in a ministry and job. You are caring and yet you are strong in your faith and in your commitment to me. Find more ways you can use your gifts in the year ahead to bring hope, healing, encouragement, and smiles to others. I will be there and will be looking for your wonderful smile and ever-caring words. You are so special!

- I am showing you the path ahead. I am showing you where your gifts and talents are most needed. You are caring and compassionate and there are people who need that. There are places of healing and faith that need you and your gifts. I am going to give you a sign. You will see me. You will hear about some invitations and you will be encouraged by someone outside your family.

- Many gifts and ministries are needed in the church and the world, but the gift of prayer is so very important. You have the gift of prayer. It grows from a spirit of faith and humility and a heart of compassion for others. It grows from trusting people. Pray for two things and two people right now. Yes, right now. That is the special beginning. If you are with others, and I hope you are, you can still pray out loud. They will wait and so will I. You will feel my blessing and love.

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.

Isaiah 62:1-2, 9

Habakkuk 3:17-19

Isaiah 54:10

Ezra 8:23
Exodus 15:1-2, 13
Isaiah 61:1-2, 5-6
Psalm 130:1-2, 5-6
Psalm 3:3-6
Matthew 14:13-14
Acts 16:38-40
Luke 8:42 (begin with “As Jesus went along...”)
Mark 10:29-31
Acts 11:13-18
John 15:10-13, 16-17
Acts 10:1-6
Matthew 11:28-30
Acts 20:22-24
Luke 7:21-22
Acts 14:21-23
Mark 12:41-44
John 20:21-23
Matthew 25:35-40
Acts 2:43-47
1 Thessalonians 3:6-10
Galatians 6:9-10
2 Corinthians 1:3-7
Colossians 3:12-14
Philemon 3-7
2 Corinthians 6:9-10
Ephesians 2:8-10
Romans 12:1-2
1 Corinthians 3:13-14, 16, 22

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>.