



Words of Blessing

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High School/College Weekly Words Pentecost Week 15: August 17, 2008

Living the Word

Acts 5: 12-21 Many miracles and wonders were being performed among the people by the apostles. All the believers met together in Solomon's Porch. Nobody outside the group dared join them, even though the people spoke highly of them. But more and more people were added to the group—a crowd of men and women who believed in the Lord. As a result of what the apostles were doing, sick people were carried out into the streets and placed on beds and mats so that at least Peter's shadow might fall on some of them as he passed by. And crowds of people came in from the towns around Jerusalem, bringing those who were sick or who had evil spirits in them; and they were all healed. Then the High Priest and all his companions, members of the local party of the Sadducees, became extremely jealous of the apostles; so they decided to take action. They arrested the apostles and put them in the public jail. But that night an angel of the Lord opened the prison gates, led the apostles out, and said to them, "Go and stand in the Temple, and tell the people all about this new life." The apostles obeyed, and at dawn they entered the Temple and started teaching.

Pentecost: You Have a Mission—Bring People to Jesus

The church grows and my love, words, and reality go out when you and others accept your call and mission in life. Everyone has different gifts to meet the needs of different people and places in the world. This was true for my disciples, and it is true for you today. Your mission, like that of the disciples, people you read about in scripture, and people you know of today, is to share my story and my words where you are called and needed. For thousands of years that simple mission has not changed. Bring people to me. That is your mission today and every day for life.

You do this mission by humbly and courageously accepting this call and using your gifts and daily life to bring people to me. Like building a house, you need to give hours to this task every day. You have to work with others and be in church each week for support, teaching, and community. Then, you have to be a friend. You have to talk to people, reach out, and listen. Encourage and teach. Share these words each week. Invite people to church, and get them involved and needed so they can learn.

It is not up to "others" to evangelize, pray, teach, heal, or do coffee hour; it is up to everyone. I need everyone. I need you. The heart of all these needs is to bring people to me. That begins by believing and knowing I am real. It begins in believing others are loved, listening to me, and listening to others as I would. Set aside self. Pray for people. Be in church each week and support your clergy, the work being done, and the people. It is not up to "others" to build up the church; it is a mission for everyone to bring people to me. You can go out and bring people to

me. So do it!

One way to bring people to me is to tell them and show them that they are loved and needed in the church, in the world, in the lives of others, and in sharing my love, words, and reality by using their gifts. Show people how their gifts are needed—not just gifts like teaching or singing in the choir, but of gifts of joy, kindness, inspiration, and wisdom. Be loving and resourceful. Use your gift and enthusiasm to get people’s attention. Show people our love and make it real. Like my apostles, you may not see how you can personally bring people to me. My child, look! I need all the laborers in the vineyard, every one. Through the Holy Spirit you have the strength to do it. Look! Be open.

Bring people to me. Share your own faith story. Be an example of how one can deal with life and its joys, hurts, disappointments, and blessings. You plant mustard seeds of faith. Bring people to me. This call is like making bread: It has to be molded and shaped, but it is the yeast that makes it grow. Who you are as a Christian—your faith and words—is the yeast. I need you, your gifts, and your witness just as much as I needed my disciples and followers, like Paul, Lydia, and Barnabas. You are my hands in the world, and you bring people new life through me.

You bring people to me by being a friend and letting the Holy Spirit fill you. Make time for prayer and listening each day. Seek ways to build up the church and its youth and people each day. Use your gifts of healing, prayer, music, and teaching. Be part of the church each day and week. Reach out to others. It takes faith, commitment, and action to bring people to me. Go out, offer these words, and believe. Have faith, offer your life, and follow me. Your mission is to bring people to me. That is your call each day, no matter what. I wait with joy for your gifts.

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. **Time** **Action** **Look**

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

2 Corinthians 9:6-12 Remember that the person who plants few seeds will have a small crop; the one who plants many seeds will have a large crop. Each one should give, then, as he has decided, not with regret or out of a sense of duty; for God loves the one who gives gladly. And God is able to give you more than you need, so that you will always have all you need for yourselves and more than enough for every good cause. As the scripture says, “He gives generously to the needy; his kindness lasts forever.” And God, who supplies seed for the sower and bread to eat, will also supply you with all the seed you need and will make it grow and produce a rich harvest from your generosity. He will always make you rich enough to be generous at all times, so that many will thank God for your gifts which they receive from us. For this service you perform not only meets the needs of God’s people, but also produces an outpouring of gratitude to God.

Acts 12:24-13:3 Meanwhile the word of God continued to spread and grow. Barnabas and Saul finished their mission and returned from Jerusalem, taking John Mark with them. In the church at Antioch there were some prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon

(called the Black), Lucius (from Cyrene), Manaen (who had been brought up with Governor Herod), and Saul. While they were serving the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said to them, "Set aside for me Barnabas and Saul, to do the work to which I have called them." They fasted and prayed, placed their hands on them, and sent them off.

Romans 15:18-21 I will be bold and speak only about what Christ has done through me to lead the Gentiles to obey God. He has done this by means of words and deeds, by the power of miracles and wonders, and by the power of the Spirit of God. And so, in traveling all the way from Jerusalem to Illyricum, I have proclaimed fully the Good News about Christ. My ambition has always been to proclaim the Good News in places where the Christ has not been heard of, so as not to build up on a foundation laid by someone else. As the scripture says, "Those who were not told about him will see, and those who have not heard will understand."

Action for the week: Think of someone you know who has not been in church for a long time or has no church to attend. Invite this person to a service or a special event. Invite this person to a Sunday class or a gathering where you share my words each week. Meet this person for coffee, a meal, or ice cream or extend an invitation to your home. Talk about your own faith and your journey. Reach out and bring this person closer to me by your friendship and interest in them. Be yourself; that is who people love! And watch for me, for I will be nearby encouraging you and cheering when this person says yes.

Decision/Question: What obstacles hold you back right now from doing more to bring people to know me as real in their lives in powerful and simple ways and to know my love and words? What keeps you from evangelizing and bringing people to me, to your church, and to a wonderful new path? What holds you back from sharing my words each week? Well? You can do this!

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, I know there are friends and people in my life who want to know you as I do. There are people I meet each day who are waiting to hear your story and my story of faith. I want to bring people to you. Fill me with the courage and faith needed for this mission of sharing your love, words, and reality. I am ready.

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.

- The gospel has a powerful message for you and others today: to go out and evangelize, to share my love, words, and reality. The Holy Spirit empowered my disciples and followers to go out and tell people I loved them, I died for them, and they can have eternal life. They told people the Holy Spirit would fill them with the power of my love so they too could go out. And they did. They went everywhere sharing the Good News. Today you are called to do the same. Yes, you! You have the gifts of faith, evangelism, and prayer. That is your mission today.

- Do you know someone who knows about me but does not know about my love, words, and reality in his or her life? Many do not realize they have special gifts and a call. There are important things to do in the world in my name, and people are needed. How about telling people about the Good News? Meet people for coffee, go biking with another person, invite people to

your church, or just sit and share with another. There are so many people who truly want to know, in a personal way or by a personal witness, that they are loved by me and are special. I send you out to do this work beginning now. You will know what to say.

- I have a long “to do” list for you, but it’s summer and you had a busy year. So this summer’s task will take only five minutes each day, and then you can lay back, smile, listen to music, or play some baseball. Think of your blessings. Know how you are loved. Think of an angel wanting to bless you with joy. Then feel my hands on your head, blessing you to have a wonderful day. It will happen. It will. Just believe.

- You are so much fun to watch. You have the gifts of joy and kindness. You make me smile with your innocence. You make me rejoice with your honesty and friendliness. You bring a childlike faith to others, and when they see that I become real to them. You have no idea how many people you bless every day, but I do, because they pray for you, love you, and give thanks for who you are—a source of encouragement. Each day you make me real to others. Bless you!

- I needed witnesses to go out each day to build up my church and tell people my story. Today I need witnesses like you who are sincere. You don’t have to preach or be an evangelist like Paul. You don’t have to be a famous baseball player, singer, or preacher. I want you to find your own way and use your own talents and gifts to evangelize and share my love, words, and reality. Tell your own story—it’s great! Watch for miracles to happen as you find your own simple way to tell our story. You can even invite people to church. Just be yourself. I love you!

- This is a time of learning what your gifts can be and do in greater and deeper ways. Read. Go out. Talk to people of faith who inspire you. Two places need you this year; one is a church. Make time to learn about a call and a ministry you are interested in. Learn about some projects—outreach to community, healing services, prayer groups, youth work, or evangelism outreach. Be open! You are not too young or old, too busy or shy. It is a way to bring people to me.

- I am calling you to use your gifts of faith, evangelism, and healing to build up people’s lives in church, schools, shops, neighborhoods, workplaces, and colleges—in all areas of your life. There are friends, family, and countless others who want and need hope in their lives. They want to know that I am real and they are loved and matter. Share my love, words, and reality with others. Share my story. Share your story and witness. (It is amazing!) Give people hope and smiles.

- You will see me this week. Open doors. Sit with me. Look at others through my eyes. Walk. Watch for someone in need. You saw me recently and I blessed you. The answer was “Yes, and trust.” You will see me again. Watch for me in the next four weeks. I will be there. You will see me walking near you. I will bless you and remind you that I want you to bring people to me.

- There are many ways to bring people to me. Look at what my disciples and followers did as they went out after my death and resurrection. Be yourself. Know who you are and what you believe. I don’t want you to be anything but the wonderful, caring witness you have always been. I am putting more people in your life and path in the year ahead. Share words with them. Invite them to church or activities. Let them see me as you do. I am real and I love them. Go.

- The Holy Spirit is going to fill you to overflowing in the months ahead. Seek the infilling of the Holy Spirit and know it will empower you to use your gifts in amazing ways in the months ahead. It will prepare you for a call and work that will change many lives. Be open. You will go out and bring others to me and to my church. This will be an exciting time for you. Doors will open, and your gifts and talents will be affirmed by others. You will feel a peace and joy about the path you are on. I bless you!

- Joe and Susan were there. They are wonderful angels who are good at sports, singing, art, and teaching. Joe loves golf, baseball, and fishing. Susan loves shopping, dance, and music. But they both also spend a lot of time reading things like “Angels Unaware,” “Angels in the Outfield,” and “Angel Experiences.” You will see them again in the months ahead. They will be smiling!

- The best gift you can have is a friend. You have been blessed with some wonderful and special friends in your life. Some remained friends, though some moved on in their journey. All of the friends you have had along the way saw in you a faith that was inspiring and yet challenging. You brought them to me in your own unique and humble way. Each time you shared our story with someone, their lives changed and I became a bigger part of it. You are the kind of friend everyone needs. Bless you. Hmm. I am going to introduce you to a new friend very soon. Look!

- You have the gifts of giving and kindness. You have had some difficult times this past year, but you never thought of yourself, only what you could do and give to others in your life. Although you struggled, your faith was strong and became even stronger. I put two people in your life who brought a fresh wind of joy and peace and the faith that wonderful new things were just ahead. This year will find even more special friends coming into your life and a new realization of your gifts in the world. Think about beginning each day as if you were a student going to school and learning about the wonderful special thing they will do one day in the world. That is you!

- Discovering your gift and call is an adventure. It is a journey outward every day as the path dips and turns and as you meet people who inspire you. You are in the midst of a powerful adventure right now. It is really a side path off your main path and adventure. I am showing you how and where to use your gifts and talents to help others more. I need you to build up others and to build up my church and its outreach. I am counting on you. This year will be a very exciting time.

- My followers and disciples went through difficult times and special times of blessing as they set out on the mission of my church. It was their mission—your mission. The journey was hard, and my followers knew they had to surrender their lives to me each day in all things. Some, like Mary, John, Paul, and Barnabas, knew they were living by faith. They had surrendered, and their mission, like yours, would take them to many places and people. This is your path, too. Go out.

- You are not ordinary. You are extraordinary! The Holy Spirit has filled and empowered your gifts of evangelism, healing, love, and missionary work to go out and change the world. This year begins a new time and a new path in your life with invitations to share your strengths and gifts, new friends, and a special mission and ministry that needs building up. What a wonderful and exciting year! You will experience a special miracle that is so wonderful you will want to dance and celebrate!

- I have filled you with the Holy Spirit because you were open to this infilling. I have removed the difficulties and obstacles that might get in the way. You have accepted my love and grace. You have set aside self and taken on the cloak of humility. The poor in spirit, those who are down, discouraged, or doubt my love, and those who are hurt or lost will come to you in great numbers to be transformed and have their hearts and spirits renewed, blessed, and filled with peace.

- I chose you. The journey and mission you are on is not easy, and the time and sacrifice needed along the way are hard. You are to meet the challenge of building my church, bringing people to me, healing, teaching, blessing, and empowering people to follow me and use their gifts to love and follow me. Accept your call and gifts. It does not matter so much whether your call and gifts are evangelism, healing, preaching, praying, or speaking, just accept them and use them. Whether you are a teacher, friend, healer, leader, dancer, or waitress, embrace your call and go out.

- My mother Mary's witness reflected her gentleness, love, humility, courage, and, most of all, her simple faith. You, like Mary, are a beautiful witness to my love, words, and reality. Mary set out to follow God's plan for her. She never said no and never gave up. She never complained that it was too hard, that she was too busy, or that she wanted something easier to do. She moved by faith. Remember this each day as you look at your past, where you are now, and what you see

and hope your future can be. Follow my path. Be courageous. Be faithful and humble all this year.

- Each day begin with prayer. It doesn't matter if you make it simple or complex, but do it. In those minutes ask the Holy Spirit to move you, help shape you, and teach you. Read scriptures, gospels, and psalms. Thank me for your blessings, family, friends, gifts, and life. Ask for a new heart of forgiveness about your failings and the things you did or said that hurt others. Forgive those who hurt you. This is called giving your life to me, and one must do that over and over each day. Trust. This is an amazing year.

- Patience is needed in one's spiritual journey. After Pentecost, the disciples went out committed to sharing my love, words, and reality and bringing the Good News to people everywhere. They had to be enthusiastic, committed, friendly, patient, and welcoming so people would know me and see me. Be patient with yourself and with others. Don't give up. Instead, go out each day determined to keep sharing our story, these words, and our love. You will see miracles!

- I do hear and answer your prayers every day and in all kinds of ways. When people tell you their problems, questions, hurts, or prayers, assure them that they will be okay in my time and way. Look back at the many prayers you have brought to me, and share those answers with others. I do answer prayers. Tell people about how some of your prayers were answered. Share the times I answered you even before you asked. I can remember those times. My child, believe, pray, and trust.

- Summer goes so fast. Before you do all the things you wanted to do, it's back to school, jobs, work, and planning for things in your church. This will be a wonderful and special year for you, beginning next week. You will meet new friends and will spend more time with other friends. But whatever you do, begin each day with prayer and look for ways to tell people about me, to tell your story, to offer these words, to bring people to church, and to show people I am real.

- George, Ellen, and Daisy are wonderful angels. They meet often to talk about the many ways they help people, perform amazing miracles, and show people I am real. You can make me real to others, too. Just tell people what you believe and what I mean to you. Tell people your witness and story. Just be yourself. They will believe. Tell people about the times you knew I was real. My child, in the next three months you will see and know three wonderful angels. Look for them.

- My disciples traveled near and far in their journey and mission of faith. It was always an adventure and a time of discovery. This year you will have opportunities to travel and go out. Hang on to your faith; it is strong. Be open to the people you will meet, especially this fall. Stay anchored in prayer and in my word. Be in church each week and look for ways to help and support. You will see how your gifts of peace, listening, and kindness will change three lives in a huge way.

- You have the gifts of encouragement and leadership, and you have always shared those gifts in all areas of your life. You can help children, friends, family, and those I put into your life. You share who you are as a Christian with smiles, joy, humility, and grace. Know that you have blessed many people all through your life. You have especially helped some people in your life who had questions and who needed a real friend, like you. I bless you for all you do for others.

- At times you wonder what is next in your journey. I hear you ask what you will do, where will you go, and how will I use you. My child, there will be new friends. A new door will open and new opportunities and invitations to help others and grow in your own spiritual life will be there. You are not afraid to share your faith, so your words bless and help many people. Just believe in yourself as I do. Share your story. See that door? It is almost ready to open. It is a new time.

- I was there. You looked my way. I was wearing blue and smiling because you were rushing about and not paying attention! You were praying and thinking about someone who was on your

heart. You were trying to figure out this friend. You were trying to decide what to do with a decision. My child, turn to me with your heart, and you will see me and I will help you. Look. - You know I love you. Your job, your mission, is to go out and love others. You go out and let the world and its people know they are loved. When you do this, you will change the world. People will change. It takes courage and love, but you have love and courage in all things. The Holy Spirit will empower you to do this work and to reflect the power of the Holy Spirit as my own disciples and followers did when they went out. When you forgive, love, and trust, miracles happen. I will give you one super special miracle this year. You will love it!

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 40:1 and 10-11

Deuteronomy 2:7

Exodus 24:12-13 and 33:14

Ezekiel 3:4-6

Jeremiah 15:16

Numbers 23:12

Psalms 116:9-14

Psalms 20:3-5

Psalms 84:5-8

Psalms 40:9-11

John 21:15-16

Acts 6:3-7

Matthew 17:14-20

Mark 8:1-10

Acts 9:10, 15-19

John 4:34-38

Luke 8:1-3

Acts 18:9-11

1 Thessalonians 2:11-13

Philippians 4:7, 11-16

2 Corinthians 9:6-9

Romans 12:5-8, 12-13, 18

2 Timothy 1:13-14

Galatians 2:6-10

1 John 4:19-26

Ephesians 4:1-5

1 Corinthians 13:1-3, 8-9, 13

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