



Words of Blessing

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Junior High Weekly Words Pentecost Week 1: May 11, 2008

Living the Word

Luke 24:10-17 and 28-32 The women were Mary Magdalene, Joanna, and Mary the mother of James; they and the other women with them told these things to the apostles. But the apostles thought that what the women said was nonsense, and they did not believe them. But Peter got up and ran to the tomb; he bent down and saw the grave cloths but nothing else. Then he went back home amazed at what had happened. On that same day two of Jesus' followers were going to a village names Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, and they were talking to each other about all the things that had happened. As they talked and discussed, Jesus himself drew near and walked along with them; they saw him, but somehow did not recognize him. Jesus said to them, "What are you talking about to each other, as you walk along?" They stood still with sad faces. ... As they came near the village to which they were going, Jesus acted as if he were going farther; but they held him back, saying, "Stay with us; the day is almost over and it is getting dark." So he went in to stay with them. He sat down to eat with them, took the bread, and said the blessing; then he broke the bread and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened and they recognized him, but he disappeared from their sight. They said to each other, "Wasn't it like a fire burning in us when he talked to us on the road and explained the Scriptures to us?"

Pentecost: The Journey—Transformed by the Holy Spirit

My disciples were baptized with the Holy Spirit, and they went out and transformed the church and its people. As they waited in the upper room, they wondered what would happen next. Where would they find the courage and power to persevere and go out? Then, with a powerful rush of wind, they praised God and experienced the power of my love, words, and reality filling them. Life would never be the same for them, for the world, or for you.

They became a true community of believers who would show the world the power of the Holy Spirit. With faith they would go out as evangelists and transform the world for all time. Pentecost would be an ever growing and moving reality that would change people everywhere. And so the disciples went out, and scripture tells you how each one, filled with the power of the Holy Spirit, transformed lives by offering the power of Pentecost and the Holy Spirit to others. The disciples helped others see how to be filled and transformed, as they were, by the Holy Spirit. People were baptized and empowered with their own gifts to heal, bless, teach, and evangelize.

Soon they were called to go out even farther, to other places and to more people. And those people asked to be filled with the Holy Spirit, and still more saw the power of my love, words, and reality, and they were transformed. The world was changed forever, and it continues to be

renewed, empowered, and blessed today. I need evangelists and believers to go out. I need you to be filled and changed by the Holy Spirit, just as they were, so you can go out with joy and excitement to bless, healing, help, preach, and transform lives everywhere.

The reality and promise of Pentecost is that every single one of you can experience the power of the Holy Spirit filling you with new life and transforming you through a real, powerful, and personal revelation of me, Jesus—not an intellectual experience, but an illuminating force that defies logic, gravity, or common sense. The Holy Spirit is present in you today, but you need to let go. Let the Holy Spirit transform and change your life. Let the Holy Spirit help you and fill you with an outpouring of love into your heart. You can change the lives of countless others. You can change the church and 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: **Changed Evangelize Confidence**

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

Acts 1: 5 John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.

Romans 12: 5-8 In the same way, though we are many, we are one body in union with Christ, and we are all joined to each other as different parts of one body. So we are to use our different gifts in accordance with the grace that God has given us. If our gift is to speak God's message, we should do it according to the faith that we have; if it is to serve, we should serve; if it is to teach, we should teach; if it is to encourage others; we should do so. Whoever shares with others should do it generously; whoever has authority should work hard; whoever shows kindness to others should do it cheerfully.

Action for the week: Think of the transforming power of the Holy Spirit and how the disciples, filled with courage and faith, went out and looked for people who were troubled or struggling. Some were having a difficult time in life. Others did not know me. And if they had known me, they might have walked away from me or the church. Think of one person who is having these or other kinds of problems or does not know me. Reach out. Listen. Be a friend of faith. Share these words. Invite this person to church. Pray with or for this person. Tell this person how he or she is loved and how his or her life could be better. Be the kind of friend I would be. Reach out and witness as my disciples would.

Question/decision: What decision have you made recently that you feel good about? Is it a decision you would be happy to share with me and/or others? Did you make a decision recently that you are unsure about or struggle with?

Witness my love and reality: Share my words with others each week. Tell someone about your faith and journey. Pray for people and let them know you are praying for them.

Daily prayer for this week: Lord, I want to experience the infilling of the Holy Spirit as your

own disciples were filled. I want to reach out and be a witness for you and show others how to be transformed by your love. I want this Pentecost to be a powerful experience of your grace so together we can go out and change lives. Amen

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 journey took some important steps forward and outward this year. Those changes have transformed who you are, what you are called to do with your gifts, and where you will use them. Be open to the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Pay attention to the times I will invite you to step out to help others and to the places I will ask you to go. I will bless you.

- My disciples set out, committed to the journey ahead. They had been filled with the power of the Holy Spirit and knew their gifts would be used to bring my love, words, and reality to the world. Your gifts of prayer and encouragement have blessed many, but two people have been especially helped by your gifts and witness. Go out now and share your gifts with the world.

- I have given you a challenge to begin now. You are one of my “today” disciples. You have the faith and courage to step out and share my message with the world around you and out into the world. You have experienced my reality, just like my own disciples did. Now begin to use your gifts in a more visible way so others can see, read, hear, and experience my reality and thus be transformed. I am counting on you because you are always faithful and willing.

- You will see me this week, just as the disciples did as they gathered together. Meet with a group of friends. Listen to each other, pray, and be open to the Holy Spirit filling each of you and empowering you as a group. Ask the Holy Spirit to fill you. Ask that I will be present and give each one a word and a blessing. This can be a powerful and life-changing time for all of you.

- Be willing to go out each day as my disciples and believers. I will be with you and will fill you with the power of the Holy Spirit, just as I did with my own disciples and other believers. You will see lives changed as you pray for people, witness, heal, teach, pastor, lead, encourage, and love each one. My child, you are strong, so I am counting on you very much. Ready?

- The journey of faith is part experiencing my reality and part sharing it in the church, word groups, ministries, Sunday school, classes, body builder groups, healing ministries, sharing groups, prayer groups, and celebration times. Go out each day, just like my disciples did, trusting that even when you cannot see or hear me, I am there. Your journey? I will be there. It may be on a job, at a baseball game, or in a convent, church, or garden.

- My disciples became a community of believers, offering their gifts, time, and faith to bring others to know my love, words, and reality. This is what I ask of you. Begin this week and make plans for the year. See what your gifts are. Look at where your gifts are needed. Look at where I want you to use them. It is clear. Risk! Step out! Be transformed! An exciting time is coming.

- You have stepped out this year in a bigger way than you thought you could or would. That was the transformation I sent you through the Holy Spirit and the affirmation of those I put in your life. Now, empowered by the Holy Spirit, evangelize, start a group, pray, help others to heal, be healed and made new, support my church fully. Look at the way your gifts and talents have grown and bloomed and how you will see them used in powerful ways to help many.

- I love taking walks, going to baseball games, and watching my people bloom, use their gifts and talents, and offer their smiles and friendship to others. I have been watching you. You have more friends than you realize. They love you for who you are—caring, funny (at times), talented, and gifted. Your smile lights up their lives. They know they can count on you, for under the smile and funny things you say that delight others is a caring, kind, and faith-filled person. That is you.

- It is a challenge to follow me in the world today. It is not easy to want the Holy Spirit to fill you so fully that your life is changed and each day you give your life, plans, and future to me. You have stepped up to this challenge and helped others, but the Holy Spirit is going to fill you and transform you even more so you can go out further to heal, evangelize, pray, teach, help, and encourage others. Filled with the Holy Spirit, you are going to see your path change this year.

- Can you imagine yourself walking with the disciples? I can! I see you humbled by their presence, knowing they had been with me at what seemed like the end. They embrace you as one of them, and they ask you to use your gifts in the next town and to tell others about the life I offer. Though unsure, you know this is your moment to say yes. With that word, you and a friend are filled with the Holy Spirit. Then, standing in a circle of friends and strangers, you tell your story and my story, and lives are changed. This scene will happen to you and to your friend.

- In the months ahead you are going to feel the rush of the wind of the Holy Spirit fill you. It will be unexpected, quiet, but powerful. You will be changed and transformed. The path you are on, the gifts to be used, and how the gifts are used will change. You will find yourself laughing, joyous, courageous, and overflowing—unable to be still. I love these powerful moments! This moment will change you, and it will show others how special you are. I love you very much. Believe that.

- You have done much in my name. You use your gifts. You bless and help many people each day in your community, schools, jobs, and home, but I want you to do something bigger. Build up my hurting and broken church and its struggling people. Bring people in. Invite older people, teenagers, those who are not going to church, and those who are unhappy and looking for a caring and loving community. Evangelize! There are so many people who do not know me as real. Tell them. Show them a caring church that smiles and prays. Use your gifts to teach, pray, help, love, and heal. Bless you, my child. You fill me with joy because of your smile and yes.

- I was there. I blessed you for your gentleness, faith, and smile. Much like my followers John and Lydia, you are always ready to give of yourself and your time and support. You pray, witness, help, love, and hug. You volunteer when there is a need, reach out to new people, and even sit through things you may not want to go to just to show you love me and care for my church and the people who are trying to keep building it up. People love you for the caring way you show your faith and can be counted on. You inspire them to do more and care.

- The Holy Spirit is going to fill you in the months ahead. Your gifts, words, witness, and friendship will change many more lives. Speak up. Pray. Listen. Bless friends and family. Love. Heal. Be who I know you are—the friend who cares and will be there. You are going to be blown away by the power of this experience. And others will be amazed at what you do and accomplish.

- Did you see me? Well, I was there. I smiled at you and saw that you were busy. You were helping someone. One thing you are good at is being a friend who listens and makes others smile. Sometimes you are funny, other times you are caring, and other times so encouraging. You have taught others that I am real and that you believe. I am blessing you with a great summer.

- I love springtime because I know summer is around the corner. New things are happening in your life and all around you. You will experience a miracle and see an angel. The angel will be wearing jeans. This will change your life. Go to places where angels would be or would like to be. Look for me, for I will be there, too. You will notice the smile and the baseball cap.

- It's a new time. Move forward. It's a new time in using your gifts and talents to bless and help others. I will give you the courage to let go of what you can't control and to take on the responsibility of being yourself as you use your gifts of love, teaching, joy, and compassion. You are going to grow in so many ways this summer. You will feel a rush of wind and you will know.

Just believe.

- Make plans now to do something special with friends and or for people from church next month. Go to a place where you can experience my love, see angels, and help others. I will be there. I won't look like you expect, but you will know it is me. I will bless you and fill you with the Holy Spirit in an unbelievable, amazing, and unexpected way. I will bless you with a special, wonderful, and unbelievable life. Empowered, you will be unable to be silent about your faith. You are an evangelist!

- Let go! Just get going! You are not too young or too old. You are not too busy or too inexperienced. You are my "today" disciple and I need you, just like I needed Paul, Mark, Priscilla, and Mary to help others and share my love, words, and reality. Help others so my church can grow. Be in church each week. You are needed. Share these words with others. Be in a group. Help my church and the teens, children, priest, and people who seem to do all the work. Look for people who need a church and bring them. There's no excuse for not being at church each week. None. Go out!

- Did you see me? Did you notice? I was watching you in action. You are growing in faith and courage every day. Wow! From where you were last year to now—wow! You are transformed through a Pentecost moment that changed your life. Pentecost moments can be noisy and big or quiet and deep. but they happen. Your moment means you are ready to bring people to me and to my church, to build up the church by helping with your gifts of love, kindness, wisdom, and joy. You are my encourager, especially to those who work so hard. I blessed you!

- You have some decisions to make at this time. You have friends and family who can help you, pray with and for you, and listen. Some of the decisions may not seem big, but they are big to you in some special ways. Some of the decisions are about how you use your time, how much time for family, friends, me, using your gifts, being in church, helping my people and church, having fun, walking, calling a friend, working, praying, smiling, encouraging others, and looking for miracles. Make time to look for a miracle each day for one month. Write them down and share them with others. Maybe you will see a giant miracle or see someone truly healed.

- Stepping into a new time in your life is often an adventure, and it is always a choice. You can stay where you are and let your gifts and talents just "be," or you can deepen and strengthen them, like the disciples did after Pentecost. Let's go! Step out and do more with your gifts. Help my church and its people more. Build up my church and its people. Be there to support your priest, the teachers, and those who serve coffee and clean up. Show others what is important to you.

- You have the gifts of prayer and miracles. Hmm, what could that mean? I think it means you need to do more with your prayer life. Keep a list of people who would like or need a miracle. Stay in touch with them by phone, emails, letters, or visits. Share your miracle times and adventures with friends, family, and a group at your church, school, job, neighborhood, or sports teams. I love you so very much. Together we will show people miracles.

- Decisions are part of life. You will face them every day, forever. What do you do with your day? How do you make the team? What do you do about a relationship that struggles or a new friend? What do you eat? Where to go in the evening? How can you best use your gifts? What should you do about decisions that will affect the next two years of your life? Ask yourself what I would want you to do in these situations. Pray. Listen. Look. I am pointing the way. I will open doors. Look. Read. Trust.

- Children love you! Do you wonder why? Well, you are patient and a good listener. You smile and care about them. You are always encouraging. You make difficult things doable and possible. One child you talked to recently has been praying for you. This child thinks you are really nice. Your caring and interest has blessed and changed this child's life. You made a

difference. I bless you.

- Old friends are treasures you want to keep always, but new friends bring a joy and light up your day. I am putting some new people into your life this year. Some will become close friends. The seasons in your life each bring a need for different kinds of friends. You are blessed with some really loyal friends. Friends can be like special angels. They are there when you most need them. Give thanks for those special friends. And be there for them, too.

- You are coming into a time of healing and new beginnings in your life. There will be signs of grace as you step forward. It will be a season of hope because you are using your gifts in more ways. You have confidence and inner peace. My child, I will go with you wherever you go.

- New friends are important. Old friends are blessings. And the friend who is always there is a joy and inspiration. You are lucky to have all these kinds of friends in your life. You are the kind of person everyone wants to be a friend to. Isn't that wonderful? It makes me smile. You too?

- The Holy Spirit will fill you and bless you in amazing ways in the weeks ahead. Your faith will be stronger and will be an inspiration to others. Your confidence in how you can use your gifts and talents this year will be seen. Continue to smile, be yourself, and give those hugs. I love you.

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 12:2-3

Joel 2:23-24

Jeremiah 17:14

Zephaniah 3:17-18 (end with "festival")

2 Samuel 22:17, 33-34

Micah 7:7 and 13

Zechariah 10:1

Psalms 98:1

Psalms 4:1-3

Psalms 25:4-5

Acts 1:4-5, 7-8

Matthew 25:35-40

John 14:25-27

Acts 1:4-5, 7-8

Mark 4:30-34

Acts 19:5-6

John 17:6-8

Luke 24:44-49

Matthew 5:5-6

Acts 14:22-23, 27-28

Mark 16:14-18

John 21:1-7

Acts 4: 30-31

Hebrews 10:36

1 Corinthians 1:1-7

Romans 12:5-8

Galatians 2:6-9

Ephesians 1:15-20

Hebrews 11:1-3

Romans 12:1-2

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>.

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