



Words of Blessing

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Weekly Word Pentecost Week 9: July 18, 2010

Living the Word

Acts 2:43-47 Many miracles and wonders were being done through the apostles, and everyone was filled with awe. All the believers continued together in close fellowship and shared their belongings with one another. They would sell their property and possessions, and distribute the money among all, according to what each one needed. Day after day they met as a group in the Temple, and they had their meals together in their homes, eating with glad and humble hearts, praising God, and enjoying the good will of all the people. And every day the Lord added to their group those who were being saved.

Pentecost: Building

*I have given you new life. Now what will you do with it?
Begin with the Church and its mission.
Outreach! Action!*

I call you to help build a community of faithful people. I am asking you to reach out and bring people into the church to build up their faith and gifts. Then we can build a community of faithful people who will go out and do the mission of the church. That is my call to you. Now, what will you do with it? Are you willing to reach out to others with action and faith? So many powerful missions and outreach happen when people come together to build this new life that I offer. It is like the fishes and the loaves—they will grow more and more. Action will happen.

There are all kinds of community, and they are in need. If you are not fully a part of a community, you become isolated and alone, and your actions become shallow—if you do anything at all. Community requires effort, openness, trust, prayer, and lots of talking, sharing, and listening. With love and faith people come together and reach out to those who are in need. They come together to pray, heal, renew, and help.

There is a story of a poor widow who gave all she had because she knew God's faithful love for her had provided all she really needed. She trusted God for her very life and in that trust gave away her last penny. She was so filled with love that she was able to give me all. Today, you can follow that witness. Cast out the fears that hold you back from living and acting. I know you have a heart of humility and new life. You are willing to reach out in a mission to help others.

Countless people have come to me and said: "Lord, what would you have me do? What is my mission? How can I reach out and do something for others? What action do you want from me? How can I build up my church and help others? Where do you want me to go? Sometimes the answer I give and have given you is to reach out and give your love, gifts, and time. Share your

faith story, forgive others, and be in church and help the church grow. Use whatever gifts you have—from healing to praying—to build up the lives of others. One time you said no. Good was still made out of that, but the mission you were given did not happen. Today I give you new life. Now what will you do with it? Begin with the church and its mission to share my love, words, and reality. Action!

Word for the week: Choose one of the following words or phrases that can most help you in planning or working on your mission and/or using your gifts to build up my church and people.

Reach Out

Trust

Give

Scripture for the week: Choose one of the following scripture passages that you believe is meant for you. What does it say about Pentecost, faith, building, and mission in your life right now.

Acts 16:13-15 On the Sabbath we went out of the city to the riverside, where we thought there would be a place where Jews gathered for prayer. We sat down and talked to the women who gathered there. One of those who heard us was Lydia from Thyatira, who was a dealer in purple cloth. She was a woman who worshiped God, and the Lord opened her mind to pay attention to what Paul was saying. After she and the people of her house had been baptized, she invited us, “Come and stay in my house if you have decided that I am a true believer in the Lord.” And she persuaded us to go.

1 Thessalonians 5:9-11, 14-18 God did not choose us to suffer his anger, but to possess salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us in order that we might live together with him, whether we are alive or dead when he comes. And so encourage one another and help one another, just as you are doing now. ... We urge you, our brothers, to warn the idle, encourage the timid, help the weak, be patient with everyone. See that no one pays back wrong for wrong, but at all times make it your aim to do good to one another and to all people. Be joyful always, pray at all times, be thankful in all circumstances. This is what God wants from you in your life in union with Christ Jesus.

Ephesians 6:10, 14-18 Finally, build up your strength in union with the Lord and by means of his mighty power. ... So stand ready, with truth as a belt tight around your waist, with righteousness as your breastplate, and as your shoes the readiness to announce the Good News of peace. At all times carry faith as a shield; for with it you will be able to put out all the burning arrows shot by the Evil One. And accept salvation as a helmet, and the word of God as the sword which the Spirit gives you. Do all this in prayer, asking for God’s help. Pray on every occasion, as the Spirit leads. For this reason keep alert and never give up; pray always for all God’s people.

Action for the week: Each day this week, pray for three people. Let them know you are praying for them and giving thanks for the witness of faith and action they show to others.

Decisions/Questions: I have given you new life. What will you do with it this week or this year? What do you know and/or believe Jesus wants you to do in the way of action in your journey and as a particular mission or ministry in your church at this time.

Witness my love and reality: Share these words with others this week. Reach out to someone

who does not know about the words I offer. Share what the words mean to you. Listen to what the words mean to others. Help others to see their own special mission and gifts through these words.

Special witness this week: Share these words and this mission with others who will be renewed as they experience my love and reality. Build up my church and people. The words this week have given you many things to do that will bless and help many. What will you do with them?

Daily prayer for this week: Lord, you have given me new life each day. I want to give thanks for the many blessing I have in and through my church. Help me to see the mission of the church through your eyes. I am ready to step out and do more and reach out to more people. There is work to be done, and 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.

- Sometimes the mission I give you is bigger than your whole life, your gifts, and what you ever thought you could or would do. I ask you to step out. Know that I will help you. I know your next question is “Lord, do you really want me to do that? I am small. I am not very clever or talented, so how can I do this?” I will help you. The yes is not just hard to say; it is enormous. You can do this action. You have the gifts and faith—and you will see miracles. Let go. Say yes, and do it.

- There are people in need all around you—in your church, job, town, and neighborhood, and in nursing homes and hospitals. I ask you to help to build a stronger community of action in your church. However small, there are things to do that make a difference. Get a group together to pray about where to begin. It does not have to be gigantic and complex; often the best way to reach out to help is in the simple acts that are overlooked. I am counting on you. I know you can do it.

- You have some special gifts that are very strong—faith, love, and evangelism. And you know you have a call and mission right now that need these gifts. Gather a small team, and they will help you more than you know. Each brings needed gifts. Get everyone involved in this special mission. Be their cheerleader, encourager, and helper. Your church—my church—needs renewing and building up or it could close. Don’t hesitate. Bring people together as one. Pray. Reach out. Go!

- When I watch you, I cannot decide if you are more like Paul, Lydia, John, or Mary. I believe you are a wonderful mix of all of them. Thus, sometimes your outreach to others and your mission in life are bringing people to church and activities as Lydia would or challenging people nicely but firmly to get out and use their gifts to bring people to me. When you are like Mary, I see your time given to prayer and kindness. I love it when you are like Paul because you are active and involved and expect everyone to reach out and build up the church. And when you take time for prayer, being in church, and sharing these words, you are most like John. You live my words.

- I hear you say, “Lord, what do you want me to do in your name? What is my mission? How do I build up your church and people? I am not sure what action to take or where to reach out and use my gifts and time.” My child, I gave you new life, a work, and gifts to make it happen. Now what will you do with these things? People are waiting and are in need. Take time to sit and share with a friend this week. Ask for help in answering this question, and offer your friend the same support and question, too.

- You have the gifts of prayer and faith. This week make time to listen and pray with someone

who is trying to discern his or her gifts and use them in powerful ways to build up my church and people. Pray together, listen, and make the words that follow be living words. “My child, I have a mission for you. Take my words out into the world. Share your story. Love everyone and see people through my eyes. Offer a new life and beginning. Action is the word.”

- I see how much you grow in faith and in action each day. You are giving more and more of yourself to others and to my mission of building the church and its people and their gifts. Now is the time to be bold. See a call to outreach in a bigger way. I have given you new life, hope, and gifts that will change lives in my name. Now what will you do with those wonderful gifts?

- Sometimes I give people their gifts when they are born, and so all through their lives they use them in different ways and places and at different times. Some are given their gifts or have them empowered when they are ready and open. I gave you special gifts when you were very young but ready. You used them in different ways and places as you grew up. Now you are to use them in a special big way, but I will help you. If you ever ask whether I really want you to do *that*, my answer is still “yes!”

- You have the gift of evangelism. That means action, outreach, and sharing my love, words, and reality. These things all go together. But you reach out in simple ways. You listen to people, and that is important. They are then encouraged and open. As you listen, you are able to share your thoughts and what you believe. That sounds like subtle evangelism and action to me. What else can you do with this gift? Attend events planned by others in your church. Build up others in their call and work.

- You have a powerful story to share. The Holy Spirit will fill you when you are ready to share this story with the gospel story. Don't worry! It will be doing some seemingly simple thing like helping in a nursing home, giving clothing to the homeless, visiting the sick, or planning special events for the youth or elderly. You walk with my love. Just pass it on. That is how to show and share the gospel and your witness of the new life I offer. You will love this action outreach.

- The Holy Spirit—that Pentecost joy—is at work in ordinary people like you. You do not have to be a superstar; just be teachable, humble, and faith filled—and trust in me. I am going to show you a team that will work with you and help you. They have talents (so they tell me), but are not perfect. They *are* caring and reach out to act on their faith. Look to those who could be a Priscilla, Apollo, Lydia, or Aquila, ordinary people filled with the Holy Spirit. The time for action is now. Get going!

- You have had some changes in your life this past year, and your journey unfolded in ways you did not expect. There was the action you did and the mission you helped with. You have been building an ever-deepening spiritual life that supports and strengthens your call and your gifts of healing, discernment, faith, and love. Now it is time to share your gifts in more ways to help others, bring healing, and renew my church and people. Build a mission. They will come.

- Miracles happen every day. Sometimes you ask for one or need one, and it happens. The miracle gets your attention. Miracles happen for many reasons: through prayer, grace, faith, love, and hope and to show you my reality. They happen because you are being blessed, sometimes for reasons you may never know. You have had a miracle happen to you, and you were blessed. If you could ask for a miracle today for the church, one for a friend, and one for yourself, what would they be?

- There are so many needs in the world. How do you figure out what outreach or action to do? Take time each day to offer this in prayer. The prayer is the action you need in order to see what you are called to do. For now, here is a simple action to get going: Evangelism. People will tell you that evangelism is hard, but it is simple. All the disciples and followers did it; so can you. Just reach out and keep reaching out to people in my name. Smile, be interested, listen, and pray for people. Let people know you are a Christian. Be encouraging, open, friendly, and kind. That

is what you do now.

- Prayer is the anchor in your life that helps you and that keeps you grounded and reaching out in my name. Praying with and for people is how you live my words, how miracles happen, and how the church is built. You are faithful and courageous. People are drawn to your kindness and your witness of joy and love. They know you keep yourself grounded in me and that you pray and act on those prayers.

- Books and scripture give many examples of people who stepped out beyond their homes to witness my love and reality by offering help, comfort, prayer, friendship, and healing beyond the “safe places.” They share with friends; strangers; and people in coffee shops, hospitals, nursing homes, on the road, or in school. Some give clothes to the homeless or offer people my words. Some witness at their jobs, at a hospital coffee shop, at their school, or to a stranger. What will you do this week?

- My disciples met many people as they went out. Some were wonderful, overflowing with faith, and anxious to hear their stories and words. My disciples loved that. But the disciples also met the doubters, the difficult people. That is the risk of stepping out to witness and even to just be a Christian today. I ask you to trust in me. Open your heart. I will show you my plans and hope for you. I will show you your gifts and mission this year. It will be powerful and will bless many lives.

- Last year was an important time in your journey. It was about reaching out beyond what holds you back from being fully who you are—a wonderful, spirit-filled, and loving person. Life changes when you let go of what was, when you take my hand and go forward, not back. Sad things happen to everyone at some time, but so do blessings, joys, grace, hope, and love. Move on in your life and look to all the wonderful people in your life. Look to the gifts you have that bless people. It’s a new time.

- There are so many needs in the world, and the Holy Spirit stirs within you to see the weary, tired, lonely, troubled, elderly, and sick. You are to “show them Jesus” in a special way. Will you do this work now? I want to guide you in your faith journey to follow the plan I have for your life and gifts. I have been shaping you into a vessel of prayer, kindness, faith, love, and joy. Go out each day filled with the Holy Spirit. I have a greater plan and work for you, but this will prepare you and keep you busy until that time. Will you do this? Great! I knew you would say yes.

- I wish more people wanted to be evangelists. I am short on evangelists at times, so I have been preparing you to go out. You have access to my words each week: use them. You can go near or far. You are ready. The world and my people have been asking and waiting for conversion, new life, hope, my healing, my words, my reality, and a personal relationship with me. Take my hand. Open your heart and spirit. I will go with you and will empower you through the Holy Spirit. Go!

- You are at an important turning point in your spiritual life, call, and mission. I have put people in your path who can help and inspire you to see what the next steps are in your life. But you have to step out and do something, because the next part of your call, life, gifts, and mission needs to be wanted and found. Hear—really hear—my words to you. Ask someone to help you discern what to do and why. I will guide them. You have to want to step out. Well?

- I have a job for you! No time to waste. Your mission is important and needs to be done. It is a way to live evangelism in a wider and bigger way. Yes, you are ready, no more waiting! You are a person of faith and thus can live “evangelism.” Go out. Be open. Go to the lost sheep and to those who do not know my love, words and reality. Go to friends, neighbors, strangers, people you work with, people in coffee shops, stores and in your own family. Just share that time in your life when you knew I was real and you believed and gave me your life. I remember.

- I have some goals for you this year; one is to build up your faith and trust, to be more open, and to build up my church and people. You can do this. You are not too busy. It is about priority. You have the gifts, time, means, and mission. It is my church. It is *your* church. Be there for all the things that are going on. Support and encourage people, help, use your gifts, bring people in, and welcome others. Go to the sharing groups, healing services, and times to share my words or do a Bible study. You will grow. You will bless and be a gift to others. Step out. I will wait for you.

- I was there. I saw you talking to a friend. Your church needs people, and it needs people to have and be a friend. My church can grow and bloom in powerful, unbelievable and amazing ways, but it needs your action, your time, and your faith. It needs you to be there for others and bring more people in. My church is coming to a critical place. Your church could become empty and fold up. It could grow and bloom. It could be a new beginning and a place of miracles, missions, new people involved, and joy filling every corner. But I need you and others to make it happen, or there will be no church. What would you do if you went to church and found it closed?

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 49:6 and 11-12

Jeremiah 29:11-12

1 Samuel 1:17 and 26:25

Psalms 65:1 and 11-12

John 1:35-42

Matthew 4:18-22

Luke 18:15-17

John 9:1-7

Acts 2:43-47

Mark 3:13-19, 31-35

Luke 19:1-10

Mark 8:22-26

Matthew 28:16-20

Acts 5:12-16

1 John 3:16-18, 24

1 Corinthians 16:13-20

Colossians 1:1-8

1 Thessalonians 3:6-9

Hebrews 10:21-25

1 Corinthians 3:5-9

Philippians 1:27-30

1 John 3:16-18, 24

Romans 10:13-17

2 Corinthians 1:1-5