



Words of Blessing

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Weekly Words **Pentecost Week 3: June 6, 2010**

Living the Word

Acts 2:32-33 God has raised this very Jesus from death, and we are all witnesses to this fact. He has been raised to the right side of God, his Father, and has received from him the Holy Spirit, as he had promised. What you now see and hear is his gift that he has poured out on us. ...Many of them believed his message and were baptized, and about three thousand people were added to the group that day. They spent their time in learning from the apostles, taking part in the fellowship, and sharing in the fellowship meals and the prayers. 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.
Use your gifts and help others to use their gifts.*

Pentecost was a most exciting time. Through the infilling power of the Holy Spirit, people experienced and lived Pentecost. Gifts were given to many: the gifts of healing, prayer, evangelism, and others. Put yourself in this scene. On the day of Pentecost, as the believers gather together, they (and you) hear a noise. A strong wind fills the house, tongues of fire touch each person, and you are all filled with the Holy Spirit and begin speaking in other languages. Like everyone, you are confused. You all turn to Peter, who reminds you that God had said he would pour out his spirit. Miracle after miracle happens. Later people begin meeting in homes, and more and more people join the group. Each contributes his or her gifts, just like your church today. They build a new church. Each of the followers goes out using his or her gifts to bring new life and the word. They begin to build the church and the people. Groups affirm one another and each other's gifts. People learn to share. They help each other to use and share their gifts to help others. They reach out and miracles happen.

You have the gifts that are meant to build up the church— your church— today. You are called to help the people around you, to affirm their gifts, and together use all your gifts. Everyone in your church needs encouragement to share their gifts of healing, evangelism, teaching, prayer, or faith. The new life I gave to you is there. What will you do with your gifts? What have you done with your gifts? Do you know what they are? I gave you those gifts—what will you do with

them?

You are to use your gifts are to build up the church and its mission. You are to affirm and help others to use their gifts to build up and renew the church. Some are afraid to start, and some need help and direction. Sometimes the youth don't feel important, and sometimes the older people are unsure. You can change that as you affirm and involve everyone and their gifts.

The call is there: renew your church. It is a new time. Help people with their gifts and empower them. If someone's gift is prayer, ask this person to pray for you or for others. Teach the youth by stepping out to help them, even with one project. Maybe an outreach project or a workshop would get everyone out there, sharing their gifts and Pentecost joy. Healing? Go to services and see what you can offer. Maybe it's praying for the team, welcoming people, or providing music or food. Is evangelism your gift? Well, that's what this is all about! Go out with others, young and old. Learn, share, and listen. The list is long. I call you to help others use their gifts to build up my church. Let's go!

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.

Affirmation

Encourage

Offer to help

Scripture for the week: Choose one of the following scripture passages you believe is meant for you. What does it say about Pentecost 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.

Romans 12:1, 5-8 So, then, my brothers, because of God's great mercy to us I appeal to you: Offer yourselves as a living sacrifice to God, dedicated to his service and pleasing to him. This is the true worship that you should offer. ...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 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.

2 Corinthians 9:6-10 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.

Action for the week: Take time this week to offer support or encouragement or send a note to at least three people who use their gifts in different ways to build up the church. Then, send one note to someone who uses his or her gifts and time to help others. They are the ones who are always in the background, supporting the gifts of everyone else. People need to know you care.

Decisions/Questions: I have given you new life. What will you do with it this week or year? How would you like to use your gifts, time, and faith in a new way or mission?

Witness my love and reality: Share these words with others this week and every week of Pentecost. Reach out to someone who does not know about these words I offer. Share what the words mean to you. Listen to what these words mean to others. Help others to see and hear their own special mission, call, and gifts through these words. I believe you can do this. Share these words each week and watch miracles happen. See my church renewed and see its mission go out. I believe you can do this. Share my words. Watch miracles happen. This is a gift! Look. You will see me.

Special witness this week: Plan on sharing these words and this mission with others who need their life renewed by experiencing my love and blessings. The words this week have given you many things to do that will bless and help you and others. What will you do with these words?

Daily prayer for this week: Lord, thank you for your encouragement in using the gifts you have given to me so I can share your love, words, and reality in more ways and with many more people. Remind me each day that others need support and affirmation in using their gifts to build up the church and to help others in the world. It is nice to know that what you do and what others offer make a difference. Thank you for the people who encourage my call.

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 have the gifts of evangelism and encouragement. They go together just perfectly. Paul was the evangelist and Lydia the encourager, but you have the gifts working together in all areas of your life and journey. You have inspired people to work at growing in their spiritual journeys and in how they can help to build up my church and people. What a great combination of gifts!

- Pentecost was truly an exciting time. I could see you there with my friends and disciples. You would be trying to figure out how to build a church. Do you work on building the place or are you going to bring in the people as your mission? Think of that this year and share your decision with others in your church. I will give you a special infilling of faith and that will be all you need.

- You are not the same person you were 15 years ago or even 10 years ago. Many prayed for you through this time that you would realize your gifts and use them in more ways to bless my people and bring more people to my church so they would be part of a wonderful faith-filled mission. You welcome people and use your gifts and time more and more to help others in my name. You are such a joy to me and to others. I will give you a special blessing in the weeks ahead. Look.

- The church is a place for leaders, evangelists, healers, young people, youth with wonderful new ideas, followers, holy people, and sinners. Yes, your church has room for all and room for more

to come in. Make a plan this week of how to bring people together to build up our church. It is an important mission that cannot wait. You will be inspired to ask two people to help you.

- You have the gifts of healing and prayer. There is a work at hand that needs those gifts, I count on you to help. You will be healing more people and in many ways and places that you never thought of. Your prayers will grow in strength and faithfulness. Yes, you are coming to that Pentecost time of being built up, just as my church is. A powerful new time is just ahead.

- What do you think would bring more people to your church and/or to be truly Pentecost-filled from top to bottom with the Holy Spirit and ready to go out? Think right now and give me and others your answer. What do you think of the answers? I think you are being affirmed with the gifts of leading, prayer, humility, courage, and faith. How exciting! It's just what the church and others need, and it's what I have in my plans for you and your church. Build a ministry of this.

- You are an encourager. You are faith filled and serve the church, the call of others, and the growing of missionaries and evangelists. Just think about what our church could look like by the end of this year. How exciting! You make the time to affirm and encourage people and offer to help them grow in any way you can. You listen to and pray for people. Together we will build up your church and will encourage everyone to use their gifts. This work calls for a group of optimists who also are friendly, who will do most anything for me and the church, and who want to build up my church now.

- You are the kind of person who quietly builds the church through your actions, missions, commitment, and help. You seek no praise and are often in the background, but somehow people find you, seek you, and turn to you for help, advice, wisdom, and prayer. You take the gifts in the church out into the world. You share everything with others. You have planted seeds of faith in the hearts and spirits of so many people in the world with your faith, humility, and love.

- Your spiritual life has been a journey of faith and using your gifts in whatever way they would help the church, its people, and its mission. You offered yourself and those gifts to be seen as my blessing and call for people. You still seek no praise or attention. You just want to follow me and help, affirm, and encourage others. You have done well. I blessed you with the gift of love that Peter showed and the gift of faith that Mary lived. Bless you.

- Planting seeds in the spring takes faith and patience. Seeds of love and the willingness to go out and share my reality and words are all seeds that you plant every day in people's lives. Your humble sacrifices to truly live my love and call have inspired and encouraged many. You saw me a short while ago. I needed a smile and hope. You did not know it was me, so I know you treat everyone as special. You helped a struggling person this week. Know that your offer to help and listen was a gift that changed the course of this person's future. Now this person believes.

- What was that first day of Pentecost like? How would you see it today? It is still a call to be filled to overflowing with the power and gifts of the Holy Spirit. How does your church live out Pentecost? How do you live Pentecost in your life? What can you do? Make your part in the church a joyful time. Live it out through healing the sick, evangelizing, going out, teaching the young people, and praying daily. Open your heart to me and be willing to let me fill you as I know you can be filled with the Holy Spirit. Believe you can move mountains!

- Pentecost was action time. The Holy Spirit has called you and given you the gifts to heal, pray, and step out to bring people to me. Action! No more waiting for the right time or until you have more courage. The time is now! Begin by writing notes to three people encouraging them, and make the notes from both of us. This is a simple one-stop mission, so this is easy, but know that it is preparation for something more to come in the near future. This is a new step in using your gifts, helping others, and showing love.

- I ask you to reach out to serve the needs of the church—your church. The needs are great. There is so much to do and say to bring people closer to me so they can believe with unshakable

faith that I love them, I am real, and I will help them. You would be a good teacher, an organizer of those needed projects and outreach missions. The Holy Spirit will move within you in a powerful way in the weeks ahead. I just love those unexpected powerful life-changing experiences!

- Evangelists like Paul, Lydia, Timothy, and Priscilla were inspirations to the disciples. And of course the evangelists learned what was needed to walk this journey and use their gifts to bring people to me and to heal, bless, pray for, and renew them. You are called to go out and evangelize in a more powerful and purposeful way, just as these evangelists did. There will be no loud speeches on a hilltop but often a meeting over coffee or a cup of tea. I ask you to do much more this year.

- Peter was set free by an angel one day. Mary helped John and Barnabas so they could go out. Cornelius taught his children and others. Many people followed the mission to go out; to share my love, words, and reality; and to heal, teach, and help others in my name. The mission of the church today happened in the early church. As I sent out my first followers, so I send you out to do the same things and even more. Believe that I will help you in this mission to build the church of hope in my name.

- Your mission is to go out. You don't have to stand on a street corner and shout though. Your mission may be to tell just one person in a coffee shop, a hospital waiting area, a store, a nursing home, or a homeless shelter. It may be to talk to someone from your school or job, a teenager, or a stranger. You will come across all kinds of people every week as you go out to do this mission. I will prompt you when to share. I will empower you with courage through the Holy Spirit. And sometimes I will have a friend cheer you on.

- I love the youth of today with their energy and open hearts, but they need a mission and call. They need to know their gifts so they will have the faith and confidence to step out. There are many young people in your life—those at church, those you know through friends, and even youth who are somehow lost or alone. Your mission for just this year is to reach out to these youth in some way. You can be the encourager of a youth group leader or a special friend to someone in your neighborhood or life. Maybe it will be the youth in your church, who simply need to believe in me and in themselves even more. Look.

- There are great needs in the world around you. I see homeless people, people without jobs or family. It is hard to know where to begin. Your compassion for others and your solid faith are all you need for this mission. Daily, pray about the needs of the world, your church, the greater church, family and friends, school, jobs, and your ministry and call. It is hard to know what to do, so I ask you to build your own special mission. You can keep the same one for a year or you can choose a different mission each month for a year, but you will have to plan ahead by at least two months so you are always ready. You can ask some people to join you in this. Begin this month.

- A gentle and humble person can do much to encourage and help others and to affirm who they are. You have a way of doing so much to be my hands, heart, words, and caring in a busy world. You bless more people than you will ever realize. You live my word. You quietly use your gifts to build my church. And with your faith, my church will grow in powerful new ways.

- I ask you to step out and use your gifts of faith, encouragement, and serving to affirm and help others to use their gifts. There are many ways. I will give you one! Meet with some people each week and share my words—these words. That is easy! Now how about just sharing my scripture each week and helping and affirming one another. Or you can do this with your family. Hmm. Some people are far away, so how about mailing them and writing responses. I think I have covered enough options for you. Remember, the mission is to build the church. Go for it!

- Did you see me or notice me? I was watching you as you listened to a friend who was in need

of support, a friend, and a listener. You always make the time for others with gentleness and true concern. Some are noisy evangelists, like Paul and John. Others are quiet encouragers who are there, who offer support, and who build you up in ways you cannot even see. I bless you.

- You have worked hard at trying to use your gifts to build up the lives and talents of others. You are there to see to the hungry, the sick, and those in nursing homes and hospitals. You listen to the teenager who struggles and the friend who does not know what to do about his or her life. You leave a note or a prayer stone for a stranger who is all alone. I bless all you do. Your gifts change lives each day.

- Pentecost is about change. Many things can be changed or need to change so the church and its people can grow and people can embrace a mission to bring my love, words, and reality to more people. You have had some changes in your life this past year, and there will be changes this coming year as well. Changes are about building something new within you, around you, or out in the world. The changes coming into your life will be good. Be ready to seek some changes and be ready to accept some changes.

- Many gifts are needed to build a church, a family, a call, or a mission. You need to use your own gifts but also to accept how the gifts of others are needed. Use your gifts and the gifts of three friends to build a special mission out in the world, and a way to be empowered with the Holy Spirit so you live and share my word in powerful ways that the world one day will see. You may have to travel, so have car, passport, maps, a cooler, transportation, a book about another country, and a bag that can be filled and packed quickly. Yes, this is a real going out—yet again!

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 40:9-11

Amos 9:13-15

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

Psalms 16:5-8

Acts 9: 10, 15-19

Luke 10:38-42

Acts 16:14-15

Matthew 28:16-20

Luke 21:1-4

Acts 4:32-35

Mark 16:14-20

Acts 3:1-8

John 15:12-17

Matthew 5:14-16

Acts 14:22-23

Mark 10:13-16

Luke 21:1-4

Galatians 5:22-26 & 6:9-10

1 Peter 4:10-11

Colossians 1:6-12

Romans 12:5-8

2 Corinthians 1:1-7

Titus 1:1-4

Philippians 1:1-6
1 Thessalonians 1:1-5
Ephesians 2:8-10

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