



Words of Blessing

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Weekly Words Pentecost Week 5: June 20, 2010

Living the Word

Acts 14:21-22 and 15:3-4 Paul and Barnabas preached the Good News in Derbe and won many disciples. Then they went back to Lystra, to Iconium, and on to Antioch in Pisidia. They strengthened the believers and encouraged them to remain true to the faith. ... They were sent on their way by the church; and as they went through Phoenicia and Samaria, they reported how the Gentiles had turned to God; this news brought great joy to all the believers. When they arrived in Jerusalem, they were welcomed by the church, the apostles, and the elders, to whom they told all that God had done through them.

Pentecost: Building

I have given you new life. Now what will you do with it?

Begin with the Church and its mission.

Bring people in! Welcome others! Be a friend!

In the powerful and exciting days that unfolded after Pentecost, my disciples, my followers, and new followers stepped out each day to bring people in, to tell people about me and this new life. They welcomed others as friends. It was a powerful time of building the church and its mission. Ordinary people like Priscilla and Aquila stepped out to welcome others to the church and to bring people my love, words, and reality. They opened their homes and hearts. Others, like Paul, Barnabas, Cornelius, and John Mark risked their lives to build this new church and its mission. They risked their lives and went out together as friends and companions. They all served with humility and courage. You can step out and see your mission of faith and for the church as not just attending but bringing people to know me.

Accept your mission for the church so people will know me. I want people to see me as their friend, to see you as their friend, and then to see their own call and witness. I want you to welcome people as friends so they join in the building of the church and use their gifts. Reach out to people, always welcoming and encouraging them to use their gifts. Show people that you care. Use your gifts and be really involved; that is part of your witness. People are waiting to hear your witness and story—so don't wait!

Have you ever sat down with someone and shared your faith story? The mission to evangelize begins just like that. You can bring people in. You don't have to be a priest or an evangelist to do this. Just begin. Reach out to the lost, those who don't go to church, or those who feel lost. You can bring people in and welcome them. You can be a friend. Share my weekly words and you really don't have to say much! Share my love, words, and reality. Welcome people as friends. Ask them to share their gifts. You can do so much. Be a friend. Welcome all. Give your witness

of faith.

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.

Friendship

Welcome

Witness

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

2 Thessalonians 1:3-4, 11 Our brothers, we must thank God at all times for you. It is right for us to do so, because your faith is growing so much and the love each of you has for the others is becoming greater. That is why we ourselves boast about you in the churches of God. We boast about the way you continue to endure and believe through all the persecutions and sufferings you are experiencing. ...That is why we always pray for you. We ask our God to make you worthy of the life he has called you to live. May he fulfill by his power all your desire for goodness and complete your work of faith.

Philippians 4:2-7, 9 Euodia and Syntyche, please, I beg you, try to agree as sisters in the Lord. And you too, my faithful partner. I want you to help these women; for they have worked hard with me to spread the gospel, together with Clement and all my other fellow workers, whose names are in God's book of the living. May you always be joyful in your union with the Lord. I say it again: rejoice! Show a gentle attitude toward everyone. The Lord is coming soon. Don't worry about anything, but in all your prayers ask God for what you need, always asking him with a thankful heart. And God's peace, which is far beyond human understanding, will keep your hearts and minds safe in union with Christ Jesus. ...Put into practice what you learned and received from me, both from my words and from my actions. And the God who gives us peace will be with you.

1 Corinthians 3:5-9 After all, who is Apollos? And who is Paul? We are simply God's servants, by whom you were led to believe. Each one of us does the work which the Lord gave him to do: I planted the seed, Apollos watered the plant, but it is God who made the plant grow. The one who plants and the one who waters really do not matter. It is God who matters, because he makes the plant grow. There is no difference between the man who plants and the man who waters; God will reward each one according to the work he has done. For we are partners working together for God, and you are God's field

Action for the week: Think and pray about some people in your church that you have not made time for. Greet these people on Sundays. Talk to them and share. Be a friend. Now pray about the friends in your life who do not know about me, who do not go to church, or who do not know of my love, words, and reality. Reach out and make it your mission to begin telling others about me and about who I am in your life. Listen. Bring people in. Many people have no church and few friends. Finally, reach out to just one person this week and tell him or her about me and your church. Tell this person why you come to church.

Decisions/questions: I have given you new life. What will you do with it this week or year? What will you do with the challenge I have given you to reach out and be a friend? I ask you to reach out to friends you have neglected. Be a friend to someone new in your life or a person you do not often talk to. How would you want people to approach you if you moved away and went

to a nearby church you thought of joining? What would make you happy or sad? What kind of community would you hope for?

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 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: Share these words with others who need their life renewed by experiencing my love and blessing. These words have given you things to do that will bless and help you. What will you do? How can you share your faith so you build your community? This week witness to a friend in a way that will show that his or her friendship is important to you.

Daily prayer for this week: Lord, you showed us by your example and by the witness of your disciples and the early church that we all have to step out to build the church and its mission, which was given to us by you. You have given us so much. Now it is our turn to open the doors and welcome people, bring them in, and be a friend and a witness in your name. Show me how and where to begin this week to be a friend to all in your name. I will open the doors and welcome all.

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.

- I was given such wonderful friends who stepped forward with me to go out and share my words, love, and reality. What a witness they gave for me. What a witness they were to me and to you today. You have friends in your life who are faith filled, who are giving, and who truly care about you. Be that kind of friend to them and to others. The journey is tough, and even lonely at times. We all need those few special friends, and you and others are called to be that friend. You are that friend.

- I sent someone into your life one day very recently. This person seemed unsure, and you wondered how to approach, but you just did it. A hello, a smile, a welcome, and words like “how are you today” were the best welcome you could give because this person was struggling. The church is not just a building. It is a community of faith that is there to welcome people in my name. You did it and you profoundly changed someone’s life. Keep going now. You got it! Share our words more and more.

- You are amazing! I wish I had five of you in every church, community, and workplace. You are the one people turn to, trust, and share with. You are what a friend is all about—sharing, listening, helping, accepting, and praying. Churches could be filled to overflowing with fellowship, joy, and witnessing if every church had people who would witness by being a welcomer, a friend. You do this so humbly and joyfully. Now how about finding a crew to do the same? We can train them together. Just think what the church community would be like then. I would be so happy.

- I have a special project for you that is critical to your church, the people in your life, and those who need a welcoming place to worship. It is simple: bring people in—neighbors, friends, family, and those you work with. How about posting signs in stores, newspapers, and other places? Be creative. You are talented, outgoing, faith filled, and caring—just what we all need.

Start a program this year, whatever you want to call it. Ask a few others to help. Bring people in and to us.

- I love your kindness and your quiet but very clear welcome, support, encouragement, and love of others in your church, community, and activities. You are an evangelist. Bringing people to me in your own wonderful way builds up my church and people. I have sent people to you. (One you kind of wondered about, so I sent George, who is more outgoing.) There are plenty of people left for you to welcome. Look for Ed, Susan, Ted, and Amy—or their friends. Welcome them and me.
- This time of year is wonderful—the days are warm, school is over, and children and young people are outside enjoying the very life they have. You have the gifts of evangelism, faith, and helping. I ask you to step out now and during the next three months and focus on those gifts in your neighborhood, family, and church. When you focus on being a friend, the mission of sharing my love happens.
- This is going to be a very busy year for you. I have so many places that need building up, so many people who need friends, and countless people who want to use their gifts in the world and don't know how and where to begin that witness of faith. You live my words so I ask you to get a summer group going to meet weekly and share and learn together how to do this. You will see miracles because your humble faith, unshakable to the core, will bring them in.
- Summer is not a vacation from the church but a way to see how to build it and expand it in new ways. Plan some things your church can offer for new people each week. Be creative and open. You can pull a team together to build this project of friendship, welcome, and building my church at this time. I think a little enthusiasm is needed, along with some evangelists and teenagers, people who are wonderfully there to help with anything that brings people to me and you. You have it. Go!
- You are a faith-filled person who is a witness of living my words each day, but everyone needs those special moments when you see an angel, experience a miracle, or see someone healed in a way that changes your life. I want you to really, really know me as your Savior, friend, help, comfort, and source of love and courage. I want to bless you. So be aware. I will give you that moment that will change your life yet again. You will know my reality in a living and powerful way. This moment will come when you least expect it. It is a blessing and gift.
- Each day you show your humility and love for others. You show others how to have the new life I offer. You decided how to build up and welcome others as friends. It was through just being a friend and offering a smile, encouragement, and invitations. You live the word. You reached out and listened to someone who truly needed comfort. This person's life was changed and blessed. Like you.
- Follow me. Walk with me each day. I call you to a unique mission. Through the power of the Holy Spirit you will use your gifts in a powerful way, making a difference in the lives of many people. It will be a tough mission, but it will be exciting, and you will never ever forget this year. Build my church and people. Follow the path I have for you. Pray. Trust. Believe. Let go.
- Your spiritual life is deepening daily. Before September do something to reach out to someone who needs prayer, support, healing, and love. Pray for and with this person. The people are my church. Build up my church and its gifts. Meet with people. Share these words with people, even in a group. The week you choose to do this will have the right words to share and fill the group in amazing ways. Your reaching out as a friend will change people's lives. They will know that I am real.
- I have given you new life. Now what will you do with it? What will you do to build up my church? How about living my words? What about being a welcomer, a witness, or a friend? Hmm. How about doing all three of those things together? We can do that! My child, you give

and do so much, but the mission and witness I have given you is a special blessing and mission. Living my word is not easy, but trust me, together we will live the word and see miracles unfold as people come in.

- I love you. I have been with you on every journey you have taken, every path you followed. Each time you struggled I blessed you. I hear every prayer you say and each request for healing or help for someone. I weep when you weep and laugh when you laugh. I am with you always. You are coming to a new time. It will be a time of growing and deepening in very special ways. Be ready for surprises and blessings in all you do. You really are a joy.

- Go out! Trust in me and in who you are. So many people come to me through you and your witness of faith and caring. This will be an amazing year for you as you continue to build a spiritual life that will be a real witness of my love, words, and reality. I will use you to renew my church and build up its people. You will do all this by just living my word at all times. You are a story of faith.

- The church and its people are in a time of change and building anew. Its people need real building up and encouragement. I hear you say, "Lord, what shall I do?" I give you the same answer I gave to Paul, Lydia, Mary, John, and others. Follow me. Go out. Spread the gospel everywhere. Evangelize. Use the gifts I have given each of you through the Holy Spirit. Use them. Heal, pray, give, serve, help, lead, and teach. Pick at least one of these things and go out. Tell our story. It is called "I have given you new life. Now, what will you do with it."

- Follow my plans to build up my people and church. I send you. I need a builder of hearts and people. I call you to make this Pentecost a new time of building up your family, home, church, prayer life, outreach, gifts, and time. Build up your friends and the new people I will put in your life. You build by being yourself and using your gifts but also being open to the hard work of a new gift and time. Begin with the church and see new people and missions come to all. My church and people struggle. Your faith and gifts are my answer. Like the apostles, bring people in.

- I call you to use your gifts, time, and witness to help the people in our church, the youth who are struggling, the friend who doubts, the neighbor who has given up on God, or the people in nursing homes who just want someone to care and listen. You have a way of making each person feel special and needed. It is a wonderful gift, and you are wonderful and special, too. Bless you.

- The church and people need renewal, encouragement, hope, and faith. Your church and people are coming to a time of work and building. It's hard work, but it will be such a blessing time. I have a long line of people who need all that you can do for them. You will bring the answers and the way to them. You will do this in my name and for me. I will bless you with a gift that you could never expect or ask for. You will love it and you deserve it.

- I was going to have Paul, Mark, Priscilla, and Mary go out together to make miracle after miracle happen to the people around you, but I realized I could count on you and three friends to do this. This action will need a variety of things: prayer, healing, witnessing, hope, encouragement, and help. I ask you to pray about it this week. Ask the people to help. Get together and make plans. You should be all set in two or three weeks. How do you do this? Pray and live the word. I will listen!

- It is time for a new path and a new beginning in your spiritual life. Many things that you have done and learned are still needed, but in new ways. Every journey has a time of work, struggle, and questions: Is this the right path for me? Why this or why that? You are beyond that now, and the path I want you to take is new, fresh, exciting, and blessed with miracles and joy. I know what is on your heart. Believe in miracles. I will guide you and put people in your life who will journey with you and be a friend. Look for angels, me, and a huge surprise.

- A spiritual friend is so important in helping you build a foundation for your faith, helping you

see how you use your gifts, answering questions you have, helping you with decisions, and answering needs. Many are friends, but it takes a special gift and call to be a spiritual friend/guide/director/companion. Think about the people in your life now who are further along the road than you are. Think of those who are spiritual, grounded, and live a faith-filled and committed life. Meet with this person and see if you can meet regularly. If this person cannot do this, don't worry. The right person will be there. Everyone who has a spiritual guide or teacher is blessed for a spiritual guide helps you to live the word and build a life of faith that is uniquely your own. Make the time this Pentecost to find a spiritual companion. I have so much for you to do with your gifts to build up my people. You need someone to help you!

- Being grounded in prayer is a call and a gift. Those with the gift of prayer see miracles happen through their faith. This is a quiet gift, yet it is an outward gift as people hear of you and know of your faith and prayer life. Prayer builds the church and its people. Prayer builds missions and gifts. Prayer heals people. Look for a sign to see what I ask you to do with your prayer life in the year ahead.

- What a blessed year for you already. I see how you are growing in faith and inner peace. I see you moving to a place of trust and joy in your call, missions, and gifts. I watch how you make the time to build up others, always looking for ways to help them. I see your humility and love shine out as a beacon of hope to others. You are my witness.

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 6:8

Psalms 16:5-6, 11

Matthew 11:4-5

Acts 26:16-18

Luke 8:1-3

John 15:12-17

Acts 11:19-26

Mark 8:4-10

Acts 15:40-42

John 4:38-42

Luke 10:1-3

Matthew 28:16-20

Acts 16:1-2, 4-5

1 Corinthians 12:4-11

Romans 15:17-20

2 Corinthians 10:13-16

Hebrews 3:1-6

1 Corinthians 16:13-21

Colossians 3:12-17

2 Timothy 1:3-7, 13-14

Colossians 1:3-9

2 Corinthians 6:1-10

Ephesians 1:12-19 (end with "believe")

1 Peter 5:1-4

Philippians 1:3-11

1 Corinthians 12:27-31

Romans 1:8-12, 15

1 Thessalonians 1:1-7

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

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