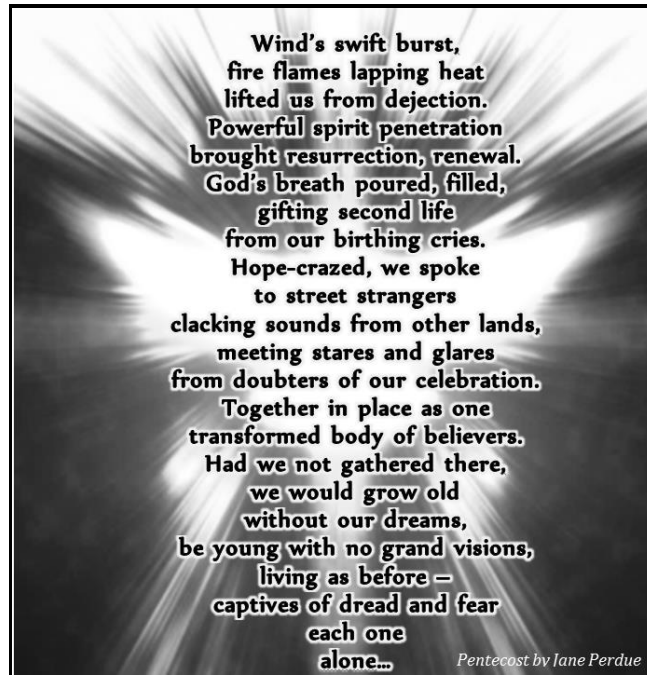


THE GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT AND THE FIRE, THE WIND, AND THE WATER



Scripture:

John 14:15, 25-27

¹⁵“If you love me, you will keep my commandments.

²⁵“I have said these things to you while I am still with you. ²⁶But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said to you. ²⁷Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid.

Acts 2:1-21

When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. ²And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. ³Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. ⁴All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability.

⁵Now there were devout Jews from every nation under heaven living in Jerusalem. ⁶And at this sound the crowd gathered and was bewildered, because each one heard them speaking in the native language of each. ⁷Amazed and astonished, they asked, “Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? ⁸And how is it that we hear, each of us, in our own native language? ⁹Parthians, Medes, Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, ¹⁰Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews

and proselytes, ¹¹Cretans and Arabs—in our own languages we hear them speaking about God’s deeds of power.” ¹²All were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, “What does this mean?” ¹³But others sneered and said, “They are filled with new wine.”

¹⁴But Peter, standing with the eleven, raised his voice and addressed them, “Men of Judea and all who live in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and listen to what I say. ¹⁵Indeed, these are not drunk, as you suppose, for it is only nine o’clock in the morning. ¹⁶No, this is what was spoken through the prophet Joel:

¹⁷‘In the last days it will be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams. ¹⁸Even upon my slaves, both men and women, in those days I will pour out my Spirit; and they shall prophesy. ¹⁹And I will show portents in the heaven above and signs on the earth below, blood, and fire, and smoky mist. ²⁰The sun shall be turned to darkness and the moon to blood, before the coming of the Lord’s great and glorious day. ²¹Then everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.’

This is the Word of the Lord! Thanks be to God!



THE TRINITY

The Spirit of God is in this place. God is made up of Jesus and the Holy Spirit. We call this our Triune God, the Trinity God that has three equal parts.

But it always seems as if the Holy Spirit gets treated as a second-rate citizen of the Trinity, until Pentecost. Then she finally gets attention. But she has to arrive as tongues of fire to get their attention. She couldn’t just seep into the room on the wind. She had to boom her way into their presence and make them pay attention by giving them the ability to speak the Good News in other languages.

We talk about the Trinity as being three in one, and each part is a part of God’s character that we can understand as the whole of God. Our Protestant church founding fathers explained it this way: Jesus is God in the flesh sent to earth, God is the Divine Creator and Sustainer and the Spirit is called the Advocate. The Advocate is the Spirit of Truth who will not leave us orphaned, who will be with us, and in us, giving us peace and reminding us of all that Jesus taught while on earth, all for the purpose of empowering us to share the Good News with others. This Good News of God’s love helps us not to be

troubled or afraid if we trust in God and in Jesus with the power of the Holy Spirit.

THREE IN ONE

The strong three in one can’t be undone, like a rope tied on a sailboat with three strands interwoven for strength and endurance. We have the three in one in us with the power of the Holy Spirit who flows in and through us guiding us along life’s way, when we pray and tap into that power. If we stay on the path where the Advocate guides us, we will have resilience, peace, tranquility, and hope. But when we go astray and let the glitter and charm of greed and popularity tempt us away from trusting in God, then we doubt and lose peace in our souls. We may also lose hope in a divine power loving us unconditionally. And we lose that sense of grace and mercy by dwelling on our sins and imperfections.

God loves us unconditionally like a grandparent who is so proud of everything we do. And when we fail, God is there to catch us when we fall.

THE HOLY SPIRIT

But since Jesus is not on earth in the flesh today, and God can seem so mysterious and

far off, the Holy Spirit comes to communicate God's grace to us advocating for us as a grandparent would advocate for their grandchild.

The Holy Spirit also promotes mindfulness and consciousness that works very mysteriously at times. I believe it is through the power of the Holy Spirit that people are enabled to be objective observers of trauma and still trust that God is with them no matter what. When you hear of "out of body" experiences during trauma, it is as if the spirit scooped them up and helped them deal with their injuries or accidents as if they were looking at themselves from a distance.

I have talked with people who felt peaceful while in the midst of things around them being shattered (as in a tornado), or everything being burned up (as in firestorms), and despite the chaos they felt the presence of the Spirit of God holding them up helping them survive.

OUR ADVOCATE

Our Advocate the Holy Spirit is here to help us cope with crises and to promote our resilience. The Holy Spirit is also a spirit of unity.

When you watch from afar what happened on Pentecost, it must have seemed very confusing to the on-lookers. Yet there was a clear power of unity and love bonding together all who heard the voices speak of the Good News in their own languages. Even though they were all speaking in different languages, they were speaking the same message about the wonderful works of God. Those around heard that God loves them, Jesus forgives all their sins, and sends the Holy Spirit to be their Advocate now and forever.

The message about the wonderful works of God also inspired many witnesses to trust in Jesus Christ and to be like him for the building the kingdom of God on earth as it is in heaven.

THANK YOU

We speak of the Gifts of the Spirit and the Fruits of the Spirit. Yet we rarely clearly thank God for the Holy Spirit. So, let's pray:

We thank you, God, for sending your Holy Spirit to advocate, guide, teach and comfort us. Thank you, Holy Spirit, for empowering us to be loving role models on behalf of Jesus Christ. Each day you carry us in your arms. You are the God who saves us through your Spirit by communicating your grace, mercy, love, and purpose helping us navigate a chaotic world.

We have received your Spirit that Jesus called upon to dwell within us. It is the Holy Spirit who gives life and hope to our mortal bodies. You are our Comforter and our Helper. You are Holy.

We depend on you to remind us of everything Jesus taught while He lived on the earth. You are God's power source, and you are the Teacher of all truth. We thank you for being God's Representative on the earth, the one through whom God relates to all believers, the Producer of the Fruit of the Spirit and our Advocate.

We love you, Holy Spirit, and thank you for working through us so that people will experience the Kingdom of God. Fill us, continue to lead and guide our lives.

As we study God's Word, reveal your power to apply it to our lives. May we be inspired to build up the Kingdom of God and help us to advocate for your justice to be done in this uncertain world.

May your Holy Spirit show us those areas in our personal lives that we need to get in order so that we will not bring you sorrow by the way we live.

Help us get rid of all bitterness, unforgiveness, anger, false words, and slander, all types of evil behavior such as hate and racism, misogyny and elitism. Instead, show us how to be kind to each other, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God has loved and forgiven us through Christ Jesus. Amen.

Benediction:

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you now and forevermore. Amen



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