

Sermon for the Feast of Pentecost

'Now this he said about the Spirit.'

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The great feast of Easter is coming to an end. The Feast of Pentecost has arisen.

Pentecost receives its name from the number of days that have preceded it, that is, fifty, for it is the fiftieth day after the Resurrection of our Lord from the infernal pit. Forty-nine days precede Pentecost, and the day of this Feast itself draws that number to its full.

It is not for no reason that the Spirit is given on the fiftieth day, that is, on the day of Pentecost, for it is the completion of seven weeks, each week having seven days. It is therefore the day of the completion of completions; the end of ends; finality of finality. For each week of seven has been drawn to a close in the repetition of seven.

Seven were the martyrs killed under Antiochus; seven were the lights of the menorah; seven times ten were the number of those chosen to receive the spirit in the presence of Moses, and prophesy. Seven are the days given by which all creation was made, and *called good*. In seven lies the whole mystery of salvation.

When Moses was told that two among the people of Israel, filled with the Spirit, continued to prophesy, he did not rebuke, but rather called out that he wished that all the people of God would so be filled with the Spirit of the Lord. Moses sighs in delight, for this day has come.

For Peter asked Christ how many times sin must be forgiven, even up to seven times. The Lord answered *not seven, but seventy times seven*. Many are confused by this, thinking that the Lord is merely multiplying Peter's initial offer, merely telling the Apostle that he should be willing forgive far more than merely seven times. Yet Peter knew that when he said *'even up to seven times'*, he did not mean that one should literally forgive not six, nor eight, but exactly seven times. He understood as we do, that seven is the number of completion. To forgive seven

times means to forgive entirely and forever.

This seems the most one could forgive, yet our Savior still corrects him. *Seventy times seven*, the Lord responds. For, according to the Gospel of Luke, seventy generations preceded the coming of the Christ, all of which require His atonement, His forgiveness, in full and complete. Therefore, let the *seventy* generations be forgiven, and all of them *seven times*, that the people of God might be made whole. That they might have life.

Therefore, when the seven weeks of seven had been completed, and our Lord had ascended in His body to the throne of His Father, to reign as the Son of Man over all creation, He poured out His Spirit on all flesh, that being baptized, we might be saved from our evil; that being washed, we might be cleansed of our iniquity; that from *the living water flowing from His heart*, from the font of everlasting baptism, we too might *call upon the name of the Lord and be saved*.

Having been baptized, and being filled now with the Spirit of grace, we are now joined to the great House of the Lord, His everlasting kingdom, His holy dynasty, whose dominion has no end. For no people is excluded, nor language denied, nor gender demeaned, nor class submitted, for *Christ is all and is in all*, and [even as the Church be slain and steeple fall] His imperium knows no end.

Now beneath the Lord's crown of empire the divine Scriptures are fulfilled, where every nation and people, in which princes, the powerful, the wealthy, all the lofty, and the poor, the lowly, the wretched, are gathered into one, even as the Lord *and His Father are one, that our daughters may prophecy, and our young men see visions, and our old men dream dreams*. For all nations and generations are forgiven, *seventy times seven*.

The Feast of Pentecost has arisen, the fiftieth day that completes the forty-nine days of the celebration of Easter. And indeed, it is a feast, for there shall be eating, for the Ascended Son offers to us His flesh; and there shall be drinking, for the victorious Lord gives us the draught of His blood. Who then, *hungers and thirsts for salvation?* Let him come. For:

'On the last day of the feast, the great day, Jesus stood up and cried out, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink."

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Preached by Pastor Fields

Sermon Texts: Numbers 11:24-30; Acts 2:1-21; John 7:37-39