Pentecost

May 31, 2020

Every year, seven Sundays after Easter, the Church celebrates Pentecost – the recognition of the day Jesus blessed His people with the Holy Spirit. Because of this awesome gift, we can experience God’s goodness and presence every single day. We can communicate directly with God and we can embrace and use the power of God. We can know more about God and grow in wisdom and understanding of His ways. With the Holy Spirit in us, we are new beings, and we have new potential.

This is not a perfect analogy, but it’s one that came to mind when thinking about what we can do with the Holy Spirit.

When it comes to working with my hands, I wouldn’t say I’m hopeless, but I wouldn’t be able to execute a project very well. For example, if I wanted to build a coffee table, I could get some wood, slap a few pieces together with nails and screws, and build something that resembles a table, but it might be crooked, it wouldn’t be sanded down properly, it wouldn’t be very strong, and it could just fall apart at any given moment. I can’t build something like that on my own.

My dad, however, excels in working with his hands. He knows every step to take, he is precise and accurate in his measurements, he can reinforce things to ensure their longevity and strength, and he can give me peace that what he makes is high-quality. He could build a coffee table on his own without my help.

But my dad likes to teach me how to do things. He likes to work with me on projects. He likes to have my input and he wants to see my own work and investment pay off.

If I build a coffee table with my dad, he can lay out his plan before me, and I can follow that plan so the table comes out just as we both envision it. He can accurately measure out what’s needed so that when I put things together, they’ll line up. He can reinforce the legs if I don’t build them strong enough. He can show me how to smooth things down and polish the surface so it is pristine. When I build a coffee table with my dad, I can have some peace knowing it will come out looking awesome.

God can build His kingdom on His own, but He chooses to use us. He likes to teach us how to do things. He likes to work *with* us. He likes to have our creativity and input and He wants to see our investment in His kingdom work pay off. So, He gave us the Holy Spirit. With the Holy Spirit, God can lay out His plan before us, and we can follow it so it comes out how it has been envisioned. He can measure out what’s needed so when I put things together, they’ll line up. He can reinforce what I put together to ensure longevity and strength. He can polish things up so they will be pristine.

Our job as Christians is to build up God’s kingdom. We can trust the Holy Spirit will give us power, wisdom, ability, and peace, and work with us every step of the way.

*Questions for Reflection and Discussion*

1. Have you ever tried building something from scratch? How did it go?
2. Do you enjoy building with Lego? Do you prefer to build sets that follow specific sets of directions, or do you like to just build things without any guide? What happens when you follow a specific set of directions? How is the Holy Spirit similar to following these directions? (Again, not a perfect analogy!)
3. Read Isaiah 11:1-2. What are the characteristics of Jesus? How is Jesus empowered with those characteristics? What characteristics can we have with the help of the Holy Spirit?
4. When the Holy Spirit first came upon the disciples, we read that it also united them. Even though the people of God in the New Testament come from all different backgrounds, they were brought together by the Holy Spirit. How do you see the Holy Spirit uniting God’s people today? Where do you desire to see more unity?
5. Read John 16:7. Different versions of this passage translate the Holy Spirit as “Helper”, or “Advocate”. What is an advocate? What person in your life would you call an advocate or helper? Why? How does the Holy Spirit act as a helper/advocate?
6. Read 1 Corinthians 6:11. What does it mean to be sanctified? Isn’t it incredible that with the Holy Spirit, we can be considered pure, become more Christlike, and be set apart as sacred? What does that mean to you?
7. Finally, read 1 Corinthians 12:4-11. What is ministry, and how does ministry happen? What gift has the Spirit given you for ministry? If you don’t know, how can you discover that gift?