

Last week, we read about Jesus stooping down to wash His disciples' feet. He stooped even further the next day when He carried our sins to the cross and won our eternal salvation, peace, and joy by suffering and dying in our place.

On the third day, Jesus rose from the dead and over a period of 40 days, He showed Himself alive to many, many people. On the 40th day after His resurrection, Jesus gathered the eleven disciples outside of Jerusalem and in their presence rose from the earth and ascended into heaven.

Ten days after that, at the Old Testament harvest festival of Pentecost, Jesus sent the Holy Spirit to His disciples. We hear about that in our Second reading today: "When the day of Pentecost arrived, they were all together in one place. And suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. And divided tongues as of fire appeared to them and rested on each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance. Now there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men from every nation under heaven. And at this sound the multitude came together, and they were bewildered, because each one was hearing them speak in his own language... And all were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, 'What does this mean?' But others mocking said, 'They are filled with new wine.'" (Acts 2:1-6, 12-13)

Filled with new wine? Well, I suppose in a way, yes! But not the kind of *earthly* wine that makes people drunk, but the *spiritual* wine, or one could say, *living water* of the Holy Spirit! The Holy Spirit gave them that ability to speak in the native tongues of the Jews and converts to Judaism who had gathered in Jerusalem from every corner of the Roman Empire. They were there to celebrate this first great Jewish Old Testament feast after the Passover when Jesus sacrificed Himself for our sins.

But then why would some in the crowds mock the disciples by saying they were drunk? Peter explains it in verses 14–15: "Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and give ear to my words. For these people are not drunk, as you suppose, since it is only the third hour of the day."

Of course, the people of Jerusalem and Judea would only know Aramaic and Greek, not the other languages or tongues the distant Jews who had traveled to Jerusalem knew. To them, it sounded like the nonsensical babbling of drunken men. But Peter answers their mockery with an Old Testament prophecy by saying, "This is what was uttered through the prophet Joel: 'And in the last days it shall be, God declares, that I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh, and

your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams; even on My male servants and female servants in those days I will pour out My Spirit, and they shall prophesy. And I will show wonders in the heavens above and signs on the earth below, blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke; the sun shall be turned to darkness and the moon to blood, before the day of the Lord comes, the great and magnificent day. And it shall come to pass that everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.” (Acts 2:16–21)

About fifty days earlier, they had all seen the sun turned to darkness for the last three hours Jesus hung on the cross on Good Friday. Now they were seeing the effect of God the Father pouring out of the Holy Spirit as He promised. Peter continues in verses 22–23 by telling them how Jesus had died for all peoples’ sins and risen again as King David had prophesied, saying, “Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs that God did through Him in your midst, as you yourselves know—this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men.”

It’s indeed possible that many of these men of Jerusalem had not been among the crowds standing outside of Roman governor Pontius Pilate’s house screaming, “Crucify Him! Crucify Him!” But if not, they most likely were among the crowds that stood watching and mocking Jesus on Golgotha, or who shook their heads in derision at Him as they passed by the gory scene on their way into Jerusalem for the Passover.

Either way, they were party to those who had crucified Jesus and shared the responsibility. But of course, all of us share that responsibility as well. Jesus carried **our** sins to the cross, and it was only because Jesus bore His Father’s wrath at **our** sins that we can stand here now in peace and hope.

Peter points out that their desire for Jesus’ death was not the end of the story. The apostle continues with these words: “God raised Him up, loosing the pangs of death, because it was not possible for Him to be held by it. For David says concerning Him, ‘I saw the Lord always before me, for He is at my right hand that I may not be shaken; therefore my heart was glad, and my tongue rejoiced; my flesh also will dwell in hope. For You will not abandon my soul to Hades, or let Your Holy One see corruption. You have made known to me the paths of life; You will make me full of gladness with Your presence.’

“Brothers, I may say to you with confidence about the patriarch David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. Being

therefore a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that He would set one of his descendants on his throne, he foresaw and spoke about the resurrection of the Christ, that He was not abandoned to Hades, nor did His flesh see corruption. This Jesus God raised up, and of that we all are witnesses. Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He has poured out this that you yourselves are seeing and hearing. For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he himself says, "The Lord said to my Lord, "Sit at My right hand, until I make Your enemies Your footstool."

"Let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has made Him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified." (vv. 24-36)

What a clear, concise, and powerful sermon! Jesus had won salvation for all people through His innocent suffering and death. And for thousands in the crowd, the Holy Spirit made those words strike home, as it says in verse 37: "Now when they heard this they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, 'Brothers, what shall we do?'"

Great guilt and remorse struck them, taking them back to the terrifying events surrounding Jesus' death at the recent Passover festival. The darkness when the sun stopped shining; the earthquake that rocked Jerusalem. Listen to the response of the Jewish crowds at that hour as Luke described it in his Gospel: "And all the crowds that had assembled for this spectacle, when they saw what had taken place, returned home beating their breasts" (Luke 23:48). They had shown deep remorse that Friday afternoon, acknowledging they had done something horrible in crucifying Jesus. Now, on Pentecost, they are terrified, realizing that this Jesus they had mocked, rejected, and scorned was risen and ruling at the right hand of God in heaven.

Peter heard their fearful, agonized question, "Brothers, what shall we do?" So he said to them, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to Himself." (vv. 38-39).

And here, at last, comes the water in this account. Verse 41: "So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls."

Three thousand people received Peter's words with Holy Spirit-given repentance and faith. They were washed in the waters of Baptism and were added to the Holy Christian Church. In Romans 6:3-4, the apostle Paul talked about the connection between our Baptism and Jesus' cross: "Do you not know

that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? We were buried therefore with Him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.”

That is how your Baptism saves you. It connects you to Jesus’ death, burial, and resurrection—because at His Baptism, Jesus exchanged your sins for His righteousness. He gave you His holiness and purity and took upon Himself your sin and guilt. When He went to the cross, He suffered and died to satisfy God’s wrath forever. And He rose again on the third day to promise you new and eternal life.

In the water of our Baptism, God the Father adopted us as His own sons and daughters and poured out His Holy Spirit into our hearts. The Spirit created faith in each of us and forgave us all our sins. Covered in Jesus’ grace through God’s living water of Baptism, we are given the precious job to go and serve our neighbor, sharing the Good News that God’s Son, Jesus Christ, has won our full and free forgiveness. Amen.