

Genesis 11:1-9; Acts 2:1-21
“Power of the Holy Spirit”
Pentecost Sunday

June 9, 2019
Our Redeemer Lutheran Church
Pastor Hartwig

Grace, mercy, and peace from God, our Heavenly Father, and Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior. Amen! Dear brothers and sisters in Christ –

[Introduction]

Power can be used in at least two ways: it can be unleashed, or it can be harnessed. The energy in ten gallons of gasoline, for instance,

can be released explosively by dropping a lighted match into the can.	Or it can be channeled through the engine of a car in a controlled burn and used to transport a person 350 miles.
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Explosions are spectacular, but controlled burns have lasting effect, staying power. The Holy Spirit works both ways.

At Pentecost, he exploded on the scene;

His presence was like "tongues of fire" (Acts 2:3).

Thousands were affected by one burst of God's power.

And the same is true about Babel.

At Babel, the Holy Spirit explodes upon the scene; His presence confusing the language.

Genesis 11 Babel and an Acts 2 Pentecost! The power of the Holy Spirit explodes!

Oh sure there are differences.

You can't get any more opposite of one another than with these two events.

At Babel the Lord confuses and scatters.	At Pentecost the Lord orders and gathers.
At Babel the diversity of languages or tongues brought an end to the let-us-be-like-God-ambitions of rebellious sinful men.	At Pentecost the diversity of languages or tongues marks the beginning of the preaching of the good news.

Babel and Pentecost are about language and how the Lord uses it
– TO SCATTER and TO GATHER.

[Babel]

You see... A long time ago the world had only one language.

These were the descendants of Noah after the Flood.

They were very naughty people. They had a hankering to be like God.

They were not satisfied to be creatures. It's what sinners do.

So they concocted a plan. ***"Let us build"*** they said.

The ***"Let us"*** language is the way the Trinity talks. You remember don't you?

"Let us make mankind in our image," (Gen. 1:26).

As if these people are little divinities they declare: ***"LET US build!"***

They wanted to build a great city with the world's tallest tower.

A skyscraper – that will make the world's tallest building look puny!

And that building is 2,717 feet.

A thousand feet taller than the One World Trade Center in New York City.

"LET US build!"

Haughty confidence. Cocky arrogance. Snooty plans.

"Come, LET US ... LET US build ourselves a city with a tower that reaches to the heavens, so that we may make a name for ourselves."

Reach the heavens! Achieve Hollywood status! Attain their greatest potential!

Control their future! They will be like God!

The possibilities are endless! Man is in charge!

Man can be like God!

WRONG. King David speaks the bald faced truth in Psalm 2.

"The One enthroned in heaven laughs; the Lord scoffs at them."

The Lord throws a huge "pipe wrench" in the construction plans.

He doesn't topple the tower.

He doesn't send a doomsday, catastrophic global warming to melt the mortar and disintegrate the brick.

Instead, the Lord ... **CONFUSES THEIR LANGUAGE!**

And the people go babbling.

God...Jumbles up their nouns and verbs.

Shuffles their adjectives and adverbs.

Tangles their tongues.

They can't understand each other anymore!

It's total confusion. Scrambled tongues and scattered people.

That is the power of the Holy Spirit.

[Pentecost]

In Acts 2 the Lord does a Pentecost. Does just the opposite.

Scattered Jews from all over the world are gathered at Jerusalem for worship.

All of a sudden there is the sound of rushing wind and tongues of fire.

Wind and fire signal something special. Something huge! From the Lord!

The Lord's doing something here. The apostles are filled with the Holy Spirit.

Then they preach in languages that are understandable.

Egyptian for the Egyptians. Greek for the Greeks.

Arabic for the Arabs. AND Aramaic for the Hebrews.

In a sense, the confusion of Babel is reversed in this moment.

The various languages remained,

but the Holy Spirit gave everyone the ability to hear
in their own native tongue.

You see...

The MIRACLE of Pentecost Sunday is that the preaching of the Gospel broke through Babel's language barrier.

AND Not just for the Jews but for all people.

All heard in their own native tongue that:

"Jesus is God FOR YOU. Jesus died for you!

He answered and atoned for all your sin.

He is your Savior.

He conquered death and hell FOR YOU.

He lives and reigns at the Father's right hand FOR YOU.

*You can be sure of it because you are hearing this good news
in your own language!"*

[Today]

And that is the same message you are hearing today. In your own language.

You see ... every Sunday is a little Pentecost!

Really it is!

In your own language you hear the good news that Jesus died for you too!

And you need to hear it because you're just like the people at Babel.

You too have the relentless desire to be God and not live as a human.

As if you have better words than the Lord.
As if life is all about making a name for yourself.

So you live for self. Curved in on yourself 24-7-365.
That's why Jesus died for you. To be your Savior. To redeem you. Forgive you.

That's the absolution. That's the sermon.
That's the Lord's Supper. That's your baptism.

In the Word and Sacraments you hear the living voice of Jesus,
and the Holy Spirit rolls up His sleeves and bears witness to Jesus!

Yes, that's right, Jesus who is God FOR YOU.
Who completely atoned for all your sin! Yes, you are forgiven.
Peace with God and all of heaven is yours.
You are saved. All because of Jesus.

You understand these words preached to you don't you? Of course you do.
So every time you hear the gospel in your own language,
you experience and receive another little Pentecost.

You are winded, flooded and fired by the Holy Spirit as
He calls you to faith in Jesus by the gospel,
enlightens you for salvation with His gifts,
sanctifies and keeps you in the one truth faith!

Then on the Last Day you will see with your eyes what you now have by faith.
On the Last Day when Jesus comes to judge the living and dead,
the same Holy Spirit will raise you and all the dead by the command of Jesus.

The Holy Spirit will breath the breath of life in your corpse
and give you a resurrected body for life everlasting with God Himself:
the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit.

All this is most certainly true. I am not babbling.
You're hearing it in your own tongue.
And it is the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

REJOICE always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances;
for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. AMEN! (1 Thess. 5:16–18)
