

Grace, mercy, and peace be unto you from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.
Amen

It is a glorious and grand day, here today, in our Lord.

- We have Pentecost and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.
- And we have 2 junior confirmands, Abby and Isaac, that have completed instruction and today will be taken in as communicant members here at Hope.

Perhaps on a day such as this there is a temptation by your pastor to tailor this sermon towards the 2 young people sitting here in the front row of this church.

- And perhaps it is a little the temptation of each of you here today to tune out a little on this sermon.
- After all, it is geared towards confirmation day and the junior confirmands.

But while there may be a little truth in all of this.....I invite, I encourage each of you, each of us to take this message to heart.

- After all, Pentecost is a big deal and it is a big deal for each of us.
- And while much of what is said is said to Abby and Isaac, it has great application for each of us.
- And finally, confirmation is really a renewal of your baptismal vows.
- And we each, should daily renew our baptismal vows.

To get us started today, we really need to go back to last week and the setting for all of this.

- The disciples had been out with Jesus at the mount called Olivet.
- And right before their eyes Jesus had ascended into heaven.

Just before this Jesus had told them, “Do not leave Jerusalem but wait for the Holy Spirit.”

- So Jesus ascended into heaven and the angel asked the disciples, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand here looking into the sky?”

And we were told the disciples returned to Jerusalem.....to the upper room.

- And they waited. And what must have seemed like a very long time they waited.

Oh yes, they did some things.

- We are told they were together on one accord, devoting themselves to prayer.

- And they did select Matthias to replace Judas.

But they waited.

- They were confused.
- Not fully understanding things.
- And lacking the courage or the certainty to go forth.

Ten days passed to be exact.

- And now we come to the day of Pentecost....where we are at today.
- And we are told there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind and it filled the entire house where they were sitting.
- And then divided tongues of fire appeared to them and rested on them.

And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit.

- And they began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.

And they went out into the city and began proclaiming the Gospel.

- No more hiding in the upper room. No more waiting.
- They went out into the city proclaiming the Gospel.

And they did so in a way that each person listening could understand.

- God's Word and salvation is for all people.
- And they did it with clarity and strength and comprehension that they previous did not have.

And Peter, amongst the others, gave his great Pentecostal Sermon.

- Some mocked him.
- Some questioned him.
- But he went forth.

Peter, with boldness and strength and clarity proclaimed Christ.

- The same Peter who had less than 2 months earlier fallen asleep in the Garden of Gethsemane and in the temple court had denied Christ 3 times.

- Peter proclaimed, “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.”
- “The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off....for all whom the Lord our God will call.”
- “And it shall come to pass, that everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.”

And those who accepted his message were baptized—about 3,000 were added to their number that day.

- Not a bad day’s work!

And of course it did not end there.

- Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts.
- They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all people.
- And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.
- And we have the start of the New Testament Church.

Which you and I are a part of.

- And is that not our story also?

On our own we were lost and condemned.

- We like the disciples in the upper room are confused.
- We are not fully understanding.
- We lack courage and certainty to go forth.

And the truth be known.....

- We like Peter have fallen asleep on our Lord.
- We, like Peter, have denied Christ.
- And for that matter we can easily relate also to the people in the crowd in Jerusalem that Peter was proclaiming the Gospel message to.

But here we are today.

- Abby and Isaac you made it!
- You did it!

But again, as I address Abby and Isaac, please include yourselves also.

- We are all children of God.
- We are here in the arms of our Lord.

You did it.

- But look close.....and for all of us.....it was not me, it was not you.
- It was the work of the Holy Spirit.

You, as Junior Confirmands, persevered through the last 2 years.

- It was not easy.
- You faced many challenges.
- We had all the issues associated with this thing called COVID.
- You had all the outside challenges of things whispering in your ear to pull you away from church. And unfortunately, that won't end.
- And you faced many personal challenges and tragedies along the way.

The same things the older adults face also.

- Each of us here today, have faced many challenges.
- Many twists and turns and bumps in the road.
- But you have persevered through not just 2 years, but many years.

For each of us, you did it.

- Not you, for any of us, but the Holy Spirit.
- Look what the disciples were before and after the day of Pentecost.

Oh yes, the Holy Spirit does work through means.

- He worked through your families. Your loved ones.
- But trace it all the way back and ultimately it is the work of the Holy Spirit.

Just as for the apostles.....

- They were in the upper room in waiting and the Holy Spirit came on them.

And the Holy Spirit desires to come upon each of us.

- And each of us can now go forth in the name of the Lord.

But it is not easy.

- We dare not kid ourselves that from this point forward, the future will be a cake walk or everything will go well.
- In fact, we know it won't

But just as we could not have gotten to this point without the Holy Spirit, we can't go forward or do those things God would have us to do to bring glory to Him without the Holy Spirit.

- Nor can we reach our final destination of heaven as our home without the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit works through the Means of Grace.

- Word and Sacraments.
- And we must always remain in Word and Sacrament.

Today is a great accomplishment in the Lord.

- But it is not a completion, a graduation, a stamp of being saved no matter what we do the rest of our lives.

We each will fall astray and need to be drawn back.

- And without the Holy Spirit we cannot do that.
- I can't tell you all the people I see who say they want to change, to do better, and they talk of doing it themselves.

That is what the world teaches but that won't work.

- There is proof after proof after proof of that.
- We didn't get to this point on our own and we can't go forward from here on our own.
- And when we stumble and fall, turn to the Lord.
- He picks us up and offers us forgiveness.

Jesus accomplished the work of grace on the cross; but it is the Holy Spirit who brings that grace to us by giving us and growing us in faith.

- Jesus redeemed us and it is the Holy Spirit who brings us the blessings of redemption.
- The Holy Spirit is shaping each of our lives into the glorious pattern of Christ.
- Please, open your eyes and your ears and your hearts to allow this to happen.

We've talked about the work of the Holy Spirit at the beginning of life, throughout life, but what about at end of life?

- The meaning of the third article of the Apostles' Creed, the Apostles' Creed which our confirmands will confess in a few minutes, helps us and answers this.
- It says, "On the Last Day, the Holy Spirit will raise me and all the dead and give eternal life to me and all who believe in Christ."
- Like inseparable companions, Jesus and the Holy Spirit work together to bring about the Father's plan of salvation.

What I address next is not just for Abby and Isaac, but I mean it and it applies to each of us.

- At life's end.....be there.
- Maybe when you are young, 100 years seems like a long time.
- Ask any of us older folks and it is not.
- It is nothing compared to eternity. Compared to forever.

Be there.

- And that can only be done in the work of the Triune God.

Only in the work of the Triune God.

- He has called you by name. Each of you by name.
- He has gotten us to where we are today.
- He will continue to go forward with us through all we face.
- And He will be with us at life's end.....when we are called to live for eternity with Him and all those that have died in the faith.

Abby and Isaac, I did some quick back of the envelope calculations.

- In the last 2 years you have done.....
- 70 sermon outlines.
- Participated in 60 confirmation classes.
- Put forth 56 memorization passages.
- Taken and successfully completed 56 quizzes.
- And performed 4 service projects.
- For the rest of us, think about what has all taken place in your life.

But Abby and Isaac, go back to where we started.

- Two years ago, in our very first introductory meeting to confirmation, parents were invited to be there, I gave this to you in writing.
- “Our biggest goal, our most important point, bigger than any academics involved in confirmation.....
- To grow in faith in Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior. To develop and nurture a loving, trusting relationship with Jesus Christ.”
- And is that not what this is all about for each of us? A long, trusting relationship with Jesus Christ through thick and thin.

Abby and Isaac, I am more confident in you than any other class I have had.

- Please don't disappoint me. More important, don't disappoint God.
- And I include in this now Sebastian who was with us, and a big part of this for the past year.
- In my years of teaching confirmation, I have never seen the growth and development of a class like I did this year.
- Abby and Isaac, stay active. Stay involved. Sebastian—I look forward to another good year ahead.

The disciples were in the upper room, waiting and waiting, and waiting.

- They were confused.
- Not fully understanding and lacking the courage or the certainty to go forth.
- And then the Holy Spirit came upon them and that all changed.

For each of us.....put God first in all you say and do.

- Amongst all the challenges and temptations and straying paths the world would have us to go.....put God first.
- Put God first today, tomorrow, and for all eternity.
- Amen.

(Please remain seated) And now, may the peace of God, which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.

At this time we will continue with hymn number 605

- We will use this hymn to prepare ourselves for the Rite of Confirmation that will take place following the hymn.
- Abby, Isaac, and Sandy, and Nichol for picture taking, I invite you to come forward during the last verse of the hymn.

You will probably recognize this as a baptismal hymn.

- Again, this day, in the Rite of Confirmation, we renew our baptismal vows earlier made.
- May that be so for each of us.
- Hymn number 605