

## **“Power to Proclaim” – Pr Jim Sprengle – Pentecost Day – June 8, 2025**

- I. **Acts 2:17** – “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...”
- II. **Many people believe we are living in the last days.**
  - a. Each time things start to settle down in one place, trouble pops up somewhere else.
    - i. A conflict finally stops in one part of the globe, and then another bloody war starts in a new place.
    - ii. When we get through with a big election that causes all kinds of division, we face more for congressional seats every two years...
    - iii. Just when we think crime is getting better, another wave comes through... shaking up our sense of safety and well-being.
  - b. Some surveys show that over forty percent of Americans believe we are living in the end times... but I suppose those numbers would go up or down depending on what the news cycle is showing...
    - i. Is Artificial Intelligence causing fear in people that it will start working on its own – and maybe against humanity?
    - ii. Is the earth’s weather going to get worse and worse over time?
    - iii. Is some virus infecting people, and we might face another global pandemic of some sort?
    - iv. Are the countries who hate America scheming to attack us when we least expect it?
  - c. One thing we can always remember as Christians is that even Jesus says we will face all kinds of trouble and catastrophes, but the end only comes when He returns to redeem and restore all things.
    - i. Sure, the world is full of bad things happening – but when hasn’t the world had bad things happening all the time?
    - ii. I can’t imagine what life was like during WWII and fighting in two separate parts of the world – in Europe and the South Pacific.
    - iii. I can’t imagine what it would be like to watch the Cuban missile crisis unfolding on TV and wondering if an all-out nuclear war was coming.
    - iv. What did parents think when the Vietnam war was raging, and they had a son that might be drafted?
    - v. No one could imagine the Twin Towers attack before it happened, and our sense of security was never the same.
  - d. In all times and places the world is full of trouble, but we are at peace knowing that the power of the Holy Spirit is in us for such a time as this.
- III. **The outpouring of the Holy Spirit** on Pentecost is God’s gift to get us through.
  - a. In a great miracle, the very presence of God appeared to people in Jerusalem, helping them to speak and understand each other.
    - i. It says, “And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance... they were

bewildered, because each one was hearing them speak in his own language.” (vv 4, 6)

- ii. I guess on one level, they were able to speak in different languages they had never learned before, and the hearers were also hearing whatever was spoken as if it were in their own language.
- iii. In other words, all language barriers were broken, and they began to share the Good News of Jesus and the salvation of humanity... the truth that the world does not win, but Christ triumphs over all.
- b. Yes, the tower of Babel was the beginning of different languages, and the prideful builders were scattered across the globe with mixed up languages.
  - i. Yet, God had a plan to bring the scattered nations back to the same language again – and through the Holy Spirit, He did just that.
  - ii. The language that needed to be understood was all about the Gospel message, and the flames of fire... the sound of the rushing wind... and the speaking and hearing of different languages allowed the Gospel to be shared like never before.
- c. So, Peter addresses the crowd that is gathered, and he quotes the prophet Joel... saying that the people of God will prophesy in the last days by the power of the Holy Spirit.
  - i. Even 2000 years ago at the beginning of the Christian Church, the time was considered the “last days.”
  - ii. The moment that Jesus came to earth as a little baby, the clock was ticking to the day of redemption... “the day of the Lord... the great and magnificent day.” (v 20)
  - iii. The long-awaited Savior had come to complete His work, and now that He had ascended to His Father in heaven... it was time for the Holy Spirit, the Helper, to be with us to the end.
- d. The truth is, by the very nature of sin, we will all face a broken and evil world... but thanks be to God, it is on a timer... and when the time is right, the Last Day will come, and everything will change in the twinkling of an eye. (1 Corinthians 15:52)

IV. **The world may** have troubles, but Jesus has overcome the world. (Jn 16:33)

- a. The rescue mission started about 33 years before the Holy Spirit came upon this group, as Jesus was born in Bethlehem.
  - i. Jesus grew up to make the greatest impact in human history – as He was executed on the cross but rose again on Easter morning to crush satan’s head – to deliver all of us from sin... from death... and from the devil.
  - ii. For forty days, the resurrected Jesus spent time with His followers, opening their minds to the Scriptures and what must happen.
  - iii. Finally, He told them to go to Jerusalem where they would receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon them, and He was then

taken up to heaven to His rightful place at the right hand of the Father. (Acts 1:8)

- b. Today's reading is the culmination of all this waiting and wondering for the disciples, as they didn't know exactly when or how these things would take place.
  - i. The Holy Spirit was poured out on the disciples, and the power to proclaim Jesus Christ and His saving work was given to all who believe.
  - ii. I see the Holy Spirit poured out on people, and it reminds me of Baptism and God's grace as it comes to us in our baptisms.
    - 1. As the water pours over us in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, we are now God's child... but also the place He chooses to call His temple.
    - 2. The Lord dwells within us, and if that isn't power, I don't know what is.
- c. We have the power of God, the Holy Spirit, dwelling in us so that we may proclaim His saving name to all nations – so that we can be witnesses of Christ in our neighborhoods, our region, and our world.

V. **It is true, we are in the last days of a dark and dying world.**

- a. We don't throw our arms up in disgust and just give up... we take the opportunity to be witnesses very seriously, because only those who know Jesus will overcome the world with Him.
- b. The Gospel is an international language that has no barriers or boundaries.
  - i. Just take the time to go with the Outreach Board to the Rockwood People's Market this summer and you will see the many cultures and people represented in Rockwood.
  - ii. In Rockwood, there are 85 plus languages spoken... roughly 40% Latino, but also people from Russia, Ukraine, Vietnam, China, and several African countries... and almost 30% of the people living in Rockwood are foreign born residents.
  - iii. Each week, the Outreach Board hands out Bibles, story of salvation bracelets, and invites people to know Jesus as the only Savior.
- c. Since Jesus Ascended into heaven with the promise to return, the clock is ticking on the end of this world as we know it.
  - i. However, we are unafraid... we are at peace... knowing that Jesus conquered sin, death, and the devil... the struggles around us are not the main thing... Jesus and the power of the Holy Spirit to proclaim His name to all the nations is the main thing.
- d. Even as the world is full of trouble and uncertainty, we stand firm in the unshakable truth that Jesus Christ has overcome the world.
  - i. By the power of the Holy Spirit poured out at Pentecost... and poured into us through Word and Sacraments... we are fully equipped to proclaim Christ.

- ii. These are the last days, but they are also the days of opportunity... because now is the time of salvation, and now is the time to proclaim the Gospel that knows no boundary... and no end. Amen