

"The Eternal Advocate" Pastor Takaaki Inou

Acts 2:1-13, John 14:15-20

① 【What Pentecost and the Feast of the Seven Weeks mean】

Today is Pentecost in the Christian calendar. It is called Pentecost in Greek. Fifty days after Jesus' resurrection, the promised Holy Spirit descended on the apostles. This is the day to celebrate. The day of Pentecost came" (Acts 2:1). Pentecost means "50-day festival," and it falls on the 50th day after Passover. It is one of the three major festivals of Judaism and is called the "Feast of the Seven Weeks. Three things were celebrated on that day. (1) The celebration of the giving of the Torah. (2) The marriage of Lutz and Boaz. Lutz is a foreigner and Boaz is a Jew, and their marriage gave birth to David's ancestors. (3) The second harvest, the wheat harvest, was celebrated (the first harvest was barley). The nature of this festival teaches us that it is a template for the new promise. On this day, God gave a new law, not the old one. Also, a new people of God was born, neither Jews nor foreigners. A new people of God was born, neither Jews nor foreigners, and a people who believe in Christ was raised (harvested).

② 【The breath of God entered the new man and spoke the word of God】

As they were all gathered together as one, suddenly a sound like a violent wind was heard from heaven, echoing throughout the house where they were sitting." (Acts 2:1-2). The sound like a violent wind came from heaven. Wind, breath, and spirit are the same in Greek: *pneuma*. In Hebrew, it is "ruach. The Holy Spirit is the breath of God. This breath of God was given to man on two occasions.

The first Pentecost was by Christ Himself, who appeared on the night of the Day of Resurrection. He breathed on his disciples and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit" (John 20:22). The breath of Christ is the Holy Spirit. The disciple who received the breath of Christ was re-created as a new man, the body of Christ. From that day on, the disciples began to breathe the breath of God. The Holy Spirit is the one who resurrected Jesus from the dead, and if the Spirit of Him who raised Him from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies by means of that Spirit that dwells in you." (Romans 8:11) We are resurrected because the Holy Spirit dwells in us. For when the breath of man ends, the breath of God, the breath of Christ, does not end. It breathes in me forever. That is why we will not die.

The second Pentecost took place 50 days later, by the Holy Spirit himself. That is today. A fiery tongue appeared at the fork and stayed on each one of them.

And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in the languages of other nations, as the Spirit caused them to speak” (Acts 2:3-4). (Acts 2:3-4). The Holy Spirit dispenses various gifts to each person and remains on them. It appeared in the form of “tongues of flame. It means the tongue of God. The Holy Spirit gave the disciples the power of God to speak to the Lord and to preach. They spoke out the great works of God in foreign languages. Jesus said, “I will ask the Father. The Father will send another Advocate to be with you forever.” (John 14:16). Jesus referred to the Holy Spirit as “the Advocate. The Greek word is “parakletos. The word “para” means “with,” and “kratos” means “to cry out.” When we speak of God, He speaks with us. That is why it appears most when we prophesy or preach. This time I understood that being an advocate is a defense for missionary work.

Thus, two descents of the Holy Spirit were necessary. In the Book of Joel, it is written, “The Lord has fallen to save you. The Lord will give you the autumn rain to save you, and it will fall in abundance. He will give you the autumn rain and the spring rain, as in the former days.” You will know that I am in Israel.” (Joel 2:23, 27) For with the spring rains you will sprout, and with the fall rains you will bear fruit and harvest.

③ 【People do not change unless they are changed by the Holy Spirit】

The event happened “suddenly”. The disciples had heard a promise from Jesus that He would send the Holy Spirit, but they had not been told when He would come. The One came suddenly. This is what makes Christianity unique. The divine event comes first, and faith is born in man through the experience of it. It is the same with the resurrection. The disciples really “saw” the resurrected person. They “touched” the body. Theology comes later. Pentecost also happened as an event first. Christian faith is thus a work from above, a manifestation of God, not our movement from below. So basically, all we humans can do is “wait. I finally realized this year that faith is about waiting for God to come to us at dawn or dusk. Think about the rain. Can human beings make it rain? We cannot make the clouds come up and move. We don't know when that day will come, but we have to wait. But we are not waiting without doing anything. We must pray and wait like the disciples. Prayer is to prepare a receptacle for us. The Holy Spirit fell on the people who were gathered together as one and praying. He did not fall on the rest of those who were in Jerusalem. Make your hearts like soft ground so that you can absorb the rain from heaven. Then you will bear abundant fruit. If you have a stubborn heart like concrete, all the rain from heaven will flow away.

●The other day I heard an interesting story from a pastor friend of mine. A certain non-Christian student at Osaka University went to Nepal for training.

He had no religion. He said that in Nepal, people who do not have faith are not trusted and not accepted. He said that in Nepal, a pastor cannot be a pastor if he cannot cast out evil spirits. After returning to Japan, the young man became very interested in Christianity and started learning about it. And he is asking for the power to cast out evil spirits himself.

The faith of the Nepalese is well characterized by the faith of the early Church. It is power and signs and wondrous works. It is not a study. The words spoken by a person who has the Holy Spirit and the words spoken by a person who does not have the Holy Spirit are completely different, even if they are the same words. The words of a pastor who has the Holy Spirit have power, conviction, and the power to change people. Only the Holy Spirit can change people. No amount of human emotion, speech, a little good will, persuasion, knowledge, or diligent care can change a person. I experienced this when I was trying to persuade a cult. No amount of truthful material, no amount of parental tears could change the children. Only when the Holy Spirit worked did the person leave and become a believer. The current rescue work of the cult is knowledge. In a manner of speaking, they will be disfellowshipped, but they will not become Christians. This is because they do not convince by the power of the Holy Spirit, but by human power. This is the critical problem of the Japanese Christian Church. Just because Peter preached that day, 3,000 people believed in Christ and were baptized. He is a fisherman. He has never studied. They were “greatly moved, saying, ... what shall we do? This is the power of the Holy Spirit. It is the Holy Spirit, not academia. Ezekiel clearly states. When I sprinkle clean water on you, you will be cleansed. I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you. I will remove from your bodies the heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and you shall walk according to my statutes.” (Ezekiel 36:25, 26-27) He is saying that only God can make a person clean and change him.

●In the book “Silwan's Memoirs,” I found this article.

One day he received a long, thick letter from a lady. One day he received a long, thick letter from a lady, in which the history of this lady was written in great detail. At the end, she asked him to grant her forgiveness for all these sins. He wrote back that he could not give her the Sacrament of Forgiveness in his letter, but after considering various circumstances, he suddenly reconsidered. He went to a priest and confessed all the sins she had written in her letter as his own sins. The woman found peace one day when the priest confessed her sins on her behalf and obtained her forgiveness.”

It means that when we confess the sins of others as our own, we can change

others. Remembering that only the Spirit of God can truly change and save others, we too should seek the Holy Spirit and let Him be the person of the Holy Spirit.