

**The Holy Spirit Put Christ Crucified In Your Heart**  
**Sermon on Galatians 5:19-24**  
**Weekend of May 30, 2004**  
**Saint Mark's, Watertown**  
**Pastor Karl Walther**

The Scriptures say: *We live by the Spirit!* Therefore: *Let us keep in step with the Spirit!* Amen.

God's Word for our special consideration on this Festival of the Arrival of God the Holy Spirit is Galatians chapter five, verses nineteen through twenty-four:

***The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.***

***But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires.***

This is God's Word, inspired by the Holy Spirit himself.

**Introduction: Pentecost Leads Us to Consider God the Holy Spirit**

Dear fellow Christians—whose souls the Holy Spirit has entered:

Today, of course, we celebrate the Festival of Pentecost. It was that day, probably late in May, probably some nineteen hundred seventy-four years ago, and certainly seven weeks after Jesus' resurrection and a week and a half after his ascension. That day the apostles were gathered in a house in Jerusalem. And God the Holy Spirit came upon the apostles with the sound of a wind and tongues like fire and the instantaneous ability to speak foreign languages. ...Although the Holy Spirit had always been present in the hearts of believers before this, now the Holy Spirit was specifically empowering the proclamation of Jesus as Savior—both by the apostles and by the New Testament Christians who would follow them.

**Theme: The Holy Spirit Put Christ Crucified in Your Heart**

And so, it's exceedingly fitting for us today – especially on the basis of this Word from God – to consider this theme: (\*) THE HOLY SPIRIT PUT CHRIST CRUCIFIED IN YOUR HEART. This particular section of Scripture gets very specific. It says: (1) THE HOLY SPIRIT RESCUED YOU FROM THE ACTS OF THE SINFUL NATURE. And: (2) THE HOLY SPIRIT RESCUED YOU FOR HIS SPIRITUAL FRUITS.

**Part One: The Holy Spirit Rescued You from the Acts of the Sinful Nature**

Now actually, God's Word to us today is a section of Scripture the Apostle Paul wrote to Christians in Galatia, modern-day Turkey, about eighteen years after Pentecost. To them Paul details the work of God the Holy Spirit. But first, he's got to make clear why people need the Holy Spirit.

And so he says, and this is God's Word to us: *The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy, the original Greek adds even murders; and then also drunkenness, drunken orgies, and the like.* And Paul comments: *I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.*

If you add it up—in the original Greek, anyway—it’s a list of sixteen. And that’s no accident. Four is often the Bible’s number for people—people from the four corners of the earth, from north, south, east, and west. And sixteen is four times four. So, this list of sixteen is a list of people-attitudes—or as the Spirit himself says: *the acts of the sinful nature*.

Now, when I read that list, did it make you uncomfortable? I bet it did! And I can tell you why. First of all, this is an unseemly list. These are ugly attitudes.

Secondly, they’re our attitudes, by nature. See, we know that living in our flesh, just under the surface of our skin, these creepy things are spooking about. We are inclined toward *sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery*—and we’d be ashamed if what goes on in our mind were broadcast to the world. Left to ourselves, we’d immediately fall into *idolatry and witchcraft*. To this day, every so often, there will break to the surface of our lives: *hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage* – we throw those, don’t we?! – *selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy*, and even *murders*. We’re at least acquainted with and tainted with *drunkenness, drunken orgies, and the like*. And all of that is very disconcerting – creepy even! – to know that all of that lives inside of us.

And then finally, worst of all, we read: *I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God*. No, God doesn’t overlook these things. He hates them. He punishes them. And he punishes those who perpetrate them. And that’s a scary thought!

It’s a scary thought to all of us.... But I’m not a faithful pastor if I don’t add: it’s especially a scary thought to those of you who are really right now still involved in these sins. If you are involved in sexual immorality, I cannot warn you strongly enough, “Confess your sin and find your way out of it,” because it will kill you—eternally. If you are involved in some sort of idolatry, or jealousy, or hatred—confess it, get rid of it, or it will kill you. If you are involved in drunkenness, confess it and quit it, because it will kill you twice—once here, and once hereafter.

But of course, all of that applies to all of us....

## **Part Two: The Holy Spirit Rescued You for His Spiritual Fruit**

And you’ll say to me, “Pastor, my immorality is eating me up. I hate my idolatry, my jealousy; I hate my hatred. I want to quit my drunken habit. But it’s hard, and I feel so helpless.”

Ah, my friend, I’ve got good news for you! Listen to God’s good Word for Pentecost: ***But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.*** It’s a list of nine virtues – three times three – because three is the number for God, who is Triune. And these nine virtues are perfectly God’s virtues. But even more importantly, get this, because this is the really good news: ***Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires.***

Hey, isn’t that glorious! *Those who belong to Christ Jesus* – that’s you! – *have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires*. And that’s the work of God the Holy Spirit!

God the Holy Spirit, when he made you God’s own: and that was probably at your baptism, when he called you by name and put you in the family of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit—God the Holy Spirit extracted your sinful nature and hammered it to the cross. God the Holy Spirit took your sins, your sinfulness, your entire inclination to evil, and shoved it onto the shoulders of Jesus Christ. God the Holy Spirit crucified your sinful nature, and for all intents and purposes it is dead and gone.

And God the Holy Spirit has replaced it with a new nature that bears his fruit. In fact, as far as God is concerned, you have borne that fruit perfectly—because Christ Jesus bore that fruit perfectly for you. Now, you are perfectly *loving*, because God the Holy Spirit has attributed Christ's perfect love to you. Now you are perfectly *joyful*, because God the Holy Spirit has taken Christ's perfect joy and made it your own. Now you are perfectly *peaceful, patient, kind, good, faithful, and gentle* – you are full of *self-control* – because Jesus displayed these virtues, and you belong to him. And the kingdom of God is yours. Isn't that great news?!

So, it's no wonder that you are becoming more and more *loving* in your life! Now, somebody else is suffering, and you're not thinking, "Well, at least it's not my problem," you're thinking, "His problem is my problem. What can I do to help him?" And lovingly, you do help him.

You are filled with God the Holy Spirit. So, it's no wonder you are full of *joy*. Now, you wake up in the morning, and at least deep down inside, you're saying, "Wow! How blessed I am! God has made me and all I need and given me the opportunity to serve him. Am I 'lucky', or what?"

The Holy Spirit has made you belong to Christ. No wonder nothing rattles you! No wonder you're at *peace*. No wonder when a loved one dies, or you get sick, or a family member wanders, or you lose a chunk of money, you say, "It's okay. I belong to Christ. And my Good Shepherd will shepherd all these things to work for me for good." That's the kind of *peace* that's yours now through the Holy Spirit.

Yes, you can exercise *patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control*. That's who you are now: by the working of God the Holy Spirit.

### **Conclusion: God the Holy Spirit Has Given Us a Personal Pentecost**

So, you know: you read about the events of Pentecost, and it's like so many things in the Bible. We wish that we were there. Oh, to have heard the sound of that wind, to have seen those flames like fire, and to have heard the Word in our language straight from the apostles' lips!

But the fact is, my friends: we have! God the Holy Spirit – the same God the Holy Spirit that came at Pentecost – has entered your heart. He has crucified in Christ your sinful nature. He has attributed to you Christ's sinless nature. The same Holy Spirit who appeared at Pentecost has ushered you into the inheritance of the kingdom of God. Heaven is yours!

That's your personal Pentecost! And it's yours: every time you hear and believe God's good news of Jesus Christ. It's yours: every day—until you receive the fullness of its fruits in the presence of the Spirit and the Son and the Father, absolutely eternally. That's Pentecost's promise to you yet today! Amen.

The Scriptures say: *Live by the Spirit! And you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature.* Amen.