

Easter People Are Filled With the Holy Spirit
Sermon for May 17th – 8:30 a.m. Service
By Pastor Vern Oestmann

The text for this sermon is the first lesson from Acts 10:34-38.

Our theme: “Living as Easter People” is highlighted by this text that says: “*God shows no partiality, but in every nation anyone who fears Him and does what is right is acceptable to Him.*” And later we read, “*...the Holy Spirit fell on all who heard the word,...even on the Gentiles.*”

Let us pray. Heavenly Father, we come before You today with appreciation for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit that has come to us through the hearing of your Word. Bless us now as we meditate on it so we may live as Easter People and rejoice in the message of salvation; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

To be filled with the Holy Spirit is to be filled with Christ. The Holy Spirit came to glorify Christ and to testify of Him. Therefore, if we are filled with the Holy Spirit, we are abiding in Christ Jesus. Today’s Gospel Lesson is Jesus telling His disciples that abiding in Him is abiding in His love. That love then is lived out by loving one another as Jesus has loved us.

The disappointment is that we don’t love as Jesus has loved us. We fail completely in loving one another as Jesus loved us. How? Let’s review a list on love according to 1 Corinthians 13: 4:8a.

Love never gives up.
Love cares more for others than for self.
Love doesn't want what it doesn't have.
Love doesn't strut,
Doesn't have a swelled head,
Doesn't force itself on others,
Isn't always "me first,"
Doesn't fly off the handle,
Doesn't keep score of the sins of others,
Doesn't revel when others grovel,
Takes pleasure in the flowering of truth,
Puts up with anything,
Trusts God always,
Always looks for the best,
Never looks back,
Love never dies.

Not one of us loves like this 100% of the time. And then, when we attach the love of sacrificing self for the sake of others – even if they do not deserve it – as Jesus did for sinners, like you and me, we have to admit that we have not loved one another as Jesus loved us.

But, I have Good News. The Gospel lesson reminds us and so does the lesson from 1 John that God loves us and has chosen us to receive His love even though we don’t deserve it. John wrote that “*Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God, and everyone who loves the Father loves whoever has been born of him*” (1 John 5:1). And Jesus said, “*This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you*” (John 15:12). Jesus goes on to say that we are His friends for whom He was willing to lay down His life.

God's love is unconditional for us. In turn our love for others should exemplify God's love. God's forgiveness reaches out to all who call on the name of Jesus. So, we too, are to forgive others as they repent and ask. But, also, to forgive as Jesus forgave those who were nailing Him to the cross. In the lord's Prayer we pray, "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us."

Easter People, filled with the Holy Spirit, produce fruit. The fruit of the Spirit is this, "*love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control*" (Gal. 5:22-23). St. Paul writes what love is in q Corinthians 4:4-8a. Living as Easter People is putting these virtues into daily practice.

This takes a transformed heart and mind and it takes commitment to follow God's commands, not our own desires. When God's love changes our hearts and God's wisdom changes our minds we then can commit our life to serve God and others with the command Jesus gave: "*love one another as I have loved you.*"

With that love and that commitment we need to be nurtured by daily prayer, regular worship, constant reading and studying of God's Word, and faithful, service. What the reward and the outcome is will be determined by the input of faithfulness. The joy, peace, and hope that come into your life is evidenced by the selfless offering of your servant heart.

The victorious message, "The Lord is risen! He is risen, indeed!" is the message we as Easter People share and live when we are filled with the Spirit of God. Amen.