

St. Luke Ev. Lutheran Church

Sermon by Pastor Anthony E. Schultz

Pentecost Series A May 11, 2008 [Joel 2:28,29](#)



“And afterward, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions. Even on my servants both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days.”

People of God – rescued from the flaming lake of fire in hell by the innocent blood of the very Lamb of God:

Did you hear about the man named Sam? Sam was a collector of Civil War battle memorabilia. Sam collected brass buttons and swords and bayonets and bullets and cannon balls. I guess I always thought of cannon balls as these really heavy solid hunks of metal that came flying out of cannons. And if you were unfortunate enough to get in the way of this bowling ball – flying through the air – it could very easily take you apart. I guess I never thought of cannon balls as being these little round bombs that were filled with stuff like sulfur, potassium, nitrate and finely ground charcoal – plus an ample amount of black powder. I didn’t know that there were 1.5 million artillery shells and cannon balls used from 1861 to 1865. I didn’t know that one out of five didn’t explode. And I didn’t know that if you used a drill or grinder to remove the grit from a cannon ball – that the complicated fuse – could be ignited by the sparks--572° F friction – and the cannon ball explodes. I didn’t know that. And somehow – Sam didn’t understand something about this either. Or – the cannon ball Sam was working on was fatally flawed. It doesn’t really matter. It exploded and Sam died! Sometimes – what you don’t know can get you horribly hurt. Sometimes what you don’t know – can do almost irreparable harm to your body. The fact is – if we don’t know the Gospel of Christ crucified and risen and ascended – we could lose our immortal soul. That’s why it’s so important for us to pray on Mother’s Day and every day:

God Bless Our Families!

- 1. Bless us with your Holy Spirit**
- 2. Bless us with fruits of faith.**

The part of God’s Word we are concentrating on – is from the scroll of the prophet Joel. *The People’s Bible Commentary* – is a book about *Hosea, Joel and Amos*. The Hosea, Joel and Amos volume was written by Prof. Paul Eickmann – who taught the Hebrew and Aramaic – the languages that the LORD chose to first record the Old Testament Scriptures. Prof. Eickmann understood the profound Hebrew concept of *Shalom* – peace. The peace we have with God because of Immanuel – God with us in the person of Jesus of Nazareth. We have peace of mind and heart and conscience for Jesus’ sake. We have peace beyond all human understanding. A peace that Prof. Eickmann has completely in Heaven. A peace that we will know when we are home with our Good Shepherd. This is the paragraph of the sermon when we review what we know about Joel. His name Joel means the LORD – the Great I Am – the Holy One of Israel – is God. The LORD is God. He changes not! He is **the same yesterday and today and forever!** Joel’s father was named Pethuel. That’s it. We don’t know where Joel preached God’s Word. It was very likely in the south – since he mentions Judah, Jerusalem, Mt. Zion and the Temple – which

are all in the south. We don't know who the king was. Joel doesn't mention the king at all. It is even possible that priests were leading the people—judging between right and wrong—between good and evil—between the wicked and guilty and the good and innocent. Imagine how little government you would need—if God's people did what was right. Imagine how little government you would need—how few laws, rules and regulations you would need if only people would love the LORD our God with all our heart, all our soul, all our strength, all our mind and if we literally loved our neighbor as we love our self. If we would love one another—not simply with words. Very often talk is cheap. If we would love one another in action and in truth.

The message of the scroll of the prophet Joel is painfully simple. Repent! Repent of your sins. The great and terrible day of the LORD—the day of Judgment is nearer now than when we first believed! The people who first heard the message of the prophet Joel were a stubborn and stiff necked people. Because their Heavenly Father loved them so much—he was going to send fierce and painful plagues. First would come a plague of locusts. We don't have too much experience with a plague of locusts—a plague of grasshoppers. You can watch a plague of locusts on PBS—plagues in Asia and Africa. “The female desert locusts lay eggs under the sand in ‘pods’ of about 100 eggs. There may be as many as 100 pods per square foot. That makes about a thousand grasshoppers on a space the size of a piece of paper! During a plague the grasshoppers are so thick—it looks like the ground is moving—as this army of ½ inch long little soldiers move forward—tearing down anything green in their path. It's hard to believe what the bug books say about bugs. They say a swarm of grasshoppers can number a billion bugs—100 swarms—that would be a hundred billion bugs can be on the move during a plague. A swarm can cover 200 miles in a day—with their whole journey being 2,000 miles. It's hard to imagine that much destruction! There was a plague in Ethiopia when I was in first grade. Grasshoppers ate enough grain—to feed more than a million of her people for a whole year. Such was the destruction Judah would see. And then when the bugs were gone there was a drought—a horrible drought—so that nothing new could grow at all! The painful physical hardships were a powerful reminder of what was spiritually wrong in Judah. Imagine if such terrible judgment would come upon our land! Imagine if plagues and drought and suffering like this would come upon us! Because of our sins we deserve God's Judgment. Because of God's grace we know his mercy and forgiveness!

“And afterward, I will pour out my Spirit on all people.” It is the will of our Heavenly Father that we share God's Word—the Gospel with everyone every where! That needs to begin in our homes—with our family! Everyone is a part of a family. We will—by the power of the Gospel be content with what Jesus has made us. Grateful and content if we are a boy or a girl—the way God made me. If we are a boy—we can grow up to be like our earthly father—the spiritual head of our household—the example—of strength and gentleness and the one to lead and protect our family. If we are a girl—we can grow up to be a woman—who can do any job in this world. You can grow up and be President. You can grow up and be a teacher—and change a life—and change the world. You can grow up and wear the uniform of your country. You can maybe have a baby in your tummy—which is something no boy can do. We can thank God that whatever Jesus made us—he made us to serve him and share him—with the love he planted in our heart when we were baptized!

And afterward, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. That would include the people in Myanmar. Do you know where that is – Myanmar – formerly Burma? It's by the Bay of Bengal – between India and China. They say as many as 100,000 people may have died in the cyclone named Nargis. How many of those people knew about Jesus? How many of the newborn babies – the infants and toddlers – the little people who went about barefoot – in their little tan shorts – little girls who wore a grownup's t-shirt for clothes? How many of the little grandpas with the long white beards and moustaches – with the deep wrinkles around their very dark eyes – knew Jesus was their only Savior – their only hope? How many people in Thailand – have talked to people in Myanmar – about Jesus? Missionary Pieter Reid – and his wife Marlis and his children – have shared God's Word with the people of Indonesia. People like Abby Rose have shared God's Word in China. Before he went to Peru Uncle Terry shared God's Word and so did Miss Weidman's mom and dad – Missionary Wiedmann in India – and now he is a missionary in California – which is filled with people from around the world! That is but a hand full of people to share the essential Gospel with literally millions of people. Time is short! There needs to be a passion and an urgency – to share God's Word with these people literally as far away around the world as you can get – before you are literally coming home again. With our prayers and with our thank-offerings and with our lives we can do that work. We can grow up to be called workers – to be the ones to share Jesus next door and literally around the world!

Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions. Even on my servants both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days." Every one of us is part of a family. You don't have to be married. You can serve Jesus very well as a single person – like the Apostle Paul. The Apostle Paul was single – able to travel – to move from place to place – without being concerned about his spouse and his children. It was just him. Lots of people need "hugs and kisses". That's ok, too. It is God's plan – God's plan that we keep the 6th commandment. You shall not commit adultery. We will – by the power of the Gospel – lead pure and decent lives – in words and actions – and each person love and honor their spouse. That's God's plan – that we have hugs and kisses and then God may grant us the gift of children. If we are blessed with children – these children are on loan from God. They belong to our Heavenly Father. We have them – maybe for a lifetime – maybe only for a little while. That's why it's so important that we have our babies baptized soon. And it's very important we bring them to church and Sunday School and we bring them to our Day School – too – to hear God's Word more and more.

Our sons and daughters ought to be our concern – our children and grandchildren – our God-children – the people we are sponsors of. The people that were confirmed last Sunday are people we need to be concerned about. Just the other day – a new video game became available for sale – Grand Theft Auto--IV. This game involves a Serbian soldier fresh from the Bosnian War in Liberty City – pretty much like New York. The idea is to pretend you are a cold blooded murderer. Oh, they say – it's so exciting to pretend to be the bad guy – to pretend to be the criminal – to pretend to be a person utterly without conscience! They say it's exciting to drive fast cars really fast while intoxicated – to blindfire – to shoot your automatic weapon from behind cover – so you can't even see who you are shooting at. To pay for hugs and kisses and the more you do – the more points you get. How popular is this game? The first day they sold 3.6 million copies. The first week they sold over \$500 million! That's over half a billion dollars worth. They plan to sell somewhere in the neighborhood of 20 million copies in the next year or

two – by which time – you can imagine – they will make a whole new version – Grand Theft Auto V! Do your children have this game? This Mother’s Day – do you know if your children have Grand Theft Auto one or two or three or four? For birthdays and confirmation do we give our children and grandchildren money – and tell them – I don’t know anything about these games – so just buy one you like? Do we know what games our children play? Do we know where they go on the Internet? Do we know who they text on their phone? Do we show them by our example what it means to live a Spirit filled life? Do we show the people around us – that we love one another – not just on Mother’s Day – but all the time!

“Even on my servants both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days.”
Being filled with the Holy Spirit and then sharing the Gospel that simply overflows is something for both men and women. There is so much work to be done – men and women need to be involved! It can be something as simple as ushering – greeting people – making them feel welcome in our Father’s House when they come to worship. Young men and young women handing out service folders – our path of worship and important announcements. It is for men and women to teach Sunday School – the very important school where you have folders and lessons and stickers and art projects – made with Popsicle sticks and yard and glitter and glue. Where you have devotions and learn songs about Jesus’ forgiving love. This is not just for ladies to teach. This is for men, too – for grandpas. You can teach little people about Jesus – tell the Bible stories – and color and paint. If you can color and paint and glue glitter – with your grandchildren – you can do it with lots of little children. Day School Teachers at our Trinity St. Luke’s School – men and women – teach Jesus’ lambs law and gospel and about the wonderful works of God in reading and science and math and social studies and art and computers and more. The Words of the prophet Joel were fulfilled on that Pentecost 200 years ago – and they are fulfilled again and again – when the Holy Spirit filled God’s people to overflowing – so that we share God’s love with everyone around us!

“Even on my servants both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days.”
When the Holy Spirit fills your heart – it changes everything! There was a lady named Susan. She was in prison in Saginaw County because she was in trouble for drugs. When no one was looking Susan very quietly and very quickly walked away – simply walked away. Susan changed her name to Marie. She moved as far away as physically possible! All the way to San Diego. She spent the next 32 years being very very good – living with her husband and two children – in a nice house – in an affluent neighborhood. When she was confronted she lied. She lied and said she wasn’t Susan. But her finger print – her thumb print – proved she was the escaped criminal. Now her lawyer is saying she was such a good person these past 32 years – she deserved to go free! That 32 years of very good behavior makes up for our drug crimes and her prison escape. The fact is – no amount of good behavior – acts of kindness – or extravagant charity can make up for a single sin. We can’t make our sins go away by dedicating every moment day and night – to being squeaky clean! Only Jesus could save us. Look at his hands. See the marks of the nails – the forever engraving of his forgiving love. The Holy Spirit – powerful in hearts and minds – through the means of grace – will make our families and our marriages strong – as we love and forgive one another – because Jesus has forgiven us. God bless our families this Mother’s Day and every day – for Jesus’ sake. Amen!

To God alone all glory!
Rev. Anthony C. Schultz