

Acts of the Apostles 1:1-14

This morning Our Lord tells the disciples what is coming next. I sometimes wonder if they truly understood the gravity of Jesus's words. Our Lord makes promises to the disciples that they will be baptized with the Holy Spirit. That our baptism will be the heart of the life of the Kingdom of God. This Kingdom of God on Earth will reflect the character of the Holy Spirit. St. Paul tells us that the character of the Holy Spirit is, "Love, Joy, Peace, Patience, Kindness, Faithfulness, Gentleness, and Self Control". Gal 5:22-23. This is exactly what we should expect from a kingdom where the citizens are baptized in the character of the Holy Spirit.

The kingdom's message will be recognizable by having these character traits of the Holy Spirit. That the kingdom itself will be filled with these characteristics. It will be the mission and work of the disciples and apostles to build the Kingdom of God on Earth.

The building of the kingdom will start in Jerusalem. Isaiah 2:3, "For out of Zion shall go forth instruction and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem." The witnessing of the life of the kingdom will be seen first in the life and community of the disciples. All of this will happen after being baptized in the Spirit on Pentecost. The Holy Spirit will be poured upon them. The kingdom will start with the disciples and their communal living. This will provide authenticity to their building of the kingdom and it will be a testimony to the resurrection of the Lord. It will start in Jerusalem and go to the far ends of the Earth.

The passage this morning outlines the role of the disciples and apostles in the church. A church that is guided and moves forward by the power of the Holy Spirit. Do not be deceived or fainthearted. The same Holy Spirit is still at work in the church. It still is the guiding force that inspires and works through people today. Things have not changed very much since the day of Pentecost. I can give you many examples where the Holy Spirit continues to work in the church and inspire people. John 16:13, "However, when He, the Spirit of Truth has come, He will guide you into all truth."

This pandemic has brought out the best in many Christians. The gifts of the Holy Spirit that are in many human beings are coming out and being used. People are actually realizing that they are truly temples of the Holy Spirit. Some of us are watching with amazement and awe. Romans 8:11, "He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you." Remember that the gifts of the Holy Spirit are: wisdom, knowledge, healing, miracles, prophecy, discernment and tongues. Look for these gifts in

yourself and others. Those who have eyes to see and those who have ears to hear, listen.

We are still living in the glow of Pentecost. However at this time in history things seem to be burning more intensely. More and more Christians, and non-Christians, have discovered the gifts they have within and are using them for the good of humanity. They may or may not know that they are moving the kingdom forward. Many Christians are living out their confirmation. The Kingdom of God continues to be built in these times. Christians are taking their faith and gifts seriously in new ways and using them in creative ways. The Spirit is still at work. I wonder if this pandemic has made us more aware of the Spirit's work among us. That it moves among all of the children of God. We just use Christian terms to explain it as points of reference. We are standing on the threshold of something with amazing potential. It has yet to be fully revealed. God is continually at work and our expectations will be greatly exceeded. Blessings, Peace, and Love to all.

Pastor Daren