*DAILY DEVOTIONAL*

August 28 – September 2

“The Holy Spirit is Given”

**Monday, August 28 Acts 1:1-8**

*“When the Holy Spirit has come upon you . . .”*

 The Holy Spirit will be given to the disciples for the very special purpose that in the Spirit’s power they will become witnesses. Power here means supernatural power of the quality revealed in Jesus’ own life so that they may continue to do what he did in his Palestinian ministry. That means love without limits; primary concern for people; communication of truth; healing of minds, emotions and bodies; and foot-washing practical service. Additionally, through the power of the Spirit, they will begin to spread Jesus’ ministry to the ends of the earth.

 To be a witness is to communicate the grace of God, to introduce people to Christ, to help them realize the reality of his inner power to live a new life, and to stand with them as they grow. “Witness” in the basic Greek means one who shares what he has seen, heard, or knows, and the dynamic power of the Holy Spirit necessary for our witness will be given in constant flow as long as we are engaged in communicating Christ. We are to be conduits or channels of the Spirit’s power, not reservoirs or holding tanks.

*Give me the power, Holy Spirit, to be a daily witness for Christ. Amen.*

**Tuesday, August 29 Acts 2:1-13**

*“Everyone present was filled with the Holy Spirit”*

 The followers of Jesus were filled with the Holy Spirit for praise and proclamation. The two go together. The Spirit releases us to praise, and that praise becomes effective declaration of the Good News of Jesus Christ. It was the sound of the rushing wind that brought the crowds to the area of the Upper Room. Then it was the quality of praise that made them want to know what was happening. Following that, Peter had a ready audience for a life-changing proclamation of the true nature of what was happening to the followers of Christ, and how the pilgrims gathered in Jerusalem could participate with them.

 The people in the Upper Room were “filled” with the Holy Spirit. The Greek means that they were filled to the full, or made full, as a vessel is filled. The best way to explain is to consider the human vessel which was filled. As human beings they had minds, brains, wills, emotions, and physical bodies. To be filled to the full means that the Spirit invaded every facet, function, and facility of their nature.

*You are present, Holy Spirit, in every aspect of who I am. Amen.*

**Wednesday, August 30 Ezekiel 37:1-14**

*“I will put my Spirit in you”*

 This passage is about the divine work of God to bring life through the power of the Holy Spirit. Though God’s people have been justly judged and handed over into the “realm of death” for their sins (that is, they have been conquered and taken into exile in Babylon), so that, humanly speaking, there is now no hope for them, yet God can bring life out of death. Because of his wrath, their death is real; because of his grace and his sovereign will to have a people of his own, however, their future prospect of life may be equally real.

 It is this that the prophet is called to proclaim to them. What he has first experienced himself he now announces to others: life in the Spirit through the power of God. While the immediate application of the prophecy is for the benefit of the Jews living far away from their homeland, its larger application within the prophetic tradition of the Old Testament is the anticipation of a Messiah who will bring salvation to all people, Jews and Gentiles alike. Thus, the passage points to the coming of Jesus and salvation for all who by faith accept him as Lord and Savior.

*By the power of your Spirit, Lord, I have been saved through Christ. Amen.*

*DAILY DEVOTIONAL*

August 28 – September 2

“The Holy Spirit is Given”

**Thursday, August 31 John 3:1-8**

*“The Holy Spirit gives new life from heaven”*

 Jesus offers Nicodemus a new beginning, a starting over again. This is new life given by God himself, a breaking in of his grace, a supernatural act bringing forth a new creation. Just as a human birth is a mystery, but a very specific reality, so there is a deeper mystery and reality about spiritual birth. Physical life is born through the intimacy of human love shared by male and female in which there is the union of egg and sperm. But there is also a spiritual act of divine grace in which God gives himself to a particular person, who, in receiving him, is born anew. It is in the union of the divine and the human, the supernatural and the natural, the heavenly and the earthly, that new life comes.

 The new birth is by water, that is, by repentance for sin. But there is more than water. The new birth is also by the Spirit. Indwelt by the Spirit, this newborn person now understands a new order of being, the kingdom of God. He has been given new eyes and a new heart to apprehend what it means to be a member of a new family, the family of God.

*By the power of your Spirit, Lord, I have been born again. Amen.*

**Friday, September 1 1 Corinthians 14:1-5**

*“The gifts of the Spirit”*

 This fourteenth chapter of 1 Corinthians needs to be read as the conclusion of what begins in 1 Corinthians 12:1 where Paul writes “concerning spiritual gifts.” In chapter 12 he urges his readers to celebrate the diversity of gifts in the church, and to see them as having a common source in the Holy Spirit and a unifying purpose which is to build up the church and encourage its members. In chapter 13 he writes of the superiority of the gift of love above all other gifts, stating that while all other gifts will eventually pass away, only faith, hope and love will remain.

 In 1 Corinthians 14, Paul isolates two features of the worship service in Corinth and discusses their relative worth. In his comparison of tongues and prophecy, or ecstatic utterances and proclamation of the Word, Paul shows the latter to be superior and to be more beneficial for the church at every point. While speaking in tongues lifts up the individual, allowing him or her to worship God in a unique and personal way, the one who prophecies (proclaims God’s Word) lifts up the entire congregation.

*May we use your gifts, Holy Spirit, to encourage one another in our faith. Amen.*

**Saturday, September 2 Mark 3:20-30**

*“They were saying Jesus had an evil spirit”*

 Jesus is so absorbed by his task of caring for the crowds that food loses its importance. A call to eat is neglected, a plate put before him goes untouched, and a final desperate demand to “eat something” is answered by a wave of the hand. His family begins to panic. In a culture where meals are rituals and food is scarce, anyone who refuses to eat must be “out of his mind.” The Pharisees, as we expect by now, try to capitalize on the situation. In a devilish turn of mind, they twist the charge of madness into a deliberate perversion. According to them, Jesus is not demented, but demon-possessed. Jesus is not the Son of God, he is the Son of Satan!

 Although he has no trouble exposing the absurdity of their accusation, Jesus treats the perverted nature of the charge far more seriously than the faulty logic of the accusation. To accuse him of being in league with Satan, he says, is not just a sin of the flesh or even a sin of blasphemy, both of which can be forgiven; it is a sin against the Holy Spirit through whom Jesus claimed to do all that he did, and that will not be forgiven.

*You, Lord, are the Son of God and I worship you. Amen.*