

Luke 24:49 and Acts 1:8  
“The Holy Spirit Fills Us With Power”  
September 12, 2010

I would like to begin by reading a few brief excerpts from an excellent article written by Rev. Dr. Scott Murray, senior pastor of Memorial Lutheran Church and school, Houston, Texas. The article is titled, “Consolation in Persecution.”

He writes, “The devil never gives up. He is always seeking a new way to disturb the church and her children. As (Dr. Martin) Luther (said), ‘Wherever God builds a church, the devil builds a chapel.’ Later he writes, “St. Paul warns us that there will be a constant battle against heresy (and divisions) in the church, ‘When you come together as a church, I hear that there are divisions among you. And I believe it in part, for there must be factions (Gk: heresies) among you in order that those who are genuine among you may be recognized’” (1 Co. 11:18-19).

Yes, the truth is Satan hates us and is out to destroy us. The devil has built a chapel here. Look at the empty pews around us. Do we just let people disappear and do nothing about it? Satan is gleeful when we become paralyzed. Our school is struggling. Our church can’t meet its financial obligations. And you know the consequences of that!

Also, St. Paul is right. There are divisions among us. Oh, how Satan’s demons love to tear us apart and cause us to hurt each other! Last week the message centered around Onesimus, Philemon, ... and St. Paul who taught a lesson about **forgiveness**. What did you learn from that story? Oh, I could certainly go on longer. Yes, our sins and shortcomings are many.

But more important than categorizing sins, I want to tell you this morning what we can do about it. Our Lord, stood upon the Mount of Olives, looked out upon the world, and then He looked at the disciples. He was certainly aware of the dark centuries ahead, and so He promised to give to them a **power** that would be greater than any other power they would ever face.

In the last chapter of Luke 24:49, Luke carefully records the Lord’s promise to the disciples, “<sup>49</sup>I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been **clothed with power** from on high.” When we come to Acts 1:8 we read: “<sup>8</sup>But you will **receive power** when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

A man by the name of Kittel did a great work on Greek terminology. Amazingly, he gives **thirty pages** to the word **power**. Think of it – thirty pages on the word power and what it can mean in the **context of human life**. It’s tough to read thirty pages, but it’s something to discover that the word means that God can **make us able, or capable**. Regardless of how dark the day, how dismal it may be, how low the clouds, how deep the hours of our frustration, God **moves** in our lives to **make us able**.

Think of God reaching down and taking **fishermen**, think of God reaching down and calling **us**, think of God stooping and catching us up and saying, “I’m going to take this person with all of his fears and failures and feebleness and I’m going to make him **capable**.” The word

also sometimes means **capacity**. When you put all this together, you see that God has **given to us a capacity** for Himself, a capacity that **He alone** can fill.

We live so far this side of Pentecost that we forget the wonder of this! But imagine Peter nudging John and saying, “Think of that! **John, think of that!** The same power that came into the life of **Gideon**, the same power that came into the lives of men in the Old Testament, this power is going to come to **take up residence in us**, to **live in us**. God does not change! We have that same power available to us. **All we need do is ask for it**. We can **conquer** our fears! We can **resist** the power of Satan and his evil demons because the power of the Holy Spirit is able to **fill us** and make us **victorious**. Sometimes when I talk with my fellow pastors, we talk about the apostasy – that is the apathy toward faith, the falling away from faith. We can stop such apathy, if only we would gather together and call upon the Holy Spirit to give us His power – to make us able to speak to those who are not in the seats beside us – with the Spirit’s power to convince them to return to worship.

Here is why our cell groups which begin to meet this week are so important. It is in these small groups where the Holy Spirit is called upon to bestow His power that Holy Trinity will experience a revival of faith and commitment to our Risen Lord.

Now listen to Acts 1:8: “But you will receive **power**, the **Holy Spirit coming upon you**, and you will be my witnesses.” The word has two meanings. The old Anglo-Saxon word for *witness* means to *know*. A witness speaks what he knows. When these early believers went out, they simply said, “We cannot help speaking the things that we have experienced, that we have seen and we have heard.”

There is another meaning, however; it is the word from which we get our word **martyr**. A witness then is an individual who **knows something** and is **willing to die for it**. It thrills my soul and gives me goose bumps when I think that there’s a Man who **died**, who **rose**, who **lives**, and I am a witness of that resurrection and these things!

Further, the Holy Spirit **strengthens our faith**. He is our **Intercessor** who carries our prayers to the throne in heaven when we are too weak, or too confused to even know how to pray. Yes, we are struggling mightily at Holy Trinity. Satan has been working hard here, but **God assures us we are victorious!** Thankfully, God does not lift us out of our troubles; but He uses these struggles to strengthen us as we go through them.

We have a lot of work to do. No longer can we leave the work to someone else and get lost in the crowd. **FOLKS! THE CROWD IS GONE!** But we have His Holy Spirit to call upon for the power we need to get the job done for Him.

I think – as a church – in our reaction against unbiblical Pentecostalism, we have neglected the Holy Spirit too much. I have spoken only a little of who and what the Holy Spirit’s does **for** us and **in** us. I believe we need to hear much more about God’s Holy Spirit in the coming year.

**Just think of it!** The **joy** of knowing God in the circumstances of life no matter how difficult they may be – to be **filled** with the Holy Spirit that makes us **greater** than the situation we are in. That’s our desire this morning. We could really sing, “Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me.” I don’t want to go home the way I came. **Do you?** I want to go home **different**, and I know the desire of your heart and my heart is that the **power that God has available** for us with the filling of His Spirit may be ours today. May the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit be on your heart always. Amen.