
Here we are, Mother's Day, 1989. And I am wishing that I were a preacher ready to speak to a congregation on Mother's Day in about 1959. For you would be a different group of people back then. All the families would be lined up in the pew together. All the children would have folded hands, all the husbands and wives would love and respect each other, boys would be boys and girls would be girls, and most mothers would be at home playing a supporting role in everyone else's day. And this would be their day.

My job would be to heap up the praises. I would make it clear where that all the goodness in the world around us comes from the love and devotion of faithful mothers. We would all go home feeling a little better.

But somewhere between 1959 and 1989 the world has turned inside out and upside down. Maybe it was when all those mothers who stayed at home and gave themselves for their children watched their sons and daughters marching in the protests of the sixties. And smoking pot. And not waiting for the blessing of the preacher before they hopped into bed. Or maybe it was when mothers saw the bodies of their sons come home in coffins and there were no bands playing, nor great speeches about the courage and sacrifice of the slain. Maybe it was when a president was chased from office for trying to deceive the people who elected him. Maybe it was when we started believing we actually needed all the things they told us we needed in the ads and everyone in the family had to work all the hours they could to buy and buy and buy. Maybe it was when couples no longer stayed together for the kids. I don't know the when nor the why, only that Mother's Day, 1989, is not the same as it was in 1959.

Maybe it is simply that I have grown up. In 1959 I was a boy too young to see the pain, the fears, the guilt. Then too, husbands were unfaithful, and came home drunk. Women got breast cancer, and mothers worried whether they were doing the right thing. Back then the preacher knew that there were no more perfect families than there are now.

Still I think there is more pain today, more uncertainty, more chaos. And
I hear women who have raised their families some years ago saying, "I'm sure glad my children are grown, it must be so much harder now, the way the world is. I find it hard to disagree.

Today, in the year 1989, as a preacher I have a solution to my dilemma. For today is not only Mother's Day, but also Pentecost. I can simply leave the drugs and the divorce and the chaos of 1989 behind and retreat almost two thousand years and talk about that day when the Holy Spirit rushed down to create the church. What a glorious day when Peter and the other disciples were in the house and the wind of the Spirit came and filled the house and them. Tongues of flame came upon them, and people from all over the world all heard the message in their own language. Three thousand persons came to faith that day.

What a day that must have been. God's own spirit no longer reserved for a prophet here, a holy woman there, but now God pouring out his spirit on all people, sons and daughters, young men and old men, maid servants and man servants. They would prophecy, they would speak God's word. Once it was the priests and the kings and the prophets whom could take their pleas before God, but now, Peter proclaimed, everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved.

Why did God do it? Why did he take his own spirit, mix his own breath and breathe it into the hearts of barmaids and garbage collectors and lawyers and nurses. They were not hand picked, one by one, like the prophets, judged worthy to house the Holy God like the temple. But on that day God took a big mob, three thousand people and whooshed his spirit into every one. They believed in Jesus.

It is a good thing they did too. For thirty years later the Romans would
be ready to burn their city, Jerusalem, to destroy the temple. And even before that, already twenty years after Pentecost, a man named Paul would be out raising money to buy food for these Jerusalem believers who were starving in a famine.

Maybe God poured out his Spirit because these people so desperately needed his spirit and his Christ.

Kind of like today. If you mothers here today see a lot of troubles ahead for your children, then you are like most of the mothers who have lived most of the days on this earth. How could a Mother prepare her daughters for sickness that would take their children from them? Mothers have had to do just that. In my first parish, a place called Goodrich North Dakota, when I looked through the church records I noticed that most of the older women in that church had lost one or more children under the age of five, many in the great flu epidemic of 1918.

Or how does a mother prepare her children to be overrun by an invading army? In each of the parishes I have served, members have told me what it was like to be in Germany at the end of WW2 as the Russian army marched on the land and people of eastern Germany.

Today is Pentecost. God has poured out his Spirit on all flesh. Through that Spirit Mothers and Fathers and children have been given grace to survive to believe, Even when sin and death and Satan have hurled their worst at God's children, still through his spirit God has supported life, and hope and peace.

As a parent it is easy for me to worry and weary myself with providing all the least important things for my children, clothes to keep them popular, and an education to bring them lots of money, entertainment to bring them laughter.

Yes, I worry and weary myself with these when my children need far more my prayers for the spirit's guidance for me. Our children need to witness our love for Jesus, our dependence upon him. They need to hear how the spirit of God has supported and strengthened the children of God through every trial and temptation. They need to know that everyone who calls upon the name of the
Lord will be saved.

Today is Pentecost. As I sat down to prepare this sermon I did what I most often do— I prayed the Spirit’s guiding, inspiration. As I approached this pulpit I prayed the same. Here in this place in meetings, in classes we pray the same.

But I find that I leave it at that. Today is Pentecost when God poured out his spirit on all people. On Mothers and fathers and schoolteachers and businessmen. God spent his spirit out, into the world, where people live. And suffer, and laugh and die.

Mothers and Fathers and everyone of you: God has granted you his precious spirit. For your life, for your children, for your trials and temptations God has breathed his breath into you.

Are these hard days? Yes. Will God’s grace through his spirit be sufficient to meet the challenges of these days? Most certainly. Let us go forth in faith.