1 John 3:19-4:6

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Preacher: Rev. Mike Stewart

[0:00] Good morning, St. John's. Such a joy to be with you on this glorious day.! Would you please be seated as we pray together.!

Father, by your Spirit, open our understanding to hear and receive your Holy Word, that together we might grow in our love for Jesus, in whose name we pray. Amen.

Such a joy to be with you here, my dear brothers and sisters, on this Pentecost Sunday as we are bearing witness to the Spirit's work in the lives of those who have just been confirmed and tonight in the lives of those who are to be ordained, Ryan and Jacob.

And Ella, happy birthday to you. And I want to say happy birthday to all of you here, if I may, because Pentecost Sunday, of course, was the day that the church was born.

So Ella, you're sharing your birthday with the whole of the Christian church throughout the world today. Happy birthday, church. Over 2,000 years old and you're looking great, I have to say.

You're looking great. Pentecost Sunday, of course, my friends, is the day of empowerment. It's the day the disciples of Jesus were clothed with power from on high.

We just heard verses from the Gospel of John, chapter 20, read to us, and I don't know if you've ever noticed the parallel between John, chapter 20, and the opening chapters of the first book of the Bible, the book of Genesis, meaning origins.

John, in chapter 20 of his Gospel, tells us what happened on the evening of the first day of the week, which, of course, we now know as Easter Sunday.

The risen Lord Jesus breathed on his disciples and said, receive the Holy Spirit. Receive the Holy Spirit.

The risen Lord Jesus, whom the Apostle Paul calls the second Adam, who makes all things new, who bore on his brow the crown of thorns, the symbol of the first Adam's curse.

And in Genesis, chapter 3, you may remember that we are told that in the evening, the cool of the day, Adam and Eve heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden.

They heard, as it were, the rustle of his steps. And we're told that they hid. They hid behind the trees.

In John 20, the disciples are hiding behind locked doors. And John tells us that Jesus appears to his disciples in the evening, in the cool of the day, and shows them his wounded hands and his side, and twice speaks the words to them, peace be with you.

Peace be with you. This, my friends, is the peace of the restored. The peace of the reconciled.

This is the peace of the forgiven. The peace of the justified. This is a peace that the world cannot give.

This is the peace that a crucified and risen Lord alone can give. peace of the peace, peace,

Receive the Holy Spirit. Breath of God. And so you see, what was lost in the garden is restored in a locked room.

Hallelujah. Hallelujah. Christian, what is your relationship to the Holy Spirit? The third person of the Holy Trinity.

The Lord, the giver of life. Who proceeds from the Father and the Son. Who with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified.

Who has spoken through the prophets. The Holy Spirit. The source of the church's renewal.

[6:29] And life. The believer's reservoir of power. And unfailing guide. And if you are here this morning, my friend, and you are not sure who Jesus is, simply ask the Holy Spirit to reveal Jesus to you.

This morning's passage from John chapter 20 contains what some people call the Johannine Great Commission.

John 20 verse 21, having breathed the Holy Spirit into his disciples, Jesus tells them, as the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you.

Jesus, the sent one par excellence, now sends his disciples in the power of the Holy Spirit.

And my friends, the one who is sent cannot change the message of the sender. Remember Jesus' prayer as the great high priest recorded a few chapters earlier in John's Gospel, chapter 17, where he prays, Father, as you have sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world.

[8:08] All three persons of the Godhead are involved in the great commissioning of the disciples of Jesus. the fruits of redemption that the second Adam has now won are conveyed to the world by the disciples of Jesus, who in a very real sense, once filled with the Holy Spirit, become apostles, apostles, which literally means sent ones.

It is to us, my brothers and sisters in Christ, that the good news of the gospel of peace is entrusted.

And those who have just been confirmed this morning, on this Pentecost Sunday, have been empowered afresh by the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit, the very same Spirit whom Jesus breathed into the disciples on the evening of the first day of the week.

This is the Father's gift to the disciples of Jesus, the gift of the Holy Spirit.

And so if you're here today and consider yourself a Christian, it's your birthday today. And at any birthday party, a good parent knows how to give good gifts to their children.

[10:05] Indeed, as Jesus has already told us, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him?

Well then, let us pray. breathe on me breath of God till I am wholly thine and till this earthly part of me glows with thy fire divine.

Amen. Happy birthday, church.