**Notes for Next Sunday**

Pentecost Sunday

**The Point of this Week’s Readings**

All of the readings have to do with the Holy Spirit’s work within us within His people of all times.

The Psalm (Psalm 139:1-16) has David praising the Lord for how intimately God in His Spirit knows everything about him. God knows His children better than they know themselves. God knows every thought and action. God knows where we are at all times. There is no hiding from Him, no escape. We are in God’s hands at all times and need fear nothing.

The Old Testament (Ezekiel 37:1-14) follows Ezekiel’s deflating the pride of the exiles (Chapter 36). Their hearts were deceitful and desperately sick. But God does not give up on the exiles. God granted Ezekiel a vision that was to convince the exiles that He will call into existence the things that do not exist. The Spirit of God through Ezekiel assures the exiles that they will return from Babylon and will do the will of God.

The Epistle (Acts 2:1-21) is all about the work of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost. One way the power of the Spirit is shown is in special signs (tongues of fire and wind). The second is the empowerment of Peter to be a courageous spokesman for the disciples (Remember Peter had denied Jesus three times because his great fear.)

The Gospel (John 15:26-27, 16:4-15) has Jesus telling the disciples that the Holy Spirit will come into their lives. Jesus tells that them that it is best for Him to ascend to heaven so that the Holy Spirit can come and help them in their mission. Jesus tells them that the Holy Spirit will convict the world of its sin. Jesus assures them that the Holy Spirit will not speak on His own. Jesus tells the Holy Spirit what is to be made known to them, what Jesus has to share.

*For more in-depth commentary on each reading, read the notes found after each text below.*

**Psalm 139:1-16**

**1﻿ O LORD, you have searched me and you know me. ﻿2﻿ You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar. ﻿3﻿ You discern my going out and my lying down; you are familiar with all my ways. ﻿4﻿ Before a word is on my tongue you know it completely, O LORD. ﻿5﻿ You hem me in—behind and before; you have laid your hand upon me. ﻿6﻿ Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, too lofty for me to attain. ﻿7﻿ Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? ﻿8﻿ If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths,﻿a﻿ you are there. ﻿9﻿ If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, ﻿10﻿ even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast. ﻿11﻿ If I say, “Surely the darkness will hide me and the light become night around me,” ﻿12﻿ even the darkness will not be dark to you; the night will shine like the day, for darkness is as light to you. ﻿13﻿ For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother’s womb. ﻿14﻿ I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well. ﻿15﻿ My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place. When I was woven together in the depths of the earth, ﻿16﻿ your eyes saw my unformed body. All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be.**

The following are some insights to individual verses…

*139:1 searched me and known me!* God is omniscient; i.e., He knows everything. This includes knowing us—our actions, our thoughts, even our future—with perfect intimacy. (TLSB)

*139:5 You hem me in.* To be hemmed in by God’s knowledge and to have his hand on us can be either a comfort or a threat. Our response depends on one crucial relationship; are we sinners trying to escape an angry judge or are we dear children in the arms of loving father? It is faith that changes us from fearful sinners to confident children

*139:6 too wonderful for me.* Our little mind just cannot begin to fathom the depth of the mind of

*139:7–12* This section begins with the same ambiguity as the first section. It sounds as if David is trying to escape from God’s presence, but as the psalm progresses, it becomes clear that David’s talk of escape is hypothetical and that he rejoices in the presence of God. (PBC)

*139:13–16* This section meditates on one aspect of God’s mighty power – his power of creation.

**Old Testament – Ezekiel 37:1-14**

**The hand of the LORD was upon me, and he brought me out by the Spirit of the LORD and set me in the middle of a valley; it was full of bones. ﻿2﻿ He led me back and forth among them, and I saw a great many bones on the floor of the valley, bones that were very dry. ﻿3﻿ He asked me, “Son of man, can these bones live?” I said, “O Sovereign LORD, you alone know.” ﻿4﻿ Then he said to me, “Prophesy to these bones and say to them, ‘Dry bones, hear the word of the LORD! ﻿5﻿ This is what the Sovereign LORD says to these bones: I will make breath﻿a﻿ enter you, and you will come to life. ﻿6﻿ I will attach tendons to you and make flesh come upon you and cover you with skin; I will put breath in you, and you will come to life. Then you will know that I am the LORD.’” ﻿7﻿ So I prophesied as I was commanded. And as I was prophesying, there was a noise, a rattling sound, and the bones came together, bone to bone. ﻿8﻿ I looked, and tendons and flesh appeared on them and skin covered them, but there was no breath in them. ﻿9﻿ Then he said to me, “Prophesy to the breath; prophesy, son of man, and say to it, ‘This is what the Sovereign LORD says: Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe into these slain, that they may live.’” ﻿10﻿ So I prophesied as he commanded me, and breath entered them; they came to life and stood up on their feet—a vast army. ﻿11﻿ Then he said to me: “Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel. They say, ‘Our bones are dried up and our hope is gone; we are cut off.’ ﻿ 12﻿ Therefore prophesy and say to them: ‘This is what the Sovereign LORD says: O my people, I am going to open your graves and bring you up from them; I will bring you back to the land of Israel. ﻿13﻿ Then you, my people, will know that I am the LORD, when I open your graves and bring you up from them. ﻿14﻿ I will put my Spirit in you and you will live, and I will settle you in your own land. Then you will know that I the LORD have spoken, and I have done it, declares the LORD.’”**

The following are some insights to individual verses…

This text can be divided into four parts. In the first (vv. 1–3), Yahweh leads Ezekiel in a vision into a valley filled with very dry bones. The second part (vv. 4-8) contains the first of three prophecies which Ezekiel is to deliver at Yahweh’s command. He speaks what the Lord gives him to say, and the bones come together. Tendons, flesh, and skin envelope them, but they are still lifeless bodies. The third part (vv. 9–10) contains Ezekiel’s second prophecy, directed to the Spirit (or wind) who enters the bodies and animates them. The final part (vv. 11–14) contains God’s explanation of the vision. The dry bones are the Israelites, who had lost hope of ever being released from exile. God tells Ezekiel to prophecy their future restoration, promising that he will bring the dead out of their graves, put his Spirit in them, and return them to their land.

*37:1 bones.* They represent the substance of a body. In this text it is about a hopeless Israel.

*37:2 led me back and forth*. It means to circle the neighborhood. Ezekiel was shown everything so that he would see the absolute hopelessness of the situation.

*37:3 Son of Man*. This title is used 93 times in Ezekiel and always refers to Ezekiel.

*37:5 breath*. In this text it is the same word as used for spirit in verse 1.

*37:8 but there was no breath.* Their form and appearance were restored but not yet life, which only God can give. (TLSB)

*37:9 four.* The “four winds” in Matthew 24:31 and Revelation 7:1 are associated with all the redeemed, who are gathered from the ends of the earth.

*37:10 breath came into them*. Humanly speaking, Israel’s hopes for survival appeared dead and buried in the exile. Prospects of national revival were as unlikely as expecting a vast array of skeletons, dried and dismembered, to come to life again. Yet at God’s command, spoken by His prophet, death must surrender its victims. (TLSB)

*37:12 graves.* This vision was to remind the exiles that He who promised to revive their dead nation was the same God who “formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life” (Gen. 2:7) Through His prophets, God demonstrated His power to force death to give up its victims. (TLSB)

*37:13 know that I am the Lord.* The recognition formula, “then you will know that I am Yahweh” (repeated for emphasis in the next verse), shows that “as ever in the book of Ezekiel, salvation is to be a means to a divine end. The redeeming act of God would bring with it the revelation of his true self.” (CC)

37:14 I will put my Spirit. Only the Lord can bring new life to the spiritually dead.

**Epistle – Acts 2:1-21**

**When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. ﻿2﻿ Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. ﻿3﻿ They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. ﻿4﻿ All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues﻿a﻿ as the Spirit enabled them. ﻿5﻿ Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven. ﻿6﻿ When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard them speaking in his own language. ﻿7﻿ Utterly amazed, they asked: “Are not all these men who are speaking Galileans? ﻿8﻿ Then how is it that each of us hears them in his own native language? ﻿9﻿ Parthians, Medes and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, ﻿10﻿ Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome ﻿11﻿ (both Jews and converts to Judaism); Cretans and Arabs—we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues!” ﻿12﻿ Amazed and perplexed, they asked one another, “What does this mean?” ﻿13﻿ Some, however, made fun of them and said, “They have had too much wine. 14﻿ Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd: “Fellow Jews and all of you who live in Jerusalem, let me explain this to you; listen carefully to what I say. ﻿15﻿ These men are not drunk, as you suppose. It’s only nine in the morning! ﻿16﻿ No, this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: ﻿17﻿ ”‘In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams. ﻿18﻿ Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy. ﻿19﻿ I will show wonders in the heaven above and signs on the earth below, blood and fire and billows of smoke. ﻿20﻿ The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and glorious day of the Lord. ﻿21﻿ And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.’**

The following are some insights to individual verses…

This text fulfills Jesus’ Acts 1:5 promise that the believers would be given the gift and Baptism of the Holy Spirit. In obedience to Jesus’ request, the disciples stayed in Jerusalem at their physical peril, for after Jesus’ crucifixion, the enemies of Christ in the Sanhedrin were still dangerous to the followers of the Savior.

*2:1 day of Pentecost.* Pentecost, also called the Festival of Weeks or the Feast of Harvest, was similar to the American/Canadian Thanksgiving Day, an agricultural festival celebrated seven weeks after the harvest began. The first fruits of the wheat harvest were presented to God. Crowds were swarming to the temple to watch the priests wave the loaves and sacrifice the lambs in worship to the Lord who had made the harvest possible. All Jewish males were required to worship in Jerusalem that day and were invited to join in an altar dance and song.

*2:2 violent wind.* A loud roar like a violent wind sounded in the sky, but there was no wind. Not a leaf on a tree moved. The sound grew in intensity and moved from the sky through the city to the house (or temple room) where the believers were gathered. It does not take much imagination to know what happened throughout the city.

*2:2 whole house.* Greek oikos. Luke usually uses this term to denote a private dwelling (or for the family as a “household”) but also uses it for the temple (Luke 6:4; 19:46; Acts 7:47, 49; cf. Luke 24:53; Acts 2:46). The setting for Peter’s sermon (vv. 14-41) had to accommodate thousands of people. According to later Christian tradition, the house with the Upper Room was located on Mount Zion (southwest hill of Jerusalem) and would have been outside the city wall. (TLSB)

*2:3 tongues.* Luke describes the scene with a comparison. The emphasis in the wording in on the mouth (“tongue,” “speak,” “utterance”), which may indicate where the “fire” appeared. The fire appropriately appears as tongues of flame, since the Holy Spirit works through the apostles’ speech. In the OT, angelic spirits were described as fire (Ps. 104:3-4). Fire also represented the presence of God’s Spirit (Ex. 3:2-4). (TLSB)

*2:4 in other tongues.* They did not all speak at once, but each spoke as the ability was given. This was not babbling or incoherent speech: it was perfectly understandable to those who knew the languages.

*2:5 God-fearing Jews.* These were Jews who either lived and worked in foreign lands and were in Jerusalem for the feast days, or they had returned permanently to retire in Jerusalem. All of them, of course, knew and spoke Aramaic, because they obviously understood Peter when he preached. But they also knew well the language of the nation to which they would return or from which they had retired.

*2:6 speaking in his own language.* God brings the people together to hear His Word. These miraculous events are God’s extended appeal for Israel to receive Jesus as their Messiah and to become part of the new Israel, the Church. The hearers understood the proclamation neither in Aram nor in common Greek but in their local languages. (TLSB)

*2:9-11.* There were representatives from three continents included in this listing: Asia, Africa and Europe. The apostles were to go into all the world, but on this day people from all the world were gathering around them in Jerusalem. The confusion of tongues which resulted at Babel was reversed on Pentecost. It still occurs as Missionaries declare the gospel in new languages.

*2:11 converts to Judaism.* Gentiles who undertook the full observance of the Mosaic law were received into full fellowship with the Jews. (CSB)

*2:12-21*. Peter makes great use of the Word in drawing out the various passages from the Old Testament. The prophecy of Joel 2 is featured most prominently, but in the subsequent verses (2:22–36) many other passages are referenced. The point that needs to be considered here is that Peter is showing that this event was in fact part of God’s plan. Further, Peter and the apostles are not starting something new but building on the foundations that God had earlier prepared. This would be a pattern throughout the Book of Acts, whether by Peter, Philip, Paul, or anyone else. There is a constant use of the Old Testament to proclaim and defend the work of Christ.

*2:13 some made fun.* Just as some rejected the earthly Jesus, so mockers and skeptics have always dismissed the Church’s message (cf. Mt. 10:22; John 15:18-20). (TLSB)

*2:15 only nine in the morning!* On a festival day such as Pentecost, the Jew would not break his fast until at least 10:00 a.m. So it was extremely unlikely that a group of men would be drunk at such an early hour. (CSB)

*2:17 last days.* In the passage quoted from Joel the Hebrew has “afterward.” Peter interprets the passage as referring specifically to the latter days of the new covenant in contrast to the former days of the old covenant. The age of Messianic fulfillment has arrived. (CSB)

*2:21 everyone who calls.* Though the Word is preached to the whole world and the Spirit works through that Word, only those who “[call] upon the name of the Lord” will be saved. The word “saved” is passive; the Lord alone does the saving through his Spirit, through the Word.

**Gospel – John 15:26-27, 16:4-15**

**﻿26﻿ “When the Counselor comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father, he will testify about me. ﻿27﻿ And you also must testify, for you have been with me from the beginning.**

The following are some insights to individual verses…

*15:26 Counselor.* "Counselor" can be translated "Comforter," "Advocate," "The one who comfortingly stands beside us at all thing, giving us all that we need.

*15:26 goes out from the Father.* This is to show that the Spirit like Jesus does not just act on his own but is a part of an eternal plan. Jesus is trying to give them some insight about the interior life of God for their comfort.

**﻿4﻿ I have told you this, so that when the time comes you will remember that I warned you. I did not tell you this at first because I was with you. 5﻿ “Now I am going to him who sent me, yet none of you asks me, ‘Where are you going?’ ﻿6﻿ Because I have said these things, you are filled with grief. ﻿7﻿ But I tell you the truth: It is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. ﻿8﻿ When he comes, he will convict the world of guilt﻿a﻿ in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment: ﻿9﻿ in regard to sin, because men do not believe in me; ﻿10﻿ in regard to righteousness, because I am going to the Father, where you can see me no longer; ﻿11﻿ and in regard to judgment, because the prince of this world now stands condemned. ﻿12﻿ “I have much more to say to you, more than you can now bear. ﻿13﻿ But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. ﻿14﻿ He will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it known to you. ﻿15﻿ All that belongs to the Father is mine. That is why I said the Spirit will take from what is mine and make it known to you.**

The following are some insights to individual verses…

*16:5 none of you asks me, ‘Where are you going?’* Thomas had asked such a question earlier (14:5). More recently, the disciples had been too preoccupied with their own loss to ask more perceptive questions about His impending departure. (TLSB)

*16:7 for your good.*Jesus insists that grief is improper and cheers his disciples with the word that it was “expedient” for them, “for their good,” that he should go away. The coming of the Counselor was dependent upon Jesus going away. Having gone away, Jesus would send the Counselor to his disciples. In the absence of Jesus (that is, in the sense of not seeing him in a visible, physical sense), another presence would be with them—the Counselor, whom Jesus would send to the disciples and to all future disciples.

*16:8 he will convict the world.* The Spirit will expose, demonstrate, convince with overwhelming evidence or to correct of punish. The idea here is that this is a trial like that of Jesus but reversing participants. The world is found guilty of sin (V. 8), it has not acknowledged the glorified Jesus (V. 9) and the judgment of the devil (V. 10). The tables are now turned.

*16:9 righteousness*. Christ is the Righteous One, as Luke’s centurion testifies at the cross (Lk 23:47). Meaning not only that he is “innocent” (ESV), but that he is the Lamb without blemish or defect offered for the sin of the world (Jn 3:16). His death is the righteousness of God and gives life to the world.

*16:9 because men do not believe.*† May mean that their sin is their failure to believe, or that their unbelief is a classic example of sin. Typically, John may have had both of these in mind. (CSB)

*16:10 in regard to judgment.* The sin of sins is to reject the person, Word, and work of Jesus Christ. Unbelief is the mother of sins. Where that sin prevails there is no hope. Where there is repentance of that sin there is nothing but hope.

*16:11 prince of this world.* This emphasizes the connection between the devil, who now stands condemned, and the unbelieving world, which is under judgment and in danger of condemnation.

*16:12 I have much more to say.* Jesus resumed teaching after the resurrection (chs 20–21). (TLSB)

*16:13 only what he hears.* Just as Jesus had told them nothing but what came from the Father, so the Spirit would speak only what came from the Father and the Son. And He would tell them things still to come, prophecies they would write down also for us to learn. So God’s truth for us would be revealed. So we too would learn what Jesus’ work has meant and what lies ahead for us and for the world.

*16:14 taking what is mine.* Jesus had received His revelation from the Father, which would now be imparted and explained by the Holy Spirit. (TLSB)