



John 15:26-27 and
Acts 2:1-13

***“The Advocate and The
Street Where You Live”***

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Jesus tells His followers that He will send them the Advocate and according to Webster’s dictionary, an advocate is “a powerful and influential person who defends or maintains a cause on our behalf.” That is what is being described in our text. Jesus says, “When the Advocate 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” (John 15:26). Let’s see how this happens in the Book of Acts.

There was a big spring festival in Jerusalem that day. It may have been similar to Daffodil Days in Tacoma, the Strawberry Festival in Santa Barbara, or Mule Day in Columbia, Tennessee. This agricultural festival was called the “Feast of Weeks” and it took place every spring on Pentecost, 50 days after the Jewish Passover. Jews scattered throughout the world returned to Jerusalem for the celebration designed to emphasize the goodness of God. As people do at community festivals, everyone was having a good time — connecting with old friends, trading old stories, maybe even attending a community worship service or two. Everybody was happy — except for a group of Jesus Followers huddled in an upper room, scared out of their wits, searching for perspective on the strange things that had happened to them in the last few weeks.

Then, on the day of Pentecost, our Triune God decided to do a new thing with this small band of believers. The Holy Spirit descended upon them, and these timid disciples were empowered to change the world for the cause of Christ. That is history.

As we celebrate Pentecost, my prayer is the same: Holy Spirit, descend upon us, timid disciples and empower us to change the world for the cause of Christ.

WHERE THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD IS, THERE IS COMMUNITY.

Our culture is hungering for community. Coffee shops, neighborhood pubs, social media connections can easily show us our need for meaningful connections with others. Churches, through the power of the Holy Spirit, are a genuine resource for community. Who else is better equipped in the world than the Church to model community with one another?

Churches are not clubs designed to protect the interests and convenience of present members to the exclusion of outsiders. We must never lose our passion for helping people discover they are loved just as they are by a risen savior who can change their lives for the better.

Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is community.

AND WHERE THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD IS, THERE IS COMPASSION.

Each one heard them speaking in his own language (Acts 2:6).

What's happening here is not speaking in unknown languages called glossolalia. What's happening here is a gift of understanding so that the people from all those places that you heard named, sixteen regions all together, could understand one another. The disciples are empowered by the Advocate to speak into the lives of others. They could communicate even though they came from different countries, different ethnic backgrounds and different situations in life.

There is a great debate in the Church on how to be relevant in this post-modern world. There are books and seminars galore on how to market our church, how to contemporize our worship, how to become seeker-friendly, and provide more customer service. They are all helpful. Sometimes I wonder if the church is trying so hard to be "with it" that we just "don't get it." We need to be in the world, but not in sync with the world. The ultimate goal of the Church is not to be relevant but to be redemptive.

It's the Holy Spirit who helps us speak a language that can be understood and gives listeners ears that can hear. Just like the disciples in the first Pentecost, we too have to get out of our building and into the streets. We need to get to know people and their stories. I want you to think of the people on the street where you live. Think of the people you know. Think of the people you sort of know. Think of the houses or apartments near you where you don't even know the names of the people who live close to you. If the Holy Spirit got hold of *our church*, our neighbors would know. If the Holy

Spirit took control of people of Christ, the world would know.

It's not the latest gimmick, it's not the latest idea, it is the power of God through the Holy Spirit that moves people to belief. I suspect when we start loving people enough to share life with them, then when there's an opportunity to share about how Christ is the center of our lives, that people will listen. They will listen because we're in a relationship with them. And the Advocate, the Holy Spirit is the One who is making it possible.

Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is community. Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is compassion.

AND WHERE THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD IS, THERE ARE CONVERSIONS.

If we were to continue reading in Acts 2 today, we would read that those who accepted the message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day (Acts 2:41). Can you picture that in your mind? I honestly can't.

It's an amazing story we have here. Peter preached one sermon and had 3,000 converts. There was just imperfect on-again, off-again Peter talking about young women seeing visions and old men dreaming dreams, and the need for all of us to turn a 180 and believe that God wants to be in relationship with us. That's what's important in life, that's what's really important.

Let me ask you, how did you become a Christian?

Every believer has a unique story, your own story of how the Holy Spirit worked in your life to help you trust in Jesus. But all of our stories have this thing in common: Somebody helped us get to Jesus. Somebody helped us hear of Jesus. And in order to hear of Jesus somebody helped us hear about Him in our own language. It may have been Mom or Dad, a co-worker, friend at school. It could even have been a total stranger, but somebody helped bring you to Jesus, and your life was changed forever.

Now, The Advocate wants us to empower us to be those helpers. The Advocate wants to move on the street where you live. Without us how will they hear of Jesus?