

NEXT WEEK WE WILL CELEBRATE THE FEAST OF PENTECOST.

IT WILL BE THE END OF THE EASTER SEASON.

LENT AND EASTER WILL BE BEHIND US AS WE GO INTO ORDINARY TIME.

THE READINGS WILL TAKE ON A DIFFERENT SLANT.

IT'S SO EASY TO SAY, 'IT'S DONE, WE CAN RELAX AND TAKE IT EASY.'

BUT THESE LAST TWO WEEKS ARE SO IMPORTANT.

IMPORTANT ENOUGH FOR THE ASCENSION TO NOT BE BURIED DURING THE WEEK BUT ALLOWED TO BE PROCLAIMED ON A SUNDAY FOR ALL TO HEAR.

AND FOR EVERYTHING ELSE THAT COULD HAVE BEEN CHOSEN,

WE ARE GIVEN PENTECOST.

THEY ARE IMPORTANT.

I CAN'T STRESS THAT ENOUGH.

THEY CONCLUDE LENT AND EASTER AND IN THEIR OWN WAY MAKE SENSE OF THE MISSION OF CHRIST.

FOR WEEKS WE HAVE LISTENED TO THE DAILY READINGS WHERE JESUS IS TELLING HIS DISCIPLES, GIVING THEM CLUES.

THAT THE RESURRECTION DID NOT END EVERYTHING.

HE KNEW THAT THEY WOULD NOT UNDERSTAND UNTIL THEY HAD SEEN IT AND FELT IT FOR THEMSELVES.

IN ONE ACCOUNT, THEY'RE NOT SURE BECAUSE THEY THOUGHT AT HIS ASCENSION THAT HE WAS COMING BACK IMMEDIATELY.

IT WASN'T UNTIL ANGELS WERE SENT TO TELL THEM TO GO HOME AND WAIT,

FOR MORE WAS STILL MEANT TO HAPPEN.

THE DISCIPLES, FOUR YEARS EARLIER COULD NEVER HAVE EVEN DREAMED OF WHAT THEY WERE ABOUT TO GO THROUGH AND WHAT THEY WERE GOING TO EXPERIENCE.

THEY'RE LIVES HAD BEEN COMPLETELY UPROOTED,

AND THEY HAD BEEN CHANGED FOREVER.

THAT'S WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU DECIDE TO FOLLOW CHRIST.

BUT IT WASN'T OVER.

EVERYTHING HAD NOT BEEN REVEALED.

PENTECOST CAN BE THE END OF A SEASON,  
BUT IT'S MEANT TO HERALD SOMETHING NEW.  
A NEW ERA IN FAITH.  
AND ONCE AGAIN, THEY WOULD HAVE TO EXPERIENCE IT.  
THE AGE OF MIRACLES WAS FAR FROM OVER.  
THEY HEARD PEOPLE BEGIN TO SPEAK IN THEIR OWN LANGUAGES AND STILL MANAGE TO  
UNDERSTAND EACH OTHER.  
AFTER A TIME OF HIDING, AND WORRY, THEY COULD FEEL SOMETHING DIFFERENT AS THE PEOPLE  
OPENLY BEGAN TO CELEBRATE WITH RAISED HEADS AND JOYFUL EXPECTATION.  
JESUS HAD BEEN RAISED TO HEAVEN,  
AND THE SPIRIT BEGAN TO DESCEND.  
AND THE APOSTLES FOUND THEIR WORK WAS JUST BEGINNING.  
LIKE THE OTHERS PRESENT ON THAT DAY THAT RECEIVED A GIFT FROM GOD.  
SOMETHING THAT WAS GOING TO BE POWERFUL  
AND WOULD SEND THE WORD TO THE WORLD.  
THE SPIRIT WOULD EMBOLDEN THEM, EMPOWER THEM,  
TO KEEP GOING AND IN SOME CIRCUMSTANCES THEY WOULD EVEN HEAL AND TEACH LIKE CHRIST.  
THEY WOULD HAVE FEAR TAKEN AWAY AS THEY WENT BACK TO A HOSTILE WORLD,  
BECAUSE IT'S PROMISE MEANT THE GOD, THAT JESUS AND THE SPIRIT, ALL THE SAME  
WOULD BE RIGHT NEXT TO THEM ON THEIR JOURNEY.  
JESUS GOT THINGS STARTED BUT HIS PLAN WAS INGENUOUS.  
THE PEOPLE WOULD CARRY THE WORD AND MANY THINGS WOULD CHANGE FOR OTHERS.  
AND ALL BELIEVERS HAD A RESPONSIBILITY TO GO ALONG.  
VERY OFTEN, I HEAR PEOPLE OFFERING PRAYERS FOR GOD TO COME TO EARTH AND SOLVE ALL OF OUR  
PROBLEMS.

BUT THERE IS A SECOND PART.

IN THE ASCENSION AND IN PENTECOST THERE HAS TO BE ANOTHER PRAYER TO ACCOMPANY GOD  
SAVING THE WORLD.

IT'S A PRAYER THAT ASKS FOR STRENGTH, FOR WISDOM TO LET THAT SPIRIT TAKE HOLD OF OUR LIVES  
AND TO BE PART OF THE ANSWER.

NO PEACE, WITHOUT PEOPLE OF PEACE.

NO SIGNS OF GOD, WITHOUT THE SIGNS OF PEOPLE WITH FAITH.

NO PROGRESS, UNLESS WE LISTEN AND RESPOND IN OUR WORLD AND IN REAL TIME,  
TO WHAT GOD HAS IN STORE FOR EACH OF US.

NO PROGRESS UNLESS OTHERS CAN SEE AND FEEL THE PRESENCE OF GOD IN US.

A NEW PARTNERSHIP.

A NEW WAY OF LOOKING FOR GOD.

NOT GREAT SIGNS NECESSARILY FROM THE SKIES OR THE PARTING OF SEAS.

BUT THE GREAT SIGNS THAT ARE PERFORMED ON THIS EARTH, BY GOD AND BY THOSE WHO CLAIM THE  
WORD FOR THEMSELVES.

WITH THE ASCENSION, WE WERE TOLD TO QUIT LOOKING AT THE SKIES FOR CHRIST.

WE WERE TOLD, TO GO HOME, TO LOWER OUR EYES,

AND TO WORK WITH GOD TO MAKE THINGS HAPPEN.

HAS EVERYONE RESPONDED. NO: SELFISHNESS, THE LOVE OF WAR, THE IGNORANCE OF POVERTY  
GREED HAVE ALL INTERFERED WITH THE NOISE OF PENTECOST.

BUT WITH EACH PASSING YEAR, IF WE WANT IT,

WE CAN, WITH THE HELP OF GOD,

BRING OURSELVES CLOSER TO THE FINALL PROMISE.

TO TAKE THE SPIRIT FROM HEAVEN AND BRING IT DOWN TO THE EARTH AND TO OUR LIVES.