

May 28, 2023
Pentecost Sunday
Pastor Matt Duerr

"The Season of the PPP"

Are you tired yet? Back in 2005, there was a Contra Costa County supervisor who was. He was tired of all the acronyms that were in the staff reports that they got for their meetings . And so, he proposed a ban on all acronyms within those written staff reports. Well, his motion was shot down, but the county supervisors did agree that the staff should include with their reports a list of the acronyms that are used. How many were used? The CHEAT SHEET contained 83 acronyms.

Eighteen years later, all I can say is it's only gotten worse. Perhaps you've heard of some of these; the JSPAC, which is pronounced jazz pack. Now is this the name of some new group, musical jazz group? No, it is the acronym that stands for Juvenile Systems Planning Advisory Committee. Wow! Jazz Pack. Maybe you've heard of teapots, TEA POTS, Title 8 Automated Paperless Office Tracking Systems. This one caught my eye-LUST. LUST-Leaking Underground Storage Tanks. Another one that caught my eye was church. CHURCH - The Congressional Hope for Uniform Recognition of Christian Heritage Act of 2013. You know since COVID hit; the whole acronym thing has kind of been on steroids. By the way, COVID19 itself is an acronym. COVID Virus Disease of 2019.

But as we look back on our time dealing with COVID, I think you might remember the PPP, the Paycheck Protection Program, which was administered by the SBA, the Small Business Administration through its own MBDA, Minority Business Development Agency, which came under the CARES Act. CARES the Coronavirus Aid Relief and Economic Security Act which failed to distribute all of the allocated funds, which resulted in the ERC the Employee Retention Credit Act.

You might be saying about this time, 'You know Pastor Matt, I am getting tired of the acronyms, myself.' Oh, let me share one more with you. It's a favorite of mine. I've seen it on a bumper sticker, and I've known a couple of people who say it's totally true. I brought it with me

in my handy, dandy, black bag and it's even coming out in black and white. It's the BMW acronym standing for Breaking My Wallet. Yeah, that's what I've heard happens sometimes.

But you know as I was thinking of all these acronyms, I thought why waste a good sermon opportunity. I think I'll get in on the act and come up with my own acronyms, and well since so many of them are dealing with the government, I guess it would be an Acronym Act. And so, this Pentecost season we begin with our own PPP Sermon Series. A sermon series of the ZLCCDFIZ- that would be the Zion Lutheran Church a corporate Deanery of Foothill, Immanuel, and Zion. We have our own acronym. But first we have to look at today.

It's Pentecost Sunday and what led up to Pentecost? Well, we just finished coming through Lent, where we saw Jesus die; the Easter season where Jesus rose from the dead, (during which we had Ascension Day where he ascended to the right hand of God the Father Almighty). But on that day that He ascended. We also saw that in Acts one, verse eight, He promised His disciples to send the Holy Spirit. When the Holy Spirit came, they would receive power to be His witnesses. And that's also when Jesus in Matthew 28:19 and 20 gave the Great Commission. Since the Holy Spirit would give them power to be witnesses, they were to go and make disciples of all nations. But first they needed to return to Jerusalem. Jesus had told them to, and when they did, they went about selecting Matthias to replace Judas who had killed himself.

And they were together on Pentecost. It was a Jewish holiday, Shavuot, it was a festival, it was number two of the three great JPF's (Jewish Pilgrimage Festivals) and it was an AF (Agricultural Festival) celebrating the beginning of the wheat harvest. Which leads to a PF (Prophecy Fulfilled) because the Holy Spirit came on those disciples with great power. And Peter gave his great sermon, that everyone of every language, heard and understood in their own language. A quick recap of that sermon is that Peter started out by quoting the prophet Joel. Why, because again it is more PF, (Prophecy Fulfilled). He made it very clear that this was the Holy Spirit, as promised through the prophet Joel. And he quotes five verses from Joel off the top of his head, this barely literate

fisherman. And he was very specific then that through the power of this Holy Spirit he was to make known the truth about Jesus of Nazareth. He was very specific, so no one got Jesus confused with any of the other people who had the name Jesus. But then he made it's also very clear that it was Jesus of Nazareth who God had attested to through mighty works, wonders, and signs using Old Testament language reserved for the work of God Himself. And then pointed out that it was the Jewish people who had delivered Him up, again fulfilling prophecy; and crucified Him, again fulfilling prophecy; and that He rose from the dead, again prophecy fulfilled. This time by King David who had written the prophecy, and that He was Lord and Christ sitting at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. In fact, he ends the sermon with this quote. "Let all the House of Israel therefore know for certain that God has made Him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified."

The result of this powerful sermon that everyone could understand, coming from a fisherman who's quoting scriptures right and left, was 'brothers what shall we do to be saved?' Peter's response; 'repent and be baptized.' Now listen very carefully to the next four words. "Every one of you." Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. And after saying that, we read that there was added about 3000 souls. Notice, there is no mention of men, no mention of women, no mentions of age, children, teenagers, young adults, old adults, wise people. No mention of educational prowess, no gendering, no anything like this. Souls: and you know in a day and age when we seem to be so hung up on race and genders and everything, I think we need to start thinking about the eyes of Jesus. How does Jesus see us? As souls. "And there were added that day 3000 souls." And Peter had said, 'every one of you,' and he was speaking to a large group that had come to Jerusalem for Shavuot and 3000 souls were baptized. Because they were made-up two different genders and many different ages. It's a powerful indication that children were included. Souls, it's the no nonsense, everybody word.

What happened after that baptism? Then we read that they devoted themselves to the APT, the Apostles Teaching. Which, by the

way, as we just saw from Peter was based on Old Testament prophecies being fulfilled. They devoted themselves to the APT and to the FGT, Fellowship and Gathering Together, much like we are here right now. But they also devoted themselves to the BOB, the Breaking of Bread. And for the Jewish people, if you eat with someone, they are family. So it's a definite reference to them coming together and fellowshipping and eating together; but yet also to Holy Communion and remembering that Christ broke that bread.

And finally they devoted themselves to the TP3XD. The what? You know, it's right there in Acts. The Prayers. What are the prayers? The three players that were prayed each day, three times daily. The morning prayer, the midday prayer, the evening prayers. This is what they devoted themselves to. The apostles teaching, fellowship and gathering together, worshipping together, eating together, to celebrating the Lord's Supper together and to praying together three times every day.

Which leads us to the PPP of Pentecost, Powerful Prayers of Pentecost. This is what the disciples had asked of Jesus, 'Lord teach us to pray and they responded by saying, when you pray, pray like this. Our Father in heaven. Right away, Creator God, He's our Father, without Him we wouldn't exist. And He's in heaven. Hallowed be thy name. May your name always be holy, be honored. This is the time for us to give adoration to God, blessing to God, claiming who He is. Thy Kingdom come. What is His Kingdom? God actively at work in this world working though us and Himself acting. Thy will be done. Notice it's not my will, it's His will. Thy will be done. How often? On earth as it is in heaven. His will always gets done in heaven and that is our prayer, that our will never gets in the way. That His will always takes precedence. Give us this day our daily bread. He is The great provider and by His provision, we have all that we need. It is not our work, it's His work and His grace to us that we even have jobs, that we even have food, and we have anything we have. And forgive us. It takes us back to last week's sermon. You must forgive is what Jesus says. Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation. Build our faith oh Lord. Pour out your Spirit upon us oh Lord. Give us

a clear vision of the truth oh Lord. Bring to our remembrance all that we have been taught and heard as you did with Saint Peter back on Pentecost Sunday. And then Lord, help us to stand up like him on the truth and speak the truth with others.

And of course, if we do that, we better continue with praying see Jesus knew what he was talking about. Deliver us from evil. Why? well very simply it's like this; if we are acting and living out the Lord's prayer through the power of the Holy Spirit and following Christ commands to us, it will be seen. We give Satan too much credit all the time. I think we think of him almost like God, oh he knows everything we're doing. No, he doesn't. He's a finite being, yes a powerful angel, who I would not want to get in the wrestling match with but he doesn't know all things. But you know what he is a sharp guy. He's got a tremendous communication system between him and the other fallen angels. They're watching for you and me. They're watching for those who are shining for Christ, who are being the salt of the earth, who are living out what we just prayed, in the Lord's prayer. And when they see that they want to stop us. And so, we are praying, deliver us from this evil. Lord protect us both through our faith, send your angels to protect us, Lord put your very hand of protection around us to protect us. And why do we pray to God? For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory forever and ever.

Prayer, that's what Jesus did immediately in the morning. In our gospel reading this morning. He got up, He left His disciples and those who were following Him behind. He went to a desolate place to pray to talk with God. It is an act of love as we talked about in our previous sermons. Talking with the one we love. And He has now opened that door, the door to the very throne room of God the Father. Because through Jesus Christ we can talk to God Almighty, Creator, Father, as we would our own father. And He's given us His Spirit who comes with power. And Jesus tells us that when we don't know how to pray, the Holy Spirit Himself will intervene and pray on our behalf.

And as we pray, we then look forward to the PF, the Prophecy Fulfilled. Because it's James, the brother of Jesus who writes, the prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working. Dear brothers and

sisters in Christ, the church needs your active, daily prayers. Prayers asking for forgiveness for ourselves, and for our country, prayers asking for strength, prayers asking for guidance, prayers for getting back to God. This is where we're going in Pentecost. We're going to be looking at some of the great prayers and the hope and prayer is that we become powerful Pentecost Prayers. In our Savior's Name, Amen.