

PENTECOST: IN FAITH WE RECEIVE THE HOLY SPIRIT`

Nineteenth Sunday after Pentecost (Proper 22)

October 7, 2007

Habakkuk 1:1-4; 2:1-4

Psalm 37:1-9

2 Timothy 1:1-14

Luke 17:5-10

Faith is the Victory!

“No one can defeat the world without having faith
in Jesus as the Son of God.” (1 John 5:5, *CEV*)

A quick scan of newspapers across the globe tells us that we are plagued on every side by mudslides, earthquakes, hurricanes, wars, terrorism, homicides, and genocides-- natural disasters and acts of inhumanity. Like the prophet Habakkuk, we ask God: Our LORD, how long must I beg for your help before you listen? How long before you save us from all this violence? (Habakkuk 1:2, *CEV*)

The silence seems deafening as the world seemingly spins out of control. We feel helpless before the wrath of nature’s elements and humankind’s wanton disregard for the sanctity of human life. Where are we headed and how can we fix it?

We become faint-hearted because we live in a generation of instant fixes—we feel hindered and hampered when solutions are not within our immediate grasp. Yet, the Scriptures remind us that despite what it looks like on the outside, God is still working his purpose out. His response to our desperate pleas *will* come. God says, “At the time I have decided, my words will come true. You can trust what I say about the future. It may take a long time, but keep on waiting—it will happen!” (Habakkuk 2:3, *CEV*).

What then should our attitude be as we wait on God? The Psalmist encourages us to trust God and live right; to do what God wants; to dispense of our anger and to “be patient and trust the LORD” (Psalm 37:7a, *CEV*). Because waiting patiently does not come easily to many of us, we need to remind ourselves that we have already overcome the world by the Spirit that God gives us. Although it appears that evil is triumphing over good, we should not be discouraged because “God’s Spirit doesn’t make cowards out of us. The Spirit gives us power, love, and self-control” (2Timothy 1:7, *CEV*).

This power that God gives us is wrapped in our faith; a faith, that if anchored on Christ, produces unbelievable results. It is our faith in God that will keep us on even keel when all around us seems to go awry. The apostle Paul tells us that we ought to let the faith and love of Christ Jesus guide our every action (2 Timothy 1:13).



So, be encouraged, rejoice and sing like the hymn writer Ira D. Sankey, “Faith is the victory that overcomes the world!”

This week’s Reflection was prepared by Dorette Saunders who serves on the staff of the American Bible Society as Senior Editorial Manager in the Education Unit of the Nida Institute for Biblical Scholarship.

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This week we remember to pray for the work of the Bible Societies in: Northern Ireland – With thanks to God for the response of churches and schools to last year’s *Handwritten Bible* project and for 200 years of Bible ministry to be celebrated at a special event in October, and with prayers for the Bible Kids’ Club magazines and for effective outreach to the growing number of immigrants; **Republic of Ireland** – With thanks to God for the support of volunteers during the bicentenary celebrations and for the enthusiastic response to Handwritten Bible project; **Scotland** – With thanks to God that the *Bibleworld SBS Studios* mobile classroom has visited locations across the country, with an excellent response from children and teachers; each child leaves with a copy of Luke’s Gospel.

Activity Corner: Faith-Go-Round

Supplies needed: Bible, Hymnal, and Concordance.

Select at least four players for each round. Challenge each other to think of or look up Bible verses containing the word “faith.” Put a time limit on how long each person has (preferably a minute). Each person gets a point for each answer. If stumped, the player can look in a Concordance, but will receive only ½ point for a correct answer. In Round 2, find hymns with the word “faith.” Use the same rules as above. The winner is the one with the most points after a predetermined time.

