

## Pentecost 2010 Confirmation

NIV Acts 2:37 When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?" 38 Peter replied, "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. 39 The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off-- for all whom the Lord our God will call." 40 With many other words he warned them; and he pleaded with them, "Save yourselves from this corrupt generation." 41 Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day. 42 They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. 43 Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles. 44 All the believers were together and had everything in common. 45 Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need. 46 Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, 47 praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

**Prayer:** O Lord, our friend and Savior, our messy lives and world need your powerful message of forgiveness to clear our guilty consciences. We need the renewal of your love to permeate our hearts and minds so that we will be able to live as your family. Move us by your Law and Gospel to repent of our sins, trust in your plan and put others first before ourselves. Hear our prayer Lord and send your Spirit to burn bright in our lives.

**Introduction:** A new start. Who doesn't like a fresh start? In a game of cards, you lose the game you simply shuffle the deck and deal again. A fresh start. In a video game you hit reset and start over. Lose a job get a new one. Can't find a job you like, move to a new town. Even in family life people have tried to hit reset and start over – they divorce and find a new spouse. That thinking carries over into the church. Members think that we get a new pastor, we get a fresh start. Out with the old in with the new. But there is a problem with starting over and resetting when it isn't just a game. When it comes to life the problem isn't the game of life – the problem is within. The problem is you. You and I and the person sitting next to you in the pew need a fresh start - a reshuffle and re-deal. We have a selfish bent to our minds and hearts that is just dark and hideously evil. Our prayer today for Breanna and Caitlyn is also for each of us.

Theme and Parts: **Renew in us the Fire of your Love**

Confront us with your Word. Fill us with your love. Increase our Giving

### 1) Confront us with your Word

Confrontation is not something most people look forward to doing. We fear confrontation. The apostle Peter confronted the people of Jerusalem for turning away from Jesus their Savior, from sin, and living selfishly. The people of Jerusalem wanted a Savior that would give them whatever their heart desired – food, wealth, freedom, power, control, and success. When Jesus told them his kingdom was Spiritual and dealt with freedom from sin, death and the devil, they turned away from him. They didn't see a need and didn't want what he was offering. It didn't seem important to them. What was important to them was what they could see, taste, touch and feel into their heart. But they were wrong. They had been tricked, duped by the Unholy three – their own sinful nature, the messed up world around them and the father of lies himself, the devil.

They needed to be confronted. Peter told them what they had done – killed their Son of God who came to save them from sin, death and the power of the devil. He told them that they were under God's wrath and punishment now and even after death. He exposed their sins – the real problem within them.

That same dark, hideous selfish nature lurks within each of our chests. Like a virus if left unchecked it breeds, multiplies and consumes healthy thoughts, feelings and desires for God. It needs to be exposed to the light of God's Word. Breanna and Caitlyn today know their sins and know their Savior. Their hearts are filled with gratitude that I didn't make them stand before you today and answer catechism questions. But even more so they are grateful for being forgiven children of God. We pray that their lives as God's children would continue to be a constant confrontation with that dark hideous selfishness that lurks in all our hearts. Through the Word of God, the Holy Spirit destroys that selfish virus in us and frees our guilty consciences with forgiveness. In place of the dark ugly virus of selfishness, the Holy Spirit fills us with His Love.

The people of Jerusalem were cut to the heart by God's sharp Word. Their sins were obvious to them. They could see them now plain as day – they were selfish and foolish to look in another direction for their peace joy and satisfaction. What could they do now? What possibly could they do to fix, or make up for rejecting

Jesus and turning away from him? Peter told them, “There’s nothing you can do.” He didn’t tell them to pray very hard and very long. He didn’t tell them to straighten up and fly straight and maybe, just maybe, the Lord would overlook their selfishness. He didn’t tell them to go to church regularly, take communion and give generously and then the Lord will forgive you. He didn’t even tell them to make a decision to follow Jesus Christ, then you will be forgiven. He told them to simply look to the promises of God in His Word especially baptism. That promise of His love is for all people, young and old, babies and elderly, black and white and every pigment of skin in between. He told them of the free and full salvation for them promised by God through baptism.

That was their new start – a renewal of life. They had hope. They had confidence. They had a free conscience. They too were forgiven children of God. That is the power of the gospel. It changes people from the inside out. We are told that 3000 people repented and were baptized that day! 3000! What a tremendous day. Today we have the power of the Holy Spirit on display as well. Not 3000 but 2. 2 today are proclaiming that Jesus Christ is Lord of their life and the universe. Only by the power of the Holy Spirit is that possible. He has given to these young Christian women the love of Christ that has brought peace, joy and freedom into their lives - a restart, a renewal.

This messy life does its best to attack our identities. Even from within our dark selfish nature whispers in our ear that if we want the most out of life and to be happy we need to work for physical things, that make us feel happy – money, prestige, success, love of a man, a family. But it’s all a mirage – here one second gone the next. The truth is that lasting true peace, love, joy and satisfaction is found in Jesus Christ, our Savior. Fill up on his love, Breanna and Caitlyn. Trust Jesus’ plan to love you and care for you through His Word and Sacrament of Baptism and Holy Communion. That is the way in which you will be renewed and given a fresh start every day, every year.

That goes for all of us here at St. Luke’s as well. You worry and fret about many things. They are all important in a sense but you are majoring in the minors. You want renewal? You want a fresh start? Jesus has it for each of you – it’s found in His Word of forgiveness, in baptism, in Holy Communion. Read, study, memorize and take every chance you have to fill up with His renewing love. Remember the problem of our life, our church is within you. Use the power of Jesus love to solve the problem within.

The result of confronting sin and filling up with Jesus love is one of increased giving. The 3000 that were filled with Jesus love had a mindset change. Instead of worrying and fretting about their own wants and needs they now were more concerned about others wants and needs. They devoted themselves to the apostle’s teaching breaking of bread, prayer. Spiritual exercises we might say. They were no longer focused on the world’s way of going after happiness. They were trusting Jesus’ way, God’s plan, his Word. By trusting that plan and following it, they were energized to sacrifice themselves for God’s Kingdom – they increased their giving. They sold their possessions and goods to cover others needs. Did you catch that? They gave up what they had to help others. Someone once said, “So Jesus wants us to all be communists? Not quite. The attitude of Christ and of these believers in Christ is “What’s mine is yours.” No one told the believers they had to give to others. The apostle’s didn’t force them to watch out for the needs of others. They wanted to give up what they had so they could be a blessing to other people. Generosity! Only when the love of Christ was overflowing in their life could they stop living selfishly and give more to others. The key is faith – trust in God.

As we trust the Lord more, the less we need to cling to with clenched fists our dollars and cents, house and home, land cattle and all that we own. All those things are the Lord’s. The things the Lord gives to us are only as valuable as to how they help God’s family spiritually and physically.

Breanna and Caitlyn both of your families have many great blessings. But you two have a pearl of great price, a treasure that far outweighs any valuable jewelry or bank account- the forgiveness of sins in Jesus Christ. That gift was given to you by God. Use all the gifts the Lord showers on you in the years ahead for His kingdom, preaching and teaching the word of God. Think of others and give of yourself generously.

Renew in us the fire of your love! Confront us with your Word that we would repent of our sins and trust in your Son Jesus for salvation. Fill us with your love that we would follow your way through life for peace, joy and satisfaction. May we be so filled with your love that we continually increase our giving, time, talents and treasures for the good of others. We pray this for all the members of our Congregation, especially Breanna and Caitlyn.