

“Receive the Peace and Joy of Pentecost”

Genesis 2:7 Adapted, Ecclesiastes 3:11, Numbers 11:25, John 7:37-38, 20:19-22, Acts 2: Select Phrases, Adapted

Pastor James York

May 24, 2026

Prayer for Understanding O God, inexhaustible source of all good things, we thank you for your steadfast love. Help us hear your loving Word. Engrave your loving word in our minds and hearts transforming us to love always. Help us contemplate your glory in the clear mirror of your gospel. Amen

God creates each person unique, so each person has a unique way of receiving the joy and peace of Pentecost. Genesis declares: **Genesis 2:7 (adapted) God forms a person from dust. God breathes the breath of life into each individual making them a living person.** We are mere dust and through a personal connection God animates us with dynamic life.

How do you receive the joy and peace of Pentecost? Without God’s goodness we are incomplete, restless, anxious, and tired. Over the years, our longing for God has been described as thirst, hunger, yearning for purpose, an existential angst, a senses of incompleteness, confusion as to the meaning of life, a deep cavern of desire, a spiritual vacuum, a void, and a God-shaped hole. We have an infinite abyss that can only be filled by our infinite God.

Ecclesiastes declares: **Ecclesiastes 3:11 NLT “God has made everything beautiful for its own time. God has planted eternity in the human heart, but even so, people cannot see the whole scope of God’s work from beginning to end.”** As you grow in seeing the world and seeing everyone as God sees past every distortion, blemish, and imperfection to our eternal beauty you are receiving Pentecost.

Throughout scripture, God is constantly striving to give us joy and peace. Sometimes, we substitute a quick fix for God. Moses was peaceful and joyful when he received the compassion of God to set people free and the wise light of God to guide people. Exhausted and under stress, Moses substituted anger which led to murder, substituted complaining about people which led to cynicism, substituted excess work which led to burnout. Moses tended to over function robbing others of opportunities to lovingly serve. Scripture explains: **Numbers 11:25 NRSV “Then the LORD came down in the cloud and spoke to Moses and took some of the spirit that was on Moses and put it on the seventy elders, and when the spirit rested upon them, they prophesied.”** We perceive the almost fully complete, beautiful Moses when he shares ministry, encouraging and affirming the gifts of others, when Moses let’s go of control, delegates and celebrates fresh ways of connecting with God. Moses shines when he enjoys nature, hikes, savors a bush, explores a mountain, is in awe of the stars, and in wonder of a volcanic eruption.

So how do we enjoy God’s life giving goodness? How do we avoid God substitutes that distract us? Addiction is substituting something for God. Addiction is idolatry. Idolatry is valuing something more than God. Sometimes one takes something that is good in moderation but ruins it by overindulgence. Overconsumption of a good aspect can crowd out the dynamic variety of goodness God designed you to enjoy. When you are tired and stressed, how do you rejuvenate? If something gives you prolonged peace and joy then it is likely God’s gift to you. Addictions are fleeting, give quick burst, but no lasting peace and joy.

There are many socially acceptable idolatrous addictions that in excess limit our enjoyment of a well-rounded life such as screen time, exercise, shopping, work, or food. Richard Rohr wrote: “Addiction uses up our spiritual desire. Addiction drains away our deepest and truest desire, that inner flow and life force which makes us “long and pant for running streams”(Psalm 42). Spiritual desire is the drive that God put in us from the beginning for total satisfaction, for home, for heaven, for divine union. It has been a frequent experience of mine to find that many people in recovery have a unique and very acute spiritual sense, often more than others. It just got frustrated early and aimed in a wrong direction. Wild need, meaninglessness and unfettered desire took off before boundaries, strong identity, impulse control, and deep God experience were in place. The addict lives in a state of alienation, with a “God-shaped hole” inside that is always yearning to be filled. Addicts attempt to fill it with alcohol, drugs, food, non-intimate sex, shopping, anything they feel will give them a sense of control over their moods and relief from the sense of meaninglessness and emptiness. All of us, of course, have our own false programs for happiness, which we keep using more and more to try to fill that God-shaped

hole. I suspect this is the real meaning of “sin.” God’s positive and lasting way of removing our shortcomings is to fill the hole with something much better, more luminous, and more satisfying. God satisfies us at our deepest levels rather than punishing us at superficial levels, which so much of organized religion seems to teach. Then our old shortcomings are not driven away or pushed underground, as much as they are exposed for the false programs for happiness that they are. Our sins fall away as unneeded and unhelpful because now a new and much better vitality has been found. This is the wondrous discovery of our True Self, and the gradual deterioration of our false and constructed self.”

With every breathe God is animating you with wonderful life. Pentecost is breathing out that which diminishes your life and breathing in that which enhances your life.

The good news of John declares: **John 7:37-38 NRSV** “**On the last day of the festival, the great day, while Jesus was standing there, he cried out, "Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and let the one who believes in me drink. As the scripture has said, 'Out of the believer's heart shall flow rivers of living water.'"** Pentecost is knowing how God quenches your thirst, drinking deep of God’s goodness, and letting living water overflow your life satisfying the thirst of others. It is nearly impossible to continually give without receiving. Imagine your soul as a reservoir for goodness, love, peace, and joy. When you regularly connect with God, drinking from God, receiving blessings, you overflow with blessings for others. One is able to give more than they receive for a season when their goodness reservoir is full. One is able to be sustained through a dry season when they manage their reservoir. These ebbs and flows are unforced rhythms of grace.

Pentecost is uncovering the imagine of God within you, savoring your true self, your authentic, Christ self and shedding your small, ego driven, false self. Richard Rohr explains: “The false self is our temporary, ego-driven persona constructed from societal, mental and external factors such as a job, wealth or reputation, designed for survival. Conversely, the true self is the eternal, unchanging "soul" or "immortal diamond", present from birth and rooted in love, which is revealed when the ego is surrendered. The small ego driven false self is formed by the mind, culture, family and education to navigate the world. The false self is defensive, always seeking to protect and promote its image. The false self thrives on power, prestige, possessions, and being "special" or "right". When you are defensive or taking offense, you are operating from the false self, constricting your life. The false self is a "wineskin" that God helps us burst to discover our true self. Our authentic, Christ self is secure, compassionate and grounded. The goodness, love and joy of our true self cannot be offended or destroyed for our true self will be glorified and endure forever. Our true self is discovered by letting go of the need to control, be right, or create one’s identity for the true self celebrates their identity as a beloved child of God, lovingly connected to all people, lovingly interrelated to the cosmos and sees self as equal in value to others for the true self perceives goodness in everyone. A Pentecost person believes God has gifted them with a true self and is on a journey to uncover their true self by letting go of the false self. A Pentecost life perceives the cross and death as a shedding of burdens that sets the true self free to soar in inexpressible peace, joy and love.”

On Easter the disciples were stuck in death and fear. The good news of John declares: **John 20:19-22 NLT** “**That Sunday evening the disciples were meeting behind locked doors because they were afraid of the Jewish leaders. Suddenly, Jesus was standing there among them! “Peace be with you,” Jesus said. As Jesus spoke, Jesus showed them the wounds in his hands and his side. They were filled with joy when they saw the Lord! Again Jesus said, “Peace be with you. As God has sent me, so I am sending you.” Then Jesus breathed on them and said, “Receive the Holy Spirit.** God is constantly striving to give us joy and peace. God provides goodness with every breathe.

Pentecost is receiving goodness and sharing. Acts explains: **Acts 2:Select Phrases, Adapted; On the day of Pentecost, they were meeting together in one place. Suddenly, there was a sound from heaven like the roaring of a mighty windstorm, and it filled the house where they were sitting. Then, what looked like flames or tongues of fire appeared and settled on each of them. And everyone present was filled with the Holy Spirit and began speaking in other languages, as the Holy Spirit gave them this ability. They stood there amazed and perplexed. “What can this mean?” they asked each other. Then Peter stepped forward and shouted to the crowd, “God says, ‘I will pour out my Spirit upon all people. You will prophesy, see visions and dream dreams. God released Jesus from the horrors of death and raised Jesus back to life, for death could not keep Jesus in death’s grip. The Lord is always with us. We will not be shaken, for God is right beside us. No wonder our hearts are glad and our tongues shout God’s praises! Our bodies rests in**

hope. God will not leave our souls among the dead or allow anyone to rot in the grave. God shows us the way of life. We are being filled with the joy of God's presence.

Goodness, love, joy, and peace are a universal language. Pentecost is gratitude for God's agency in every goodness. Pentecost is casserole given during loss, the aurora of wonder from a sunset, the laughter of playing together, the harmony of singing, the unfolding of a way forward with the comfort of a listening friend, art that gives expression to good feelings, shared gratitudes. Pentecost is the sensation of cool water on a hot day, education that elevates, stars that give us wings, stories that connect, the earthly smell of spring greening, the sweetness of community, mountains that draw us to grandeur, shared ideas that spark innovations, friendship that rejuvenates, conversations that inspire, the glory of worshipping together. Pentecost is curious exploration, compassion that frees, sharing that satisfies, finding home, grand banquets, feasts of delicious food, a kiss from the cosmos through a snowflake, freedom to find your passion, a hot beverage, the comfort of being loved, a soft prayer shawl, the excitement of a cheering crowd, a good book, the energy of a concert. Pentecost is communication that uplifts, a flock of good thoughts, good feelings blooming, a cheer of affirmation, a roll in soft foliage, a look of approval, the belonging of being seen, the comradery of an inside joke, the reviving sleep from a clear conscious, the excitement of a shared good vision. Pentecost is every goodness, joy and peace.

Pentecost is the invitation of goodness. David Brooks writes: "Faith is yearning for something beautiful that I can sense but not fully grasp. Faith is longing and thirsting. Let me try to be less cryptic. Think of the drives that propel you through life. Some are caused by a void. You get hungry when your stomach is empty. Others are caused by an attraction. You sense some distant delicious thing and find yourself pulled forward by its goodness. Sometimes I feel pulled by a goodness that seems grand and far-off, a divine luminosity that hovers over the far horizon."

Pentecost is the ongoing story of God breathing life into us, making all beautiful, invigorating our gifts, resurrecting love, pouring living water into us, giving us language to share God's goodness, revealing how to enjoy abundant life, permeating us with peace and joy. Pentecost is God breathing goodness into you. Receive the peace and joy of Pentecost. Amen

