

“Surviving the Peace”

✠ Pentecost + PTSD

(Prophecy...Tragedy...Savior...Deliverance)

In the name of God’s Spirit of Grace, dear heirs and beneficiaries of Pentecost:

One of the greatest dangers confronting Christ’s Church today is that we forget we are an army. God kept His promise on Pentecost and sent His Spirit. Remember how Jesus breathed on His disciples? **“Peace be with you.”** He said again and again. **“Peace I leave with you. My peace I give you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Do not let your heart be troubled, and do not let it be afraid.”** (John 14:27 ¹)

Those who stand guard over our freedoms can help us see our need for Pentecost in our daily lives. “My veteran buddy and I meet once a week. Each time we walk away with the same assignments: *I am responsible for seeing to it that he stays alive for a week; and he is to make sure I am still among the living seven days from now.*” ² Their spiritual trauma sometimes goes physical. “The average suicide rate among American military veterans is one per hour every day of the year.” One vet at a PTSD retreat commented, “Surviving the war is just the beginning. Now we must survive the peace.”

Sadly, Christians the world over are committing spiritual suicide by going it alone. What if those weekly meetings stop? The Holy Spirit is a gift from Christ to His body, the Church. His army cannot live without this life-giving breath from God. But so often when peace comes to human hearts and minds, they grow soft. They walk away. They sleep in. They don’t realize how quickly Post Traumatic Stress Disorder can seize their souls. God is a warrior and God’s Son our Champion Redeemer. By His Gift of the Spirit we are **“Surviving the Peace”** that turns **PTSD** positive, first in...

✠ Prophecy...

Semper Fi – Semper Fidelis – Always Faithful – the motto of the U.S. Marine Corps. No one is more faithful than the LORD God. He makes promises that sound awesome at first, but when He finally delivers, they’re a hundred more amazing. About 4500 B.C., He stood up against our worst enemy Satan and promised that the Seed of the woman would crush his head. Fast forward to 2200 B.C. He promises Abraham, **“In your Seed all the nations of the earth will be blessed.”** (Genesis 22:18) Forward to 700 B.C. and He tells a wicked King Ahaz, **“The Virgin will be with child.”** (Isaiah 7:14) When a disappointed bachelor found out his fiancé was pregnant, an angel told him that this was the fulfillment of God’s promise about the Virgin. **“She has conceived by the Holy Spirit...the Son of God.”** (Matthew 1:21-23)

That, my dear friends is *Semper Fi*. Expect more faithfulness when Jesus promised Pentecost to His disciples. **“Look, I am sending you what my Father promised. But stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high.”** (Luke 24:49) **“When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. ²Suddenly a sound like the rushing of a violent wind came from heaven, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. ³They saw divided tongues that were like fire resting on each one of them. ⁴They were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, since the Spirit was giving them the ability to speak fluently.** “ God is always faithful. He keeps every promise. Pentecost is still spectacular to eyes and ears as God is bringing to completion His Spirit’s work

¹ EHV ~ *Evangelical Heritage Version*, the Wartburg Project. Northwestern Pub. House, © 2017. Order: 800-662-6022.

² *Together*, A biweekly and breaking e-newsletter from WELS, “A PTSD retreat,” May 15, 2018.

in us.

✠ Tragedy...

War is Tragedy. And one of the most tragic battles between humankind and their Creator happened at a tower called Babel. Arrogant men thought they could work together against God. All it took was for God to confuse their languages, not just in the words but the whole sentence structure. They had to separate after the Flood and fill the earth as God commanded. But sadly God's message was often obscured because of man's sin. Yet God is gracious. God is more stubborn in His love than we are in sin. And the Holy Spirit is more than a veteran war buddy for us. He is the Counselor our Lord Christ promised to send, the God who turns every Tragedy of ours into a blessing.

He started in the Old Testament with *"the Feast of Weeks,"* 50 days after Pentecost, *"with the firstfruits of the wheat harvest, and the Feast of Ingathering at the turn of the year."* (Exodus 34:22 NIV84) This was Israel's spring harvest festival foreshadowing our Christian Pentecost festival. Generous offerings were to be brought to the Lord, recognizing God as the Giver of their harvest and the generous Creator who would keep giving. Christ raised from the dead is *"the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep."* (1 Corinthians 15:20) God's Babel curse was reversed when Galilean fisherman proclaimed fluently in unstudied languages the wonderful works of God. Amazement and mockery tried to continue Tragedy.

✠ Savior...

This is why God sent His Son. The thunder of our amazement and the mockery of our foolish hearts can never accept our need for God. We naturally hide from God's grace that covers our sin. God had to come looking for Adam and Eve in the Garden to call them back to a right relationship, reconciled to Him. God brought Pentecost to unsuspecting pilgrims truly in need of a Savior. Peter's sermon would go on to say how they had crucified their long awaited Messiah, that God raised Him from the dead and exalted Him to God's right hand. Cut to the heart they will cry out, *"What should we do?"* ³⁸*Peter answered them, "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. ³⁹For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far away, as many as the Lord our God will call."* Your sins are forgiven. Your Savior has risen. Humble yourself to this Hero's + PTSD in kind hearted...

✠ Deliverance

These are *"the last days,"* the New Testament era between Christ's first and second coming. Have you noticed how people are talking about "peace and security"? Jesus warned through His Apostle Paul: *When people are saying, "Peace and security," destruction will suddenly come on them, like labor pains on a pregnant woman, and they will certainly not escape.*" (1 Thessalonians 5:3)

For Deliverance from our Savior Pentecost + PTSD must continue in you. We need the Holy Spirit's prophecy through Joel to ring out in our sons and daughters, young men and old, servants of God both men and women. *"The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and glorious day of the Lord....Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."* Let every challenge you face remind you that Jesus faced our worst enemies of sin, death and hell. He won Deliverance by His innocent death and glorious resurrection. Let each heartbreak remind you to pray for those who have stood between us and evil of body in earthly wars and tragedy of soul in spiritual battles to this day. Pray them for them in Jesus' "Our Father..." Prayer. May God's Deliverance bring Pentecost peace to veterans in sight, riches, healing of the mind, all they need in Him to find, the Lamb of God our Savior. He promised and delivered Pentecost. Let our firstfruits offerings be substantial, generous and eager to get God's Word and sacrament, God's war materiel to the front lines of this cosmic battle for souls. The stakes in this spiritual war are eternal. But instead of death and destruction, God's

weapons of the Spirit bring life and health and peace. Pentecost to all in Jesus' holy Name! Amen.