

FAITH COMES BY HEARING THE WORD OF GOD 5.9.2021

Let's look at the Bible readings for the 6th Sunday of Easter, May 9, to prepare for on-line, drive-in, and in-person worship (10 am) with Abounding Joy.

1ST READING: Acts 10:34-48 Saving faith is born as we hear the story of Jesus

³⁴Peter opened his mouth and said: “Truly I understand that God shows no partiality, ³⁵but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him. ³⁶As for the word that he sent to Israel, **preaching** good news of peace through Jesus Christ (he is Lord of all), ³⁷you yourselves know what happened throughout all Judea, beginning from Galilee after the baptism that John proclaimed: ³⁸how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with **the Holy Spirit** and with power. He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him. ³⁹And we are **witnesses** of all that he did both in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They put him to death by hanging him on a tree, ⁴⁰but God raised him on the third day and made him to appear, ⁴¹not to all the people but to us who had been **chosen** by God as **witnesses**, who ate and drank with him after he rose from the

dead. ⁴²And he commanded us to **preach** to the people and to **testify** that he is the one appointed by God to be judge of the living and the dead. ⁴³To him all the prophets bear witness that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name.” ⁴⁴While Peter was still saying these things, **the Holy Spirit** fell on all who heard the word. ⁴⁵And the believers from among the circumcised who had come with Peter were amazed, because the gift of **the Holy Spirit** was poured out even on the Gentiles. ⁴⁶For they were hearing them speaking in tongues and extolling God. Then Peter declared, ⁴⁷“Can anyone withhold water for baptizing these people, who have received **the Holy Spirit** just as we have?” ⁴⁸And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked him to remain for some days.

SOME QUESTIONS TO PONDER RELATED TO ACTS, CHAPTER 10

1. In vss. 34 and 35 it sounds like Peter is saying that only if we fear God and do what is right will God save us. How does that fit with the teaching of salvation by grace through faith?
2. In vs. 38 does the phrase “for God was with Him” refute the divinity of Jesus?
3. For more on the phrase “hanging him on a tree” look up Deuteronomy 21:22-23 and Galatians 3:12-14.
4. What's significant about “ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead” in vs. 41?
5. Do you see part of the Apostles' Creed in vs. 42?
6. Why might we say that vs. 43 is the Gospel in a nutshell?
7. What is the connection between the Word of God and the Holy Spirit (vs. 44)?
8. In the Book of Acts normally the Holy Spirit is given through baptism but sometimes the Spirit is given before baptism (vss. 47-48). What are we to make of that?

2ND READING: 1 John 5:1-8 We have been born of God for a life of love

¹Everyone who **believes** that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God, and everyone who **loves** the Father **loves** whoever has been born of him. ²By this we know that we **love** the children of God, when we **love** God and obey **his commandments**. ³For this is the **love** of God, that we keep **his commandments**. And **his commandments** are not burdensome. ⁴For everyone who has been born of God *OVERCOMES THE WORLD*. And this is the

victory that has *OVERCOME THE WORLD* — **our faith**. ⁵Who is it that *OVERCOMES THE WORLD* except the one who **believes** that Jesus is the Son of God? ⁶This is he who came by water and blood — Jesus Christ; not by the water only but by the water and the blood. And **the Spirit** is the one who testifies, because **the Spirit** is the truth. ⁷For there are three that testify: ⁸**the Spirit** and the water and the blood; and these three agree.

SOME QUESTIONS TO PONDER RELATED TO I JOHN, CHAPTER 5:

1. Three times here the phrase “born of God” is used. To learn more about this look up: John 1:12-13; John 3:1-8; and I Peter 1:23.
2. To figure out what “his commandments” refers to, look up I John 3:23 and John 6:28-29.
3. Three times here we see the phrase “overcomes the world.” What does that mean?
4. To get some hint regarding the meaning of vss. 6-8, look up John 19:31-37.

THE GOSPEL: John 15:9-17 Abiding in Jesus; Abounding in Joy

⁹Jesus said, “As the Father has **loved** me, so have I **loved** you. Abide in my **love**. ¹⁰If you keep **my commandments**, you will abide in my **love**, just as I have kept **my Father’s commandments** and abide in his **love**. ¹¹These things I have spoken to you, that my **joy** may be in you, and that your **joy** may be full. ¹²This is **my commandment**, that you **love** one another as I have **loved** you. ¹³Greater **love** has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his *FRIENDS*. ¹⁴You are my *FRIENDS* if you do **what I**

command you. ¹⁵No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you *FRIENDS*, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you. ¹⁶You did not **choose** me, but I **chose** you and appointed you that you should go and bear **fruit** and that your **fruit** should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you. ¹⁷**These things I command you**, so that you will **love** one another.”

SOME QUESTIONS TO PONDER RELATED TO JOHN, CHAPTER 15:

1. If love is a feeling it cannot be commanded. Jesus commands it. So, what is love?
2. Vs. 11: What does it mean to have the joy of Jesus in us? Is full joy, abounding joy?
3. Jesus talks about us being not His servants, but His friends. What’s the basis of this friendship? Is it a gift or a reward?
4. How do we abide in the love of Jesus and in the love of the Father?
5. Vs 16: what difference does it make regarding the matter of who chooses whom?