

Menifee United Church of Christ

Established in 1962 by God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit

SERMON FOR

April 19, 2015

“You Have Power From On High”



Reverend Bill Freeman: Senior Minister
Eckart Seeber: Music Minister
Marie Paulus-Nyquist: Children's Minister
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Menifee United Church of Christ

Sunday Service and Sunday School 10 AM

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Live Life Fully Alive!

1 John 3:1-3

See what love the Father has given us, that we should be called children of God; and that is what we are. The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. Beloved, we are God's children now; what we will be has not yet been revealed. What we do know is this: when he is revealed, we will be like him, for we will see him as he is. And all who have this hope in him purify themselves, just as he is pure.

Luke 24:44-49

Then he said to them, 'These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you—that everything written about me in the law of Moses, the prophets, and the psalms must be fulfilled.' Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures, and he said to them, 'Thus it is written, that the Messiah is to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day, and that repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things. And see, I am sending upon you what my Father promised; so stay here in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high.'

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You Have Power From On High

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A preacher one Sunday after the service was standing at the back of the church to shake hands with people as they left. After shaking a few adults' hands, the seven year old son of one of the deacons of the church approached the preacher. The preacher reached out his hand and said, "Good morning, Buddy." The boy said, "Good morning, Sir," and he handed the preacher some money. The preacher said, "What's this for?" The boy said, "It's

for you.” The preacher said, “I don’t want to take your money, Buddy.” The boy said, “It’s okay, I want you to have it.” The preacher said, “Why?” The boy said, “I want to give you some money because my daddy says you’re the poorest preacher we’ve ever had.”

You have power from on high. That’s what I want to talk with you about today. You have power from on high. Whether you’re a preacher or a parishioner. You have power from on high. Whether you’re an adult or a child. You have power from on high. Whether you’re a male or a female. You have power from on high. (Say to those around you: You have power from on high. You have power from on high. You have power from on high.)

The Gospel of Luke tells us that Jesus appeared before the disciples after he was resurrected. Jesus said, “Everything written about me by Moses, the prophets, and the Psalmist must be fulfilled.” Jesus said, “The Messiah must suffer, die, and rise again.” Jesus said, “I am sending you what my Father promised: Power from on high.” The “Power from on high” that Jesus sent to the disciples - and to us - according to theologians, is The Holy Spirit. As John the Baptist said, “I have baptized you with water; but Jesus will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.” So the disciples - and now we - have the Holy Spirit. Power from on high! But what is that power from on high, the Holy Spirit?

The Holy Spirit is God, part of the Holy Trinity, with Jesus. The Holy Spirit is one way God connects to us, to our spirit, to our soul. The Holy Spirit is known by many names: The Advocate. The Comforter. The Counselor. The Spirit. The spirit is not apart from us. The spirit is a part of us. The spirit is betwixt and between and beyond each one of us. The spirit does not have boundaries, any more than the earth has boundaries. The earth has artificial boundaries, called countries. The spirit has artificial

boundaries, called religions. If they recognize it, all religions have power from on high because all religions have the spirit of God.

The Book of First John tells us that we have power from on high because we have a divine, loving parent. First John says, “See what love the Father has given us, that we should be called children of God; and that is what we are.” First John says, “Beloved, we are God’s children now.” First John says, “When Jesus is revealed, we will be like him.” Well, Jesus has been revealed, so the disciples - and you - are like Jesus now! But what does that mean, that you are like Jesus?

Jesus is holy, sacred, and divine. So if you are like Jesus, then you are holy, sacred, and divine. Jesus loved everyone, forgave everyone, and made peace with everyone. So if you are like Jesus, then you love everyone, forgive everyone, and make peace with everyone. Jesus assisted the needy, comforted the hurting, and welcomed the stranger. So if you are like Jesus, then you assist the needy, comfort the hurting, and welcome the stranger. Now you might say to me: Pastor, I’m not exactly like Jesus, but I wish I were; how can I be like Jesus? And I would reply to you: Turn to the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit will help you to be holy, sacred, and divine. The Holy Spirit will help you to love everyone, forgive everyone, and make peace with everyone. And the Holy Spirit will help you to assist the needy, comfort the hurting, and welcome the stranger.

Kathleen and I on Monday went to Oceanside. We like to do that when we can. Just get away for a little while. We walked out to the pier. And we walked along the ocean. We didn’t say much. We were walking in solitude. I think Jesus did that a lot. He walked in solitude. I think he did that for the same reason I like to walk in solitude, stand in solitude, and sit in solitude: To get in touch with the Holy Spirit. Jesus spent much time alone I

think to get in touch with the Holy Spirit. Jesus was led by the spirit into the wilderness for 40 days and 40 nights. Jesus needed solitude. We all need solitude. You need solitude. Solitude relaxes your body, renews your mind, and restores your soul. Solitude reminds you that you have power from on high. Solitude gets you in touch with the Holy Spirit. How else can you get in touch with the Holy Spirit?

To get in touch with the Holy Spirit just breathe. The Hebrew and Greek words for spirit mean breath. So when you breathe, you are in touch with the Holy Spirit. The Hebrew and Greek words for spirit also mean wind. So when you feel the wind upon your face, you are in touch with the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit makes you aware of the world around you. The Holy Spirit makes your senses come alive. The Holy Spirit allows you to see a spectacular sunset, hear birds singing sweetly, feel the warm embrace of a loved one, taste something as simple as water as if for the first time, and smell the roses. When your spirit connects with the Holy Spirit, you live life fully alive, in body, mind and spirit, in the here and now, in heaven on earth.

On Good Friday I preached at the Methodist and Lutheran churches in town. We had joint services. One of our members heard from someone at the Lutheran church. She told me, "They're all raving about the way you preached, because you preached from memory." When she brought this up at the church council meeting the other day, people said I blushed. Later I wondered: Why did I blush? Then I figured it out. I worked in TV news for many years. In TV news you often have to memorize maybe a 20 second stand up, where you stand up in front of city hall or wherever, and repeat it. I would sometimes have to do 20 takes, because I couldn't memorize a 20 second stand up. Then I went to seminary and our preaching prof told us he wanted us to stand up in front of our congregations and deliver a 20 minute sermon from memory. I thought: How can I do

that? But now I can. And I know it's not because of my talent that I can memorize 20 minute sermons. And I know it's not even because of my preaching prof that I can memorize 20 minute sermons. I believe I can memorize 20 minute sermons because the Holy Spirit is working through me. You have power from on high. And the reason I blushed the other day is because I'm beginning to believe that I have power from on high, too.

“This Little Light Of Mine,” is thought of as a children's hymn. But it can also have meaning for adults. “This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine.” You have a light inside of you. A spark. A soul. A spirit. It's connected to the Holy Spirit. In other words, inside of you: You have power from on high. Will you use your power from on high to help people? It's up to you. You can choose to use it or you can choose to not use it. You can choose to let people see your light, your spark, your soul, your spirit. Or you can choose to hide it under a bushel basket, as Jesus said. It's my hope that you will choose to let people see your light. That you will let your light shine. Because your light is part of the Holy Spirit, power from on high.

Let us pray...

God of Love,

Help us to realize we have power from on high.

Help us to use our power from on high.

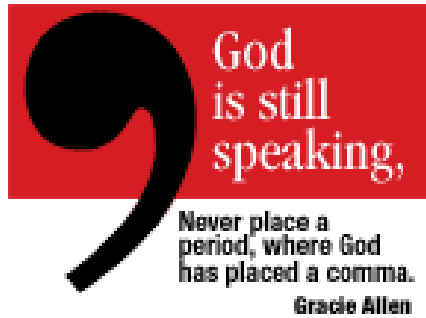
And help us to encourage others to do the same.

Now and forevermore.

By the power of the Holy Spirit.

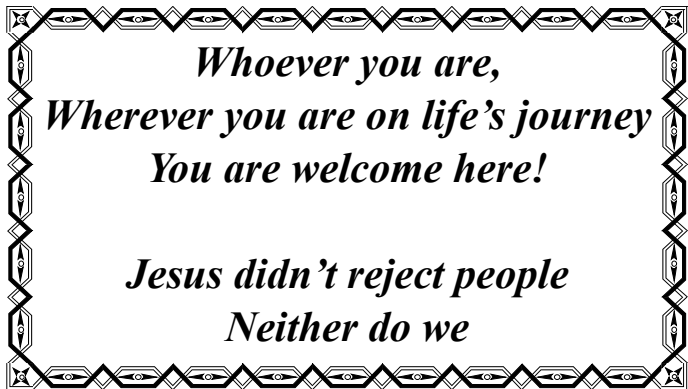
And in the name of Jesus.

Amen.



Never place a
period, where God
has placed a comma.

Gracie Allen



THE GOLDEN RULE

*What is hateful to you
do not do to others.*
Judaism

*Do to others what you would
have them do to you.*
Christianity

*None of you believes until he wishes for his
brother what he wishes for himself.*
Islam

*Do not do to others
what would cause pain if done to you.*
Hinduism

*Hurt not others in ways that you yourself
would find hurtful.*
Buddism

*Regard your neighbor's gain as your gain,
and your neighbor's loss as your loss.*
Taoism

*Do not do to others
what you do not want them to do to you.*
Confucianism

*Treat other people
as you'd want to be treated in their situation.*
Humanism