

“So”. That’s how the third and final section of our Old Testament Lesson begins today. “So Moses went out.” That one little word tells us we’re near the end of this story. A lot has happened before this, even before we come to our text today in Numbers chapter 11. When Moses goes on to say, “**Would that all the Lord’s people were prophets, that the Lord would put his Spirit on them**” (v 29), he is speaking words that bring to conclusion a much, much longer series of events. And these words, which he spoke in response to Joshua’s call to stop two men from prophesying, become a *promise* that would be fulfilled much later.

Moses may have had no idea that what he was saying would actually take place many years later, *but* 50 days after Jesus rose from the dead, on the Day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit truly was poured down on God’s people. And ever since then, the Spirit has *been* placed on *all* God’s people in a way greater than ever before!

Some back story would be helpful in understanding what led Moses to say those prophetic words: “Would that all the Lord’s people were prophets, that the Lord would put his Spirit on them.” So, let’s go back even further in time to about a year before our text. It was then that the Israelites, held captive in harsh slavery in Egypt, collectively cried out to God for relief. And the Lord graciously heard their groaning and remembered His covenant promise that He made to their forefathers Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. It was the promise to give their descendants their own land. And so to deliver the Israelites from bondage, God sent Moses to lead them out of slavery and on to the Promised Land of Canaan.

As you may recall it took some serious convincing of Egypt’s leader, the Pharaoh, to finally allow Moses and the Israelites to leave the land. But the Ten Plagues sent by God- water turning to blood, frogs, gnats, flies, the death of Egyptian livestock, boils, hail, locusts, darkness, and finally the death of the firstborn of all the Egyptians - did at last prompt Pharaoh to let God’s people go.

So at last the Israelites departed Egypt, passing safely through the waters of the Red Sea which God parted for them. Even though treacherous Pharaoh tried one last time to thwart the Israelites by sending his army to capture or kill them, the LORD kept His people safe. And God *continued* to watch over His people in their wilderness journey. He provided them clean water to drink and sweet-tasting bread called manna to eat so that they would not die of thirst or hunger out in that desert. Amazingly, the Israelite people grew tired of eating

the manna and grumbled amongst themselves and complained to Moses. Then again, maybe it's really not *that* amazing. Wouldn't we complain too, if all we had to eat every day was, say oatmeal or rice cakes? **But** the Israelites were **so** discontent and **so** dissatisfied that they actually longed to go back to Egypt; back to the land where they were slaves. What's more, after God called Moses to the top of Mt. Sinai to speak with him and give His Commandments for the people, the Israelites grew impatient for Moses' return. They rebelled and committed the sin of idolatry by worshiping a Golden Calf. In His righteous anger, God was ready to destroy the Israelites and start over with Moses to make a nation out of **his** descendants, but Moses pleaded with God to forgive the Israelites and God's anger subsided.

So there's the background information leading up to our text. We can see now why Moses was so frustrated! It was extremely challenging for him to lead these people, let alone even tolerate them! Moses was weary and worn by their continual grumbling and complaining even after all of God's care and mercy. By the time we come to our text today in Numbers 11, Moses became so discouraged that he even asked God to take his life. Instead of doing that, however, God did answer Moses' prayer by giving him seventy elders from among the people to assist him. God's Spirit was with them and they became a great help to Moses. They would gather at the tent of meeting and God's presence and Spirit came down to them in a cloud. This was the place where God promised to meet Moses and the elders and reveal what He was going to do, what He wanted to say, and what He wanted Moses to do and say.

As our text puts it, "As soon as the Spirit rested on them, they prophesied." Then it goes on to say: "Now two men remained in the camp, one named Eldad, and the other named Medad, and the Spirit rested on them. They were among those registered, but they had not gone out to the tent, and so they prophesied in the camp. And a young man ran and told Moses, 'Eldad and Medad are prophesying in the camp.' And Joshua the son of Nun, the assistant of Moses from his youth, said, 'My lord Moses, stop them. But Moses said to him, 'Are you jealous for my sake? Would that all the Lord's people were prophets, that the Lord would put His Spirit on them!'" (vv. 26-29) Or to put it another way, "**Would that the Holy Spirit be placed on all God's people.**" And *that's* our focus for today!

Now Moses may not have been purposely speaking a prophecy in his response to Joshua, but it **becomes** that. **We** have a tent of meeting where the Spirit is placed upon all God's people. His name is Jesus.

No longer does God come down in a cloud, but in a manger. He comes down as a baby. His ministry begins with His Baptism, and the Father's voice is joined by the Holy Spirit as a dove. Jesus' whole ministry is accompanied by the Holy Spirit placed on Him. All Jesus said and did revealed what God wanted for His people. When people heard Jesus, they heard God speaking to them. When they saw Jesus doing something, they saw God in action. In Jesus, ***we meet God.***

Then on the cross, Jesus meets everything that would keep the Spirit from being placed on us. All of ***our*** complaining and discouragement, rebellion, weariness, and idolatry—all of it meets Jesus, and He sheds His blood to bring forgiveness for all of it. He secures an eternal redemption for us. We are delivered.

When Jesus rises from the dead, He spends time with the disciples. But then He ascends into heaven. And ten days later, He sends the Spirit. The faithful were gathered in a house: The sound of a loud rushing wind, the tongues of fire, the miraculous ability to speak other languages. ***"Would that the Holy Spirit be placed on all God's people."*** And in Jesus, ***our*** tent of meeting, His words come ***true***. He places His Spirit on ***us!***

Where do we meet Jesus as our tent of meeting ***today?*** When does He place His Spirit on us now? Go back to your Baptism. When the water was combined with "In the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit," Jesus scooped us up as His own people. All of us received His Spirit on that day. When we come to the Lord's Supper, we meet Jesus in His very body and blood, and He sends us from that altar with the Spirit placed on us again. We open up the Bible, and the Word brings us to Jesus. We meet Him there, and His Spirit pours into our lives.

"Would that the Holy Spirit be placed on all God's people." In Word and Sacrament these words of promise are fulfilled. Moses' words have come true for us. In 1 Corinthians 12:3 it says, 'No one can say "Jesus is Lord" except ***by the power of the Holy Spirit.***'

By the power of the Holy Spirit, little children sing simple but deeply meaningful songs like "Jesus Loves Me." And we join them with our hymns and songs prompted by the same Holy Spirit. Like 'Voices Raised to God We Offer', as we began our worship this morning! (And in obedience to God the Holy Spirit's call to us in our life we too can say, "Here I am Lord" as the choir encouraged us!)

By the power of Holy Spirit, on your Confirmation Day you made the good confession of your faith before the congregation. And again today, by the

power of the Holy Spirit we rose together and in the words of the Creed boldly confessed our faith in our Triune God.

By the power of the Holy Spirit, you go out from this place and are led by Him to share the hope that God has given you. Perhaps it's through words to comfort someone who is hurting and you tell them, "I'm praying for you. Christ's peace be with you." By the power of the Holy Spirit you live your life in such a way that others take notice and want to know more about that faith in God that gives you the hope that you have.

"Would that the Spirit be on all the Lord's people." In Jesus, **our** tent of meeting, those words come true. When we meet Jesus in His Word and Sacraments, the power and presence of the Holy Spirit is placed upon us. Every time we confess Jesus as Lord, we see the Holy Spirit active in our lives, and we know that Moses' words have come true in our lives. Amen.