

Shamed. Publicly shamed.

Spit upon. mocked.

They took the clothes right off of him and hung him up there naked.

His friends ran away. Why one of them at Jesus' arrest ran away naked also.

I remember a day of shame for me. I wore a new hat a very different hat to the local cafe in the small town in North Dakota where I lived. <sup>Looking back</sup> Each day the men there gathered for coffee. Tom who was a very powerful man in that place. made fun of my hat. And me. Suddenly they were all laughing. and I was ashamed, my head was pounding. No honor. no dignity. only mocking. Such a small thing, how great my shame.

I can't imagine what Jesus' followers were feeling as he was crucified. Certainly shamed with him.

They hid, behind locked doors they hid. Afraid. Shamed.

Jesus found them there, came to them there, honored by God in being raised from the dead, he honored them with his touch, his word of peace.

Still they stayed in private. Still afraid? Jesus told them to wait until they were clothed with power from on high. Colthed by God to cover their shame.

All together in one place on the day of Pentecost a violent wind blew upon them, through them, tongues of fire rested upon them.

And they spoke. In every language they spoke of God's deeds of power.

Where did this courage come from, this transformation from huddling fear to boldly speaking? The Holy Spirit, God's spirit that moved over the waters at creation. This was God's spirit that had filled the prophets. Here was God's spirit that had come down upon Jesus and entered him. God's spirit was now in them.

Out of all the people in the world God chose them. God could have chosen warriors full of courage who had never once given into fear, nor run in the face of the enemy. But God chose the shamed cowards who would not stand beside Jesus.

God could have chosen the priestly elite, trained in all the words of scripture, properly pure and holy in manner, but God chose them, common people, working men and women who had walked with them and Jesus.

God could have chosen the scholars and world travellers, the most cosmopolitan of the people of Palestine, but God chose them, a little educated group.

God sent them right out into the streets, and when the crowds wanted to know what was going on, Peter remembered God's promise to pour out the Spirit on all flesh. Here, today, this is it. And then he told them of Jesus.

They knew of Jesus shame, they had seen it with their eyes and added to it in their mocking. But Peter, in the power of the Holy Spirit told them of Jesus honor, raised from the dead, declared by God to be Messiah and Lord.

Peter, who fifty three days before had swore that he did not even know this shamed man, Jesus, now stood before thousands, and shouted that Jesus was exalted to the right hand of God. And three thousand believed. Three thousand turned to the very one they had shamed, and bowed down before him.

Far too often, I do not expect very much of God. I tell you that God's own spirit dwells in you, and then I only expect from you what you are able to do. I tell you God's own spirit dwells in me, and then I only expect from me what my own spirit is able to do.

Right now, today, it is time for a change. God is able to turn hearts and lives to Christ through you. God is driving out fear and making you bold through the Holy Spirit. God is taking all your shame and burying it

in the tomb with Jesus. God's spirit dwells in you and will be great in you.

When that day of Pentecost was over, and 3000 were baptized this is what happened: They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. They sold their possessions and goods and distributed to all as any had need.

Where God spirit rules you are devoted to the apostles' teaching and gathering together to break the loaf and share the cup, to pray, to give to any who have need. What a wonderful guide and model for our life together.