

What do they got that I ain't got?

There's a **movie** that you probably saw as a kid and then **several times** since then called **The Wizard of OZ**. It came out way back in 1939, it **remains one** of the really great movies of all time. **You can still see it** today on **Video or DVD**.

Perhaps you remember the scene in the movie where the **4 main characters** have finally made it to the land of OZ and they're about to meet the Wizard.

So, they're nervously going over what they're **going to ask for**: the **Scarecrow** would like to have **brains**, the **Tinman** would like to have a **heart**; **Dorothy** would like **to go home to Kansas ...** and the **Lion** are would like to have ... **courage**.

It's at this point that the **cowardly lion** breaks into song singing:

*What makes a **king** out of a **slave**? **Courage!***

*What makes a **flag** on a **mast** to **wave**? **Courage!***

*What makes an **elephant** charge his **tusk** in the **misty mist** or the **dusky dusk**?
Courage!*

*What make the **Muskrat** guard his **Musk**? **Courage!***

*What makes the **Hotentot** so **hot**? What puts the **ape** in **apricot**?*

*What do **they got** that I ain't got? **Courage!***

*And the **cowardly Lion** snickers, "You can say that again!"*

Remember that?

It's a **funny little sequence** for sure ... and what strikes me is **the last question** that the **Lion** asks: "*What do **they got** that I ain't got?*"

Have you ever asked yourself that question ... or confided in your best friend?

If you ever see someone having way more success at something than you ... you might ask in bewilderment: "*What do **they got** that I ain't got?*"

Well, I'll bet that was the very question that the **Pharisees** were asking themselves after seeing **the people** flocking around Jesus and **his followers**.

Something was drawing the people in an ever increasing way to want to be near Jesus and **His followers**, so the **Pharisees** had to be wondering,

*"Hey ... what do **they got** that I ain't got?"*

And **part of the answer** would come right from the movie ...

Part of the answer was **the cowardly Lion's desire ...**

Part of the answer was **courage ... one of the many gifts of the Holy Spirit!**

You see, **the thing** that **Jesus** had ... and that **all Christians** have is **the Holy Spirit**.

Yes, beginning on the day of our Baptism ...
and then again in all the other Sacraments we receive,
God's Holy Spirit is poured into our souls
to impart His love, His strength and His mercy in us.

That's **something** that **the Pharisees** never had!

Those poor Pharisees, no matter how **meticulous** or
how **determined** they were to living lives that were pleasing to God ...
there was just no way for a person to fulfill all the **613 rules** of the **Old Law** ...
it wasn't humanly possible.

Through all this, God showed them that righteousness wasn't something they could
gain for themselves ... they needed supernatural help ... the grace of God!

And so, shortly after Jesus accomplished His great work of redemption
by dying and rising from the dead and ascending into Heaven ...
He sent His Holy Spirit into the world at Pentecost ...
to empower all people to be able to live lives that were pleasing to God.

This was something wonderfully new ...
and it was foretold in the **Old Testament Scriptures.**

We heard one reference to this today in our **First Reading** from the Prophet **Isaiah**
... writing 500 years before the time of **Jesus** ... he announces:

*“Remember not the events of the past,
the things of long ago consider not;
see, I am doing something new!”*

Yes, **God** did do something new ...
sending His Holy Spirit changed the whole picture.

It's **very much like** what happened in the **middle of the movie** the **Wizard of Oz.**

The movie starts out in **Black & White** and then **something new** is added.
Do you remember what that was? **Color!**

Yes, Color was added ... and it changed everything!

Whereas before ... Dorothy couldn't find her way ...
Now with the addition of **color ...** she could follow **the Yellow Brick Road!**

What **MGM** did was, **they took** the **foundation** of **Black & White cinematography** and ... they made it better ... they made it fuller ... they made it **more complete!**

They used the same characters as at the beginning of the movie,
but now the characters had color, now they came alive with new life!

And that's exactly what happens when God pours His Holy Spirit in us ...
we have a fuller, richer character ... we come alive with new life!

You see, **Jesus took** the **Old Covenant** where **the Law was written in Black & White**
and He gave it new life by adding color, by shedding His Red Blood.

In doing so, He fulfilled the Old Law & established the new Law; His **Law of Love!**

He made our relationship with Him and **others** ... better, fuller and more complete.

And He gave us the power to live out His Law of Love with His Holy Spirit!

Look what happened to the **Apostles** when they received the **Holy Spirit** at **Pentecost**.
They were ignited with zeal and filled with courage and went out to
boldly witness to the **Resurrection** of Jesus ... the **Son of God** and **Savior!**

One of the Apostles who wrote these events down was **St. Mark** ...
who is often symbolized as ... a **Lion!**
and **like the Lion** in the movie, **St. Mark** received the gift of courage...
that he used to give glory to God to this day!

If we're open to it, the same thing can happen to each of us ...
because each time we receive the Holy Spirit in **one** of the **7 Sacraments** ...
we are enlivened with the power of the Holy Spirit!

What a difference this makes!

You see, none of those who lived before Jesus had access to this power.

The **Chosen People of God** were operating only with the Law of Moses ... which
never had the power to put the **Jews back into a right relationship** with the **Father**.
Divine power was needed and it just wasn't there!

But, all those who are baptized into Jesus Christ are **immediately put into a right**
relationship with the **Father** as they receive the indwelling of God's Holy Spirit.

St. Paul's speaks of this in our **Second Reading** when he says that even he
“(did) not have any righteousness of (his) own based on the law,
but (only) that which (came) through faith in Jesus Christ.”

It was Jesus atoning for our sins and reconnecting us to the Father, that enabled the Holy Spirit to be poured on the world & into the soul of every baptized Christian.

How does the Holy Spirit help us? In many ways ... the first of which is mercy. It is through the action of the Holy Spirit that we receive forgiveness for our sins.

Recall the prayer the Priest prays before giving Absolution in Confession:
*“God the Father of mercies, through the death and Resurrection of His Son
Has reconciled the world to Himself
And sent the Holy Spirit among us for the forgiveness of sins.”*

In the Gospel, the Pharisees bring before Jesus a woman caught in the act of adultery. According to the Old Law, they were to stone her to death ...
the Law was Black & White ... and there was no room for mercy.

**But as Jesus stooped and drew a line in the sand as if to say ...
See now, I’m doing something new!**

And what did He do? Jesus added mercy!

He said to the woman, “neither do I condemn you.”

**Wow! What a relief! Jesus gave her another chance!
He said to her, “Go and sin no more.”**

There is God’s justice ... but in Jesus’ great love for us ... he offers Mercy.
And Mercy triumphs over justice!

**It’s Mercy that we receive every time we go to Confession.
It’s then that Jesus gives us another chance!**

That’s accomplished by the work of the Holy Spirit!

**So you see, if Jews or Muslims or Atheists were to look at us Christians and ask,
“What do they got that I ain’t got?”**

The answer would be ... we Catholics have ... the Holy Spirit of God.

It’s the free gift that we received on the day of our Baptism.

And it is to our Eternal advantage to take advantage of the gift regularly and often.

The Sacrament of Confession is formally offered each Saturday from 3:30 – 4:30pm and it is ever-available by appointment.

During **Holy Week** we'll offer special times for Confession ...
they're listed in **the flyer** inside the **Bulletin**.

You know, **as Catholic Christians**, we have everything we need to be pleasing to God in this life and to receive his pardon for sins so as to be with Him in Eternal Life.

So, **if** someone should ever ask you,

*“What makes the **Hotentot** so hot?
What puts the Ape in **Apricot**?
What do **you** got that I ain't got?”*

Tell 'em **you have** **the Gifts** of the **Holy Spirit**!

And **if** they should say, “Wow, *that's awesome!*”

Then simply respond, “*You can say that again!*”