

#26 Pentacost
May 20th, 2018

Acts 2:1-21 When Pentecost Day arrived, they were all together in one place. ² Suddenly a sound from heaven like the howling of a fierce wind filled the entire house where they were sitting. ³ They saw what seemed to be individual flames of fire alighting on each one of them. ⁴ They were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages as the Spirit enabled them to speak.

⁵ There were pious Jews from every nation under heaven living in Jerusalem. ⁶ When they heard this sound, a crowd gathered. They were mystified because everyone heard them speaking in their native languages. ⁷ They were surprised and amazed, saying, “Look, aren’t all the people who are speaking Galileans, every one of them? ⁸ How then can each of us hear them speaking in our native language? ⁹ Parthians, Medes, and Elamites; as well as residents of Mesopotamia, Judea, and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, ¹⁰ Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the regions of Libya bordering Cyrene; and visitors from Rome (both Jews and converts to Judaism), ¹¹ Cretans and Arabs—we hear them declaring the mighty works of God in our own languages!” ¹² They were all surprised and bewildered. Some asked each other, “What does this mean?” ¹³ Others jeered at them, saying, “They’re full of new wine!”

¹⁴ Peter stood with the other eleven apostles. He raised his voice and declared, “Judeans and everyone living in Jerusalem! Know this! Listen carefully to my words! ¹⁵ These people aren’t drunk, as you suspect; after all, it’s only nine o’clock in the morning! ¹⁶ Rather, this is what was spoken through the prophet Joel:

¹⁷ *In the last days, God says,
I will pour out my Spirit on all people.
Your sons and daughters will prophesy.
Your young will see visions.
Your elders will dream dreams.*

¹⁸ *Even upon my servants, men and women,
I will pour out my Spirit in those days,
and they will prophesy.*

¹⁹ *I will cause wonders to occur in the heavens above
and signs on the earth below,
blood and fire and a cloud of smoke.*

²⁰ *The sun will be changed into darkness,
and the moon will be changed into blood,
before the great and spectacular day of the Lord comes.*

²¹ *And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.*^[a]

One of my favorite memories of Andrew while living in Lithuania is when we went to clean our car. It was in the very beginning of our first year. We went to the gas station. We filled the car with gas. We washed the car. I looked at Andrew and said, "Would you go inside and buy us a ticket to vacuum the car too." He hesitated but what can you say to your wife? "Yes, dear." So he went in and it took him more time than I expected. I was getting a little nervous. Finally he comes back with a ticket to wash our car again. I asked, "What happened? We do not need to wash our car again." He says, "I know it. But the workers of the gas station did not speak English. So I tried to show them with my hands gestures that I need to vacuum They did not understand. They thought I needed to wash my car." I, being so smart :) said: "Andrew, did you use sounds? I bet if you made sounds they would have got it!" I still chuckle every time I think about it.

It is horrible when you do not understand what is happening. It is pretty bad when people do not understand you. Sometimes it is hard to understand me, but how hard it would be if I did not speak English and you did not speak Lithuanian? :). There is not much we could achieve. Even when it is in your own culture and language you sometimes just don't get it. And sometimes you just have those moments – Aha moments. A miracle of understanding happened on the Pentecost, too.

My favorite day in the church calendar is Pentecost. I see the joy of Christmas, I feel the power of Easter, but I am mostly touched, moved and excited about Pentecost. At Christmas time we remember and believe that the Son of God was born. But it is a one-time event that has happened in the past. On Easter, Jesus rose from the grave once. We remember, we believe the fact that he is alive. Ascension Day, with all of its significance of Jesus assuming His rightful place on the throne as King of kings and Lord of lords, was still a one-time event. But Pentecost continues. The Spirit that was poured out to all who gathered continues to be poured out today to all who believe. We live in the time of the Pentecost. Reading the Bible would be reading just like any other book without the Holy Spirit who opens our eyes and minds and gives life to the every word and it makes sense. Suddenly we understand; the work of the living God is achieved through the Holy Spirit, healing, guiding, seeing. Even our actions are through the Holy Spirit. This Spirit is as active and as powerful as the Spirit was from the very beginning of the creation to the day of the Pentecost. God's power and activity continues today.

I think I also like Pentecost because it just happened to be a Sunday when Andrew and I got married. First we set the date and later we found out that this Sunday would also Pentecost Sunday. Love the day to be reminded and awoken of the power and the presence of the Holy Spirit.

Pentecost means "fiftieth." That's because the festival occurs 50 days after Passover. Now remember, Jesus was crucified on Passover, so this event occurs fifty days after that. If you do your math: Jesus rose from the dead after 3 days, then spent 40 days with his disciples, before ascending. That leaves about a week before Pentecost. So the events that occur here happened about a week after Jesus ascended to Heaven. I think it is important to remember the sequence of events. Pentecost did not

happen while Jesus was little, while Jesus ministered, not even when he was crucified. The Holy Spirit was working in some occasions. Miracles happen to some people some of the time. I believe the Spirit is at work at every stage of our faith, even before we accept Jesus. There is always some kind of growth we experience through the activity of the Holy Spirit. First is the believing that Jesus came to the world. He came as a human and was still divine. Then there are his teachings. We accept his teaching, we follow him, we go with Him to the cross, we die with him so we will be raised for life together. We believe that Jesus is alive. We gather as all believers together to wait. In Acts 1 chapter we read that He ordered them not to leave Jerusalem but to wait for what the Father had promised. Waiting is very much a part of our faith. I believe that just as urgent as our are call to act and proclaim the gospel, is the urgency to wait. Wait together, wait in prayer, be still and receive the Holy Spirit. I invite you to come tonight as we gather for a time of prayer. Come and be still in the presence of the Lord and feeding on God's word. Pray for the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. We are meeting at 7PM just to pray.

What happened two thousand years ago does not mean it will happen exactly that way for us today. I wish so much if I could just give you all a little, or a bigger jar (show jars) of a Holy Spirit. You just open it when you need and get the power. But it is not like that with the Holy Spirit. We do not know where, how or when the Spirit works. Jesus said, "The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit".

So then if you will open the jar you will have air, but not the wind. Air is good, too. But wind that is contained is no longer wind. It is just air. It is air that's capable of sustaining life, but it's powerless to move us in the right direction truly doing the work of God.

I know that the Spirit is in you all. But how much you let the Holy Spirit burn? How much you are in seeking and letting the third person of the Trinity be the power and the guidance for you to proclaim the gospel or to simply live a Christian life.

When Pentecost Day arrived...(Ask different people from a pew to read verse 1-4).

Think wind and fire. Those are powerful images. The metaphors Acts uses for the spirit -- power, tongues, fire, and wind -- all signify the radical nature of the Spirit's freedom. We translate the Greek *dynamis* as "power." We get the word dynamite from this word.

Luke is describing explosive power. The Holy Ghost will not leave anything old and will move you forward with a blazing fire. The purpose of the Holy Spirit is to speak the gospel so all the people will hear about Jesus. I believe the miracle resided not with the speaking of the disciples but in the hearing of the crowd. They heard the gospel in their own languages. This is what we all want: The Spirit of God to communicate with every person in a language particular to that individual. We want people to be able to hear about their salvation and life in Jesus.

For so many of us the topic of the Holy Spirit is so hard topic. It is even more abstract. Even more unknown. Sadly, many even feel the presence of the Holy Spirit is not necessary. But Jesus commanded them to stay and do nothing until they receive the Holy Spirit. As we walk in Christian faith, as we are baptized and we believe, we ask and pray for the Holy Spirit. It is not about having a better life or get the things we want for our own benefit, but purely for us to truly be Christ-like and to make other the disciples of Christ. The Holy Ghost helps us align our wills with the will of God. The Holy Spirit is a gift for all believers. The divine Counselor is a gift from God to the one who speaks and the gift from God to those who listen. It is a miracle to understand the gospel. When we gather here today and we hear the words from Acts are we hungry and believe that the word is the living word? Do we believe and acknowledge the Spirit is with us and is eager to help us to understand God's word so we can share with others?

Some people have a hard time believing in miracles. They try to explain everything. They claim there is nothing new under the Sun. There were people like that 2000 years ago too. They heard all these people blabbering in the languages they did not understand and they thought they were drunk. They had to come up with some kind of explanation. But they were not drunk.

Peter stood up and said, they are not drunk, but the prophesy came true and started with the Prophecy of Joel:

(Ask different people to read (v17-21))

Today we live in the day of Pentecost. Things can make sense or be absolutely just words or even nonsense. Pentecost is the celebration of the church's birthday. We celebrate today the Lord's Supper. Communion is for non-believer a truly ridicules act. But for us, who believe, it is the very center of our worship today. It is bread and juice, but by your faith in Jesus, by the work of the Holy Spirit is a way of totally washing your sins away, a way of new strength in life. It is a way we take Christ in the very center of our being and consciously choosing to let Jesus be the King and the Lord of our life.

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