**June 9, 2019 Acts 2:1-21**

***Pentecost***

**Scripture:** Acts 2:1-21 NRSV

(1)When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. (2)And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. (3)Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. (4)All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages as the Spirit gave them ability.

(5)Now there were devout Jews from every nation under heaven living in Jerusalem. (6)And at this sound the crowd gathered and was bewildered, because each one heard them speaking in the native language of each. (7)Amazed and astonished, they asked, "Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? (8)And how is it that we hear, each of us, in our own native language? (9)Parthians, Medes, Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, (10)Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, (11)Cretans and Arabs--in our own languages we hear them speaking about God's deeds of power." (12)All were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, "What does this mean?" (13)But others sneered and said, "They are filled with new wine." (14)But Peter, standing with the eleven, raised his voice and addressed them, "Men of Judea and all who live in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and listen to what I say. (15)Indeed, these are not drunk, as you suppose, for it is only nine o'clock in the morning. (16)No, this is what was spoken through the prophet Joel: (17)'In the last days it will be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams. (18)Even upon my slaves, both men and women, in those days I will pour out my Spirit; and they shall prophesy. (19)And I will show portents in the heaven above and signs on the earth below, blood, and fire, and smoky mist. (20)The sun shall be turned to darkness and the moon to blood, before the coming of the Lord's great and glorious day. (21)Then everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.'.

**Notes:**

1. The disciples are in ***Jerusalem***,
   1. They are still tucked away in the ***same*** room.
   2. The festival of the ***First*** ***Harvest*** is being celebrated.
2. Like a freight train the Holy Spirit ***blows*** into the room
   1. Did they cower, or sit ***amazed***?
   2. Each person was ***filled*** with the Holy Spirit.
3. The people passing by must have heard the ***noise***.
   1. Each bystander hears in their native ***language***.
   2. For these people, this is truly ***amazing***.
4. We all have plenty of reasons to ***fear***.
   1. Pentecost reminds us of what can ***renew*** and ***redeem*** us,
   2. The Holy Spirit comes to comfort, ***empower***, and enliven those who follow Jesus,
   3. The disciples stayed in Jerusalem as Jesus ***instructed***.
5. We learn to ***fear***, don't we?
   1. Have you experienced the ***filling*** of the Holy Spirit?
   2. We all are given the ***choice***, we are given freewill.
   3. In relationships we have the opportunity to listen and ***share***.
   4. Receive the Holy Spirit, and in obedience, ***share*** the love of Jesus.

**Transcript:**

I heard a story this week about a young man named Andrew Forsthoefel. Upon graduating college he walked out his back door and began a trek across the country. He would travel from New Hampshire to California. He would not be carrying a smart phone. He would not be accepting rides. But he would be carrying a backpack containing camping gear, camera, a food bag stocked with beef jerky, tuna fish, and PB&J, and a sign hanging on his back that said, “Walking to Listen.” He also carried a voice recorder used to collect the stories of the people he met along the way; asking the question, “If you could go back, what would you tell yourself at 23?” This question yielded some pretty remarkable answers; answers that were used to create a radio show which appeared on *This American Life* in 2013, and has since inspired a book entitled ***Walking to Listen***.

Andrew admits that along his journey he traveled with a keen sense of vulnerability. He said that at times he was “*fear walking”*, and this fear was heightened by those he met along the way. Those who would host him and befriend him along the way, they would warn him to watch out for those others down the road, “Don’t trust them, They’re not like us.” Yet when asked the advice they would share with a younger self, to the contrary, their responses were filled with emboldened and daring messages. And not one person responded that they would warn themselves to be more cautious; Or advise them to be fearful. In retrospect Andrew shared, “What I wish, is that these people could have experienced what I did and seen that the people they were warning me about, were the very ones who took me in later on, and fed me, and told me their stories.”

Most people never have the chance to learn these things from behind their closed doors. Most people live their lives in fear of the unknown, myself included. Yet if we would venture out of our locked rooms, we would be surprised, surprised at the wonderful experiences we may encounter, and the incredible changes we may have on the lives of others.

John writes in chapter 20:19-22 that the disciples were locked in the room, hiding in fear. They were afraid of the Jews, but in a broader perspective also in fear of “the others”. They were afraid of what would come next. So Jesus gave them the Spirit, not in whole, but in part; a little taste of what was to come to ease their fears and give them some confidence. Today we find the Spirit delivered in whole to the disciples. Join me as we share in the passage from Acts 2:1-21 .

*(1)When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. (2)And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. (3)Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. (4)All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability.*

*(5)Now there were devout Jews from every nation under heaven living in Jerusalem. (6)And at this sound the crowd gathered and was bewildered, because each one heard them speaking in the native language of each. (7)Amazed and astonished, they asked, "Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? (8)And how is it that we hear, each of us, in our own native language? (9)Parthians, Medes, Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, (10)Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, (11)Cretans and Arabs--in our own languages we hear them speaking about God's deeds of power." (12)All were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, "What does this mean?" (13)But others sneered and said, "They are filled with new wine."*

*(14)But Peter, standing with the eleven, raised his voice and addressed them, "Men of Judea and all who live in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and listen to what I say. (15)Indeed, these are not drunk, as you suppose, for it is only nine o'clock in the morning. (16)No, this is what was spoken through the prophet Joel: (17)'In the last days it will be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams. (18)Even upon my slaves, both men and women, in those days I will pour out my Spirit; and they shall prophesy. (19)And I will show portents in the heaven above and signs on the earth below, blood, and fire, and smoky mist. (20)The sun shall be turned to darkness and the moon to blood, before the coming of the Lord's great and glorious day. (21)Then everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.'* (Acts 2:1-21 NRSV)

The disciples are in Jerusalem, they have all seen Jesus at least three times since that fateful day. They saw him on that resurrection day in that locked room; the day he breathed on them and said receive my spirit. They saw him a week later when Jesus returned to prove his resurrection to Thomas. They saw him on the shore after the great catch and just before Peter is restored. And, they saw him on the day when he ascended to heaven to be with the Lord, after giving the disciples the great commission. But they were told to wait now, wait for the comforter to come. And so, here they are waiting for the promised Holy Spirit.

They are still tucked away in the same room. Perhaps their fears are somewhat lessened, the door may not be locked It has been 50 days since the crucifixion. The turbulence of the Passover week has subsided. But there is still danger for these men. Most likely the crosses are still on Golgotha, most likely there is still anti Jesus sentiment, and most likely the Romans do not want an uprising to deal with. There is another festival being celebrated during this day; the festival of the First Harvest, one of the three annual major feasts. So Jews from many other locations had gathered in Jerusalem as it was required of the Jewish people. So I am guessing there is still plenty of fear to be had. Caution is not thrown into the wind. And the disciples are not out freely walking the streets.

That is when it came, like a freight train the Holy Spirit blows into the room, with the sound of a mighty rushing wind. not the rustle of a light breeze, but the roar of mighty winds, like that in a hurricane or tornado. It filled the entire room. And then the divided tongues of flames appearing over everybody’s head, I cannot even imagine what it may have been like. My fear would have gotten the best of me in this situation. I have often wondered did these people have the same imagined fear that I have. Did they cower in the corners, did they lie face down in hopes that whatever was happening would pass them by? Or, did they sit amazed at what was happening, Did they just look around and take it all in? I don’t know, but as much as I think I would have been afraid, I would also want to have been there and seen what was taking place.

And that is when each person was filled with the Holy Spirit. Each person speaking in a different language as the Spirit allowed; each person, spirit filled to the brim with the peace and assurance that you only find in the presence of God, and the Holy Spirit. It doesn’t say this, but I believe that each person in the room was able to understand what the others were saying.

Out on the street it was a different story. The people passing by on the road, must have heard the noise The noise of the Spirit falling upon this room. It says a crowd began to gather outside. And some in this crowd were amazed, some were astonished, yet others were bewildered, because each bystander, heard the disciples speaking in their native language. “Are not these men who are speaking Galileans?” The question seems pointless for us today, we have public education and are trained from early on. But these Galileans had few options for education, you either learned to fish, or you learned a trade. There was not a lot of options for the people of Galilee. So for these people from all over the Roman Empire standing in the midst of Galilean fisherman who are speaking their native tongues, speaking about God’s deeds and the truth of Jesus, well this is truly amazing.

But for some they were trying to put down what God was raising up. Some sneered these men are filled with new wine, in other words, these men are drunk. And now what Jesus had handpicked Peter for, is about to come to fruition. Peter takes his place in the forefront of the church of Jesus Christ, and he addresses the crowd.

*"Men of Judea and all who live in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and listen to what I say. (15)Indeed, these are not drunk, as you suppose, for it is only nine o'clock in the morning. (16)No, this is what was spoken through the prophet Joel: (17)'In the last days it will be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams. (18)Even upon my slaves, both men and women, in those days I will pour out my Spirit; and they shall prophesy. (19)And I will show portents in the heaven above and signs on the earth below, blood, and fire, and smoky mist. (20)The sun shall be turned to darkness and the moon to blood, before the coming of the Lord's great and glorious day. (21)Then everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.'*

The Comforter has come, The Holy Spirit from heaven, The father’s promise given has descended upon all who truly believe. Do you truly believe today, and can you say that you have experienced the filling of the Holy Spirit in your life?

We all have plenty of reasons to fear from where we stand. Just living in modern society gives us reason to be afraid; mass shootings that seem to be happening more and more, our increasing age and declining health, the economic outlook of our society, the increased drug epidemic and the crime that accompanies it, not to mention the political extremists and the chaos they thrive on; we all have plenty to be afraid of. None of us want to believe that we're not as brave as we once thought we would be, but we see and hear enough and we start installing deadbolts and security cameras. These days you don't even have to peer out the door. for just $200, you can get a detector installed to your doorknob that notifies your phone when anyone comes near. Yes, there's an app for that, and it can leave us latched inside, or if we venture out at all, locked in place.

But this day of Pentecost reminds us that sometimes the things we end up closing ourselves off from are the things that can renew us and redeem us, the things that flow from the very Spirit of God. The coming of the Holy Spirit to the followers of Jesus is a big and compelling story; after the death of Jesus the Spirit comes to comfort, empower, and enliven those who had followed Jesus, the Spirit arrives as a forceful wind that seems to rush down the streets and alleyways of Jerusalem; the Spirit arrives amidst festival crowds in the streets.

Most striking are the distinct portrayals of those who wait. In John those who wait are cowering concerned for their well-being, they hide behind double-bolted doors. We are not sure if they still are in the same state of fear or not. But when the Spirit arrives in Acts, the doors are blown wide open. At least that’s how I imagine it. The disciples have stayed in Jerusalem, as Jesus had instructed. They've gathered in one place, hopeful and anticipating Jesus' earlier promise, when he'd told them, "You will receive power when the Spirit comes upon you." There's expectation in the scene. There's celebration. Some look out the doors and windows. But when the Holy Spirit is set loose, the walls can no longer contain them.

They are so filled with the Holy Spirit that they cannot contain themselves. They begin to speak words of praise and worship to the Lord. They share the message of Jesus and without thinking are saying these words in a tongue they have never spoken before. Some may believe that this was a hoax, others may believe that this was staged, but when the power of God, fills the people of His church anything is possible: the lame can walk, the blind can see, the mute will speak, and those who are frozen in fear will be emboldened to stand out in the crowd and speak the word of the Lord to all who will listen.

We learn to fear, don't we? Over time as more is established and more is at stake, as there's more to protect. We resist the notion to leave the comfort and safety of our own homes, we resist the potential to expose ourselves to the dangers of the world, we try to stay within our own comfort zones; and when it comes to church, many try to stay within the confines of the building. But we have been called, not to stay within the confines of the church building but to go into the streets, into all the world, sharing the good news of Jesus Christ, inviting others into a saving knowledge and lasting relationship with our Lord and Savior just as those the Spirit filled on that Day so many years ago.

I wonder where you find yourself in these passages. Are you in the house, hiding in fear? Or are you out in the street, sharing for all to hear? Are you crouched in the corner, afraid of what will happen next? Or are you peering out a wide-open window, looking to the future? What will it be today, will you lean on your faith or will you hide in your fear? These are the questions we must consider, These are the questions of Pentecost.

Have you experienced the filling of the Holy Spirit in your life? Have you surrendered your will to the will of God our father? Have you committed to following Jesus, sharing his teachings and blessings? Have you submitted to the direction of the Holy Spirit, following where He leads you? If you have felt the nudge, today or sometime recently, to step out on faith and minister to those in your world, to reach out to a hurting world and share the love of Jesus, to give to those who are less fortunate, whatever it is that they are in need of; Then today I ask you to step out on faith trust in the leading of the Holy Spirit, and allow the Spirit to enter into your life in a way that you have never imagined. .

We all are given the choice, we are given freewill. What we do with it makes the difference in our walk with the Lord; what we do also makes a difference in the lives of the others we come into contact with. As we enter into relationships we have the opportunity to listen, much like Andrew Forsthoefel, listening to the stories of people’s lives, hearing where they have been, hearing what they have struggled through, and in some instances the opportunity to share our story as well. So today receive the Holy Spirit, follow the Holy Spirit into the world, and allow Him to lead you to places where your fear tells you to avoid. Trust in him to direct you to the people who need to hear the message of the Lord. Trust in him to give you the words to say and then in obedience, share the love of Jesus with them.