**May 31, 2020 Acts 2:1-21**

***Pentecostal Purpose***

**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. ***Pentecost*** was a Jewish holy day long before Christ.
   1. Pentecost was the Festival of First ***Harvest***.
   2. The sound of a mighty rushing ***wind***.
   3. Divided tongues of a ***fire*** appearing among them.
   4. God's presence is ***available*** to all who believe in him.
   5. Travelers could hear the ***Gospel*** in their native tongue.
   6. Peter explained the ***truth*** about God.
2. God may use dramatic methods or speak in gentle ***whispers***.
   1. Wait patiently and always ***listen***.
   2. We may not experience the ***power*** of the Holy Spirit in the same way,
3. Unleash the ***Power*** of the Holy Spirit in your life.
   1. We must be ready to ***share*** how to be born again.
   2. Live in such a way that people will see ***Christ*** in us; then we can explain our "Christian hope".
   3. We are called to be the ***church***.

**Transcript:**

Waiting has never been one of my strong points. If told to wait until a certain time to eat a meal, I would wait, but I would also make several passes past the buffet line, sneaking a taste of this or that. I have trouble waiting.

But I am not alone. I have seen on Facebook these videos of people who will put out some sort of a treat and then tell their children not to eat them until they get back. So, in essence, they put a temptation in front of an unsuspecting child and expect them to refrain from indulging. They are asked to wait. Rarely are the kids able to resist the temptation. I ‘ve seen other videos like these where the kids are told if they wait, they will receive a bigger treat on top of the treat that lies before them. Again, many times the child does not wait and settles for the immediate treat instead of the promise of a treat.

In todays passage we are watching as the disciples are waiting for the arrival of the Holy Spirit. And while they wait, I am not sure that they know what to expect. Turn with me to Acts 2:1-21 and join me in reading the sermon passage for today.

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.'*

The day of Pentecost was a holy day for the Jewish people, long before Christ was born. Held 50 days after Passover, Pentecost was also called the Festival of First Harvest. It was one of three major annual festivals, a festival of thanksgiving for the harvested crops. Jesus was crucified at Passover time, and he ascended 40 days after his resurrection. It was now 50 days after the Resurrection, 10 days after the Ascension. Jews of many nations had gathered in Jerusalem for this festival.

The disciples were told prior to the ascension in Acts 1:4-5 “… not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait there for the promise of the Father.” Jesus went on to tell them, “(4)…This, is what you have heard from me; (5)for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.” So as I said last week, the disciples, went back to Jerusalem after the ascension and waited in the upper room, devoting themselves to prayer. Waiting for the Holy Spirit to come and baptize them.

However, I am not sure the disciples knew exactly what was going to come and how they would meet the Holy Spirit and experience this baptism. I wonder if they were expecting some spirit in a physical form. I wonder if they were expecting a baptism like the ones the experienced in the Jordan river. I wonder what they expected to hear, and how they expected these experiences to change their lives.

So, there they are in Jerusalem, I imagine they were still in hiding to some degree. In the upper room of a dwelling where they were able to lock the door and allow only those they desired, to come in. They were praying, and waiting on the Lord’s promised Holy Spirit. For ten days they waited and prayed. Ten days of praying and waiting. Ten days, it almost seems like an eternity when you are expecting the arrival of some great dignitary; somebody you are looking forward to meeting. But they wait; ten days; praying.

Then out of nowhere; it arrives, the sound of a mighty rushing wind. I imagine it would be similar to the sound of a tornado. It doesn’t say how long the sound lasted but I imagine it lasted for quite a while. The noise so loud you could not hear the person standing next to you screaming for fear of their life. A noise that is often described as being louder than a freight train, not that the disciples had ever heard of a freight train. It couldn’t be seen, but you could definitely hear it. Like Elijah who needed a sign came the wind, an earthquake, then the fire.

Next it appeared, divided tongues like that of a fire appearing among them. The flames separated, coming to rest over each person’s head. Why tongues of fire? Tongues symbolize speech and the communication of the Good News. John the Baptist said that the Holy Spirit would bring a baptism of fire. Fire symbolizes God's purifying presence, which burns away the undesirable elements of our lives and sets our hearts aflame to ignite the lives of others. On Mount Sinai, God confirmed the validity of the Old Testament law with fire from heaven. At Pentecost, God confirmed the validity of the Holy Spirit's ministry by sending fire. At Mount Sinai, fire came down on one place; at Pentecost, fire came down on many believers, symbolizing that God's presence is available to all who believe in him.

The Prophet Joel shared words about the outpouring of the Holy Spirit and what would follow, “…I will pour out my spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions. (Joel 2:28 NRSV)” And you know what, that is exactly what happens next. These disciples, men and women, began to speak in tongues they were not familiar with. These are poor Galilean fishermen and their friends and families, they did not have the means for an expensive education. But they were, by the power of the Spirit, able to speak in the languages of the visitors in town from other places.

This definitely got the attention of the many people in Jerusalem for the Pentecost festival. Some who heard the raucous thought that these men and women were drunk. But we know better, these people were filled with the Holy Spirit and the Spirit was fulfilling the promise made many years before. They were speaking so that travelers from other countries were able to hear the Gospel of Jesus Christ in their native tongue. There are at least 16 regions or countries listed where people were hearing these words in their native language; and all of these persons were amazed at what they were seeing and hearing.

When the gathered crowd recognized that something supernatural was taking place, they naturally wanted an explanation. At this point, Peter stepped forward and explained the truth about God. Peter stands to teach, quoting from the prophecies of Joel. Peter tells the people that they should listen to the testimony of the believers because the Old Testament prophecies concerning Jesus had been entirely fulfilled in him, because Jesus is the Messiah, and because the risen Christ could change their lives. Peter's speech is given to an international audience, and resulted in a worldwide harvest of new believers—the first converts to Christianity; 3000 that day all of whom received forgiveness of sin and were baptized.

I know, I know, you are probably thinking, “That’s a great story Pastor; but what does that mean for me?” Well let me see if I can explain some ways that this story may apply to you.

First of all, the Holy Spirit entered the room in such a dramatic fashion that it would have been hard to miss. I mentioned Elijah needing a message from God while he was sheltered in a cave with similar signs; a mighty wind came past, then the earth trembled and shook, and finally a fire blazed by him; but God was not in the wind, the earthquake, nor the Fire; God was found in the silence that followed. God may use dramatic methods to work in your life; or he may speak in gentle whispers. Wait patiently and always listen. We do not need these flashy signs to know that God is near us. God is found wherever we are, He is with always, in all situations, and every moment. If we need the Lord, we only need to call upon His name and he is there.

The disciples who encountered the Holy Spirit literally spoke in other languages as the Spirit gave them ability; this was a miraculous attention-getter for the international crowd gathered in town. All the nationalities represented recognized their own languages being spoken. More than miraculous speaking drew people's attention, however; they saw the presence and power of the Holy Spirit. When we encounter the Holy Spirit in a mighty way, we too will experience the presence and power. We may not experience the power of the Holy Spirit in the same way, we may not speak in tongues, we may not have healing powers, and we may not be able to foresee the future like some were able to do. But we may experience the power of the Holy Spirit in ways that we would never have dreamed. Those who expect the gift of tongues and healing to be the all in all sign that the Spirit is upon you are putting God in a box.

Unleash the Power of the Holy Spirit in your life; be obedient to where the Spirit leads you; and be surprised at what is able to be accomplish through your obedience. The apostles continued to minister in the Holy Spirit's power wherever they went. If we encounter the Holy Spirit and are obedient to His will, he will bless our ministry wherever we may go. Throughout the book of Acts, we are able to read how the Holy Spirit was with the disciples and often prepared the way for them as they ministered to the people.

When the people wanted an explanation, Peter stepped forward and explained. This should be the pattern in our lives as well. Peter wrote in 1 Peter 3:15 NRSV, “…but in your hearts sanctify Christ as Lord. Always be ready to make your defense to anyone who demands from you an accounting for the hope that is in you…” We must be ready that when we have an opportunity comes; an opportunity to share what the Lord is doing in our life; an opportunity to explain why we are so content since accepting the Lord as our savior; an opportunity to share what one must do to be born again, that we are able and prepared to explain it clearly.

Hopefully we are living in such a way that people will see Christ in us. If we *do* shine and sparkle, and if we are "salty", we will draw the attention of others. They will surely want to know what is so attractive and different about us. Then we can explain our "Christian hope" (1Pe\_3:15). What is different about your life? What supernatural evidence would cause someone to stop you and say, "What can this mean?" “Why are you like this?” and “how can I be like that?” Are you living this way?

This seems to be the recurring message these past few weeks. We are called to be the salt in a tasteless world. We are called to be the light of Jesus in a world full of darkness. We are called to share the Hope of Jesus, the Holy Spirit, and God our Father, to those who have a difficult time finding hope for even one more day. We are called to be the church; not a group of socialites who want to hang out together like we are in some sort of social club, but a group of Bible believing Jesus freaks willing to step out of our comfort zone and spread the light and love of Jesus Christ into the whole world; even the parts that are a little sketchy; especially the parts that are a little sketchy.