

May 23 2021

Pentecost

Acts 2:1-4, Galatians 4: 1-7, 5:16-26

Children's Message: This morning we celebrate Pentecost. It means fifty days after Easter. Originally Pentecost was a Jewish celebration marking fifty days after Passover. It was then called the Festival of Weeks. Our celebration of Pentecost marks the conclusion of Easter and the coming of the Holy Spirit. This is actually the birthday of the church.

Pentecost is an unusual celebration because it is hard to describe accurately with words. It is even harder to understand and then describe with words what actually happened that morning. We know something very important happened that day. The disciples and apostles heard the wind of the Holy Spirit, they felt the wind against their bodies and they saw it with their eyes as tongues of fire above their heads. They experienced something great with three of their five senses. How do you explain something you have heard, feel and see that makes no sense? The Pentecost experience is beyond our natural world and how we understand it. Pentecost is supernatural and beyond our natural world.

Little Pentecost experiences occur all the time. The supernatural world of God is always poking its way into our world. Most of the time we are

not aware of them. Think about coincidences as an example. Coincidences are not coincidental.

Yet Pentecost happens to each and every one of us. Many have said that at our confirmations we experience our own mini Pentecosts. We see it on page 236 in our cranberry prayerbooks. This is the blessing that the pastor prays over us as they put their hands on our heads. The prayer calls the Holy Spirit to come upon us and to lead and guide us as it did the disciples and apostles this morning. Our confirmations are a great connection and reminder of Pentecost. We too are disciples and apostles of Our Lord. We are called to carry our faith in our hearts wherever we go. Take some time and think about the idea that you have the Holy Spirit within You.

I sometimes think that the best way to describe something is to look at the results. What has this event done in the lives of people? Somethings are not meant to be fully described or understood. They are mysteries and Pentecost is one of the great ones. We can see and describe the effects and results of the event. We see and experience things like: love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self- control. These are all works of the Holy Spirit that are found in the church. These works really help us to understand what happened at Pentecost. So look for these works in our church and in your lives. Try to encourage them in others.

Adult's Message: Last week we talked about unity in the church. That baptism is that unifying factor that unites all Christians. Baptism welcomes us into the Christian community and makes us children of God and heirs to the kingdom. Paul spoke of the need for unity and to

remember who we actually are. We are all Christians. This morning, Luke talks about the unity of the very early church and how it began. On the first Christian Pentecost the believers were gathered together in one accord and in one place. They are united in the oneness of faith in Jesus Christ. Their unity created an environment in which the Holy Spirit would come. Their reactions showed that they were not aware that they were working with the Holy Spirit. Paul and Luke remind us that the Holy Spirit's works are best realized when we, the church, are united. We are better able to recognize Its movement amongst us. It is much harder for us to see the Holy Spirit working in the chaos of our lives. Yet the Holy Spirit does.

The phenomenon of the tongues of fire fulfills the prophecy of John the Baptist. He was the one who told us, that Jesus would baptize us with the Holy Spirit and fire. Luke 3:16 and Mathew 3:11. The tongues of fire are a manifestation of the uncreated energy of God. He does not have to function in ways that are natural to us. There seems to be no visible power source for the tongues of fire. Usually flames need wood or lighter fluid to fuel them, in order for them to burn. God is the power source that is fueling the tongues of fire. They are just flames burning above the heads of those assembled. Even the burning bush had a bush to keep the flames going.

Pentecost is a beautiful time of year. Nature is coming back to life after winter. It is a time of new life and energy. It reminds us that we are not in control of things. We just need to experience the things that are unfolding before our eyes. Do not try to explain or control them, just experience the experience. Pentecost is like that. It transcends our understanding. To the point that language can only point to the

experience as something beyond our minds that our tongues cannot express the depth fully.

The prophet Joel wrote about Pentecost centuries before. Joel 2:28-29, "Then afterwards, I will pour out My spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your old men shall dream dreams and your young men shall see visions. Even on the male and female slaves, in those days, I will pour out My spirit." God pours out the spirit on all people regardless of social status, sex or age. God does not discriminate with the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Neither should we. This is what Paul struggled with in the Galatian church. We need to remember that God is in charge and not us.

We are all temples of the Holy Spirit dwelling within each of us. Many of us find it hard to believe that something so holy dwells in such a fragile and human vessel. Yet it certainly does. Pentecost reminds us of that. It brings to mind that the Holy Spirit is a great potential in all of us. 2Timothy 1:14, "That good thing which was committed to you, keep by the Holy Spirit who dwells in you." David was aware of the spirit of God in us. He asks God to not remove It from him. Psalm 51:11, "And do not take Your Holy Spirit from me."

Knowing that we are temples of the Holy Spirit carries a greater responsibility. To act and behave as someone who has the Holy Spirit dwelling within themselves. As Paul tells us to walk our talk. To walk in the spirit comes from life in the Spirit. That is the struggle of every Christian. To live up to the calling that we have been called to. That we are to trust in God above and the Spirit that is within.

Have a great long weekend, Pastor D