

February 12, 2023

Day 1: Acts 2:1

When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly a sound came from heaven like the rush of a mighty wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting.

This day is considered by many to be the birthday of the Church. The promise of the Holy Spirit was fulfilled. The experience of the Spirit's coming was hard to explain. So Luke used an image from Genesis (Genesis 1:2) of the Spirit as the wind. The Hebrew word that is used in Genesis 1:2 means wind. The Spirit of God blows and it only stops when we get in the way. We too often let our own ideas and plans get in the way of the Spirit working. Instead of putting up a barrier we need to find ways that we can help focus the Spirit's power, or sometimes just get out of the way.

Question: What birthday party do you recall being the happiest? What made it so good?

Challenge: If you could not use the image of the wind, how would you describe the coming of the Spirit?

Scripture: Acts 2:1-21

Day 2: Acts 2:3-4

And there appeared to them tongues as of fire, distributed and resting on each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

Luke uses an image drawn from the prophet Isaiah (Isaiah 6:6). The power of fire is not just in its ability to destroy things but also in its cleansing ability. Fire is used to refine and purify. The image of the Spirit first as wind, now fire, helps us to understand that the event of Pentecost is from God. The Apostles were speaking the Word of God just like the prophets of old.

Question: Do you enjoy a fire, either indoors or outdoors, and why?

Challenge: Again, if you could not use the image of fire, how would you describe the Spirit landing on the Apostles?

Scripture: Isaiah 6:1-13

Day 3: Acts 2:5-6

Now there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men from every nation under heaven. And at this sound the multitude came together, and they were bewildered, because each one heard them speaking in his own language.

Pentecost takes place during one of the Jewish holidays. This holiday brought Jews from all over the world to Jerusalem. The Apostles were probably speaking on or near the Temple mount, where there was enough space for a large crowd to gather. It is likely that even though the crowd knew a few languages they were surprised that the Apostles were speaking in their own language. This tells us that we must speak the language that people in our day really understand, not just be able to make out the words.

Question: What is your favorite religious holiday and why?

Challenge: Try watching a program in a different language. Note how much you understood and how much effort it took to understand. Would you like to do this every week?

Scripture: John 3:1-17

Day 4: Acts 2:7-8, 12

And they were amazed and wondered, saying, "Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? And how is it that we hear, each of us in his own native language? We hear them telling in our own tongues the mighty works of God. ... And all were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, "What does this mean?"

Today people are surprised and grateful when we try to make the Gospel understood in their own language. I am not just speaking of the known languages of the world but the language of a new generation. The Church has learned that for our country, just speaking English is not enough. We need to present the Gospel with word, images, and song. When we make an honest attempt to "speak" in the language that people can understand, we will find people responding.

Question: How do you think the listeners knew these folks were Galileans?

Challenge: Think this week about how you learn? Do you learn new things better by reading, listening, watching, doing or some combination?

Scripture: Romans 10:8-17

Day 5: Acts 2:14, 16-18

But Peter, standing with the eleven, lifted up his voice and addressed them, "Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem. ... but this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: 'And in the last days it shall 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; yea, and on my menservants and my maidservants in those days I will pour out my Spirit; and they shall prophesy.

The good news for our time is that God has given us the message of salvation and the ability to deliver it to anyone who is willing to receive the Spirit. It will not be a few who have the Spirit but all people can and it seems will proclaim the Word of God - the good news to this generation. We need only become willing and God will pour out the Spirit.

Question: Have you ever spoken to a group or given a speech? What was it like?

Challenge: Write a 5 minute sermon.

Scripture: Joel 2:28-32

Day 6: Acts 2:21

And it shall be that whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.

The reason for all people to proclaim the word of God is so that everybody can call upon the name of the Lord. Nobody can call on the Lord if they do not know that the Lord is first, there, and second, that the Lord will listen. The promise of God is valid, it just needs to be shared.

Question: What would be good news for you right now?

Challenge: Think of someone else and try to first think of what good news would be for them, then try to give it to them.

Scripture: Acts 2:1-21