

June 4 2017

Reading from the Bible Acts 2:1-21, 32-33

Sermon “What Does This Mean?”

Acts 2:1-21

“When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. 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. Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability.

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

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. Indeed, these are not drunk, as you suppose, for it is only nine o’clock in the morning. No, this is what was spoken through the prophet Joel: ‘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. Even upon my slaves, both men and women, in those days I will pour out my Spirit; and they shall prophesy. And I will show portents in the heaven above and signs on the earth below, blood, and fire, and smoky mist. The sun shall be turned to darkness and the moon to blood, before the coming of the Lord’s great and glorious day. Then everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.’

Acts 2 : 32-33

This, Jesus God raised up, and of that all of us are witnesses. Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this that you both see and hear.

(Following the reading of the Scripture- the minister starts her sermon by walking around the sanctuary pointing out the messages in the colored glass windows)

The story so far starts over here with this stained glass window-some of you will have trouble if you are sitting at an angle so you will need to come and look at it later. But this particular window portrays the crucifixion - INRI on it---do you remember what Pilate had put at the top of the cross when Jesus was crucified? What did it say? Remember it said- Jesus Christ King of the Jews. This is in Latin and I'm not very good at Latin but that was what was on top. Pilate got in trouble with the Jewish leaders because they said he said he was the king of the Jews but Pilate replied what I have written is what I have written. The sign was written in Latin, Hebrew, and in Greek.

And then we come over to this window which is the easiest to see from the pulpit and it portrays the braided cross in rainbow colors. It fulfilled the rainbow promise that God made with Noah in the Old Testament. So now we are between Easter and Pentecost. Last week we talked about the ascension and Jesus made very special, real proof to people that he was alive where ever he went in those 40 days.

And then we come back here to the back row people and we have a window showing the flames and it looks like flames and wind. It is beautiful but it is wild and it is Pentecost. It was a celebration 50 days after Passover. Pentecost was already a celebration, and we have just claimed it as Christian. Pentecost was a religious celebration and if you were a faithful religious Jewish male and lived within 50 miles (don't quote me on that) of Jerusalem, you were expected if at all possible to attend the Day of Pentecost. It was not a day off from work. It was a celebration of the giving of the law to Moses on the Mt Sinai. Isn't that interesting that God would give the Holy Spirit the same day as the celebration of the giving of the law. It was the law that kept the Jewish people alive and together all those years. There was also the festival of Spring Harvest when people gave thanks for the bounty that was provided by God. The place was jammed pack for them. And one of the things I thought about was the bad roads in Judea; but at Passover which was five or seven weeks before the roads were probably more muddy and rugged. So there probably were more people in Jerusalem at Pentecost than at Passover. It would have been easier to get there and it was the Spring Harvest and everybody harvested their crops and that was the rhythm of the year. And so there they were.

Some people who study the names, think they are off because many of the names that were listed are ancient names and some ministers have made much about that but personally I don't think it is worth a sermon. What is important is that they list names of where the people came from. We see people came all the way from Rome and Asia which would have been eastern Turkey, all the way

around the Mediterranean Sea to Egypt. There were dispersed Jews from all the ends of the earth. Remember they thought the earth fell off at a certain point. Another sermon which I think could take a lot of time is what language did they understand? I think that Luke wrote in the book of Acts id trying to make point that they didn't all speak Latin, Greek or Hebrew. Those were the three common languages which everyone could understand. But they were hearing it in their own everyday language which the people used... It was like the United Nations Organization where everyone wears the little head phones and someone is speaking and they are hearing it their own language.

Those folks were saying what is going on here? They did not see it as a negative, they were not fearful. They just said what is happening here? And what did they hear? They heard the believers praising the glories of God. And that is what the Holy Spirit immediately poured into them. And they were praising God. They weren't preaching sermons, they weren't doing any great theological discussions, and they were praising God. Everyone in that building and outside heard these 20 or so disciples and believers speaking and praising God. This was something unique that had never been seen before.

The first time when I went to Disney Land, one of the places I liked the best was the haunted house that had a hologram and I knew there was a technology that created these ghosts and made it work but I was just in awe when I went around a corner and there was a ghost appearing before me. I was just in awe but I enjoyed it. The disciples had no technology and they had never experienced anything like this in their whole lives. They knew that in the Old Testament Days there were people like a prophet was occasionally gifted of the Holy Spirit or it might fall on someone who was prophesying. Before this none of these people had ever experienced anything like this before. If I were to say there was a big gathering over at the Priest River Community Center and there was about 120 people that would be a big crowd. But the Christians were few nobodies. There might have been a 120 in the room. There were 11 disciples, and probably Mary the mother of Jesus, Mary Magadane and the other Mary maybe Lazarus and Mary and Martha and a few others. We don't know how many were there but they were few in number and that was the church and they were waiting. Jesus had said to wait and they would be empowered. Then there was the wind, the sounds and tongues of fire and they were given the pouring of the Holy Spirit. Outside the building there were people from all over the then known world and all were astonished. The church was born.....They were all together and all the nations heard them. Everyone in the whole house experienced the wind and tongues of fire. There was a sense of unity. And that was when the church was born. And Jesus said they would all be one. (TROUBLE WITH THE TAPE)

Peter preached and 3000 people were baptized and added to the group of believers.

I believe the Holy Spirit is with us and gives us courage and he will walk along side---helping people to do the right thing-----The Holy spirit will be with us until Jesus comes back He give some the gift of prophecy, others the gift of teaching, others the gift of discerningwhatever your gift is it is use it for Jesus.-