

June 8 2014

Scripture Lessons ~

Psalm 104: 24-34

1 Corinthians 12:4-13

Acts 2:41-47

Sermon *Church Family*

I don't know about you but when I think about the season of Pentecost as I sort demonstrated with what we did with the children this morning, I usually give a tip of the hat in the direction of something fantastic, something supernatural related to the events described that was happening at the day of Pentecost at the beginning of Acts in Chapter two. I think about fiery tongues and the rush of the mighty winds and the cacophony of languages spoken all at the same time.

These are the things that we image when we think of the out pouring of God's Holy Spirit on the followers of Jesus on that first day of Pentecost for the church. That was followed by Peter's fiery sermon pointing out to all assembled who Jesus was and what Jesus came into the world to do. But less often though, do we think about what happened after the dust settled and the fireworks of that day ended. Acts chapter 2 verses 41 claims, as Joan shared with us, that three thousand people joined the ranks of the apostles as followers of Jesus that day.

But what happened after they were baptized to these new followers of Jesus. I'm afraid that followed was much more mundane but every bit as important because these new followers settled down to the task of what it means to be a family. What it means to be a church family. To be an intentional group of believers determined to live out the gospel of Jesus Christ together on a day by day basis. In a way it was a quite a daunting task in its own right. It seems to be me that most things we read or watch or listen to regarding the process of becoming a follower of Jesus focused on struggle of belief in Jesus.

And in Acts this includes all those mighty signs and all those mighty wonders that were signs to impress to awe inspire and finally to lead people in faith to believe in Jesus. And granted for many of us this having faith; believing the power of God's love to overcome evil; to reconcile the world to God and each other is a very daunting process that we wrestle with it day in and day out. But what happens again after the dust settled; how is our faith maintained; how is faith lived out on a day by day basis.

Again what do we do when the fireworks ends and when the signs and wonders are few and far between. I think that is what today's lesson from Acts in

Chapter two is really all about. It is not nearly so loud; it is not so flashy; or even as exciting as the day of Pentecost although it can be exciting thing. Instead what we see in this passage is quiet, every day consistent, persistent, and sometimes downright hard work that is absolutely essential to the building of the body of Christ which is the Church, which is our church family. You know often as Christians we like to hit the high points of our faith and believe that those things are going to be enough is enough to sustain us and to sustain our family in everyday life when times are tough. Christmas, Easter, weddings, funerals, baptism, confirmation, anniversaries, reunion dedication, like today.

But we are told something quite different by St Luke at the end of Acts chapter two and yet it isn't anything that we haven't heard before one time or another. After all the activity at Pentecost these new believers devoted themselves to one thing –prayer, what a radical concept, eating together, you know what that means-potluck, sharing the sacraments, Baptism and Holy Communion, learning from the teachings of the apostles, that means listening to the pastor spout off once in a while, Bible study, Sunday School and something even more radical than that sharing such possessions as they had with each other as those people had need.

And what was there attitude to live this way day by day. Well Luke said they things; begrudgingly? Reluctantly? What did he say, they did it with glad and joyful hearts; spending their time working and sharing together in a united way. They praised God for all God's blessings and as a result they generated the good will of people all around them. It sounds ideal; it sounds even picturesque but as I said before it takes work and above all commitment and dedication to live as a kind of family that would continue to nurture one another long into the future.

Today is the day to celebrate; to celebrate the presence of God's Holy Spirit, the Pentecost in our midst. The spirit invites us as we work together as a church family every day of our lives. So remember the Memorial gifts that we have dedicated today as I mentioned in the Dedication Service are only tools; they are only signs of the work that God invites each of us to do. The work of the church; the work of the Holy Spirit in not the work of acquiring things but instead the work of the church is to share those things that we have. Share in word; share in love; share in deed that steadfast love that God has for all human family centered in the life and teaching and work of Jesus.

So Happy Pentecost and Amen