

Acts 2:1-21

Theme: All of us all together for everyone

Pentecost is an everybody thing. I don't think we focus on that quite enough. We emphasize the good for everybody nature of Good Friday and Easter – rightly so! Pentecost is another good for everyone thing that shows how much God wants to save all people and assure them that this is his heart, who he is. God gave the Spirit generously to strengthen his children's faith in Jesus and equip them with boldness to talk about Jesus, planting the seed or watering it as God wills. That's what Pentecost is all about: all of us, equipped by God working all together for everyone to spread the truth that God is love.

Ten days after Jesus ascended, fifty days after he rose, the Holy Spirit got the ball rolling on Pentecost with a flurry of miracles. The place where the believers were was filled with the sound of a rapidly rushing wind and a large fire appeared and separated into smaller flames which rested over their heads. Can you even imagine that experience?? "Guys...guys. Guys!!! What's happening??" The Spirit made his presence among them unmistakable, just like Jesus promised. And, they started speaking in other languages, real languages they hadn't known a moment earlier as the Spirit gave them the words and the ability!

Those miracles are amazing, fun to think about but please think more about what God was doing through them. God was miraculously breaking down barriers between people groups to reach them with the gospel. People who had OT faith from all over were visiting Jerusalem. The sound of wind drew them into a crowd, but they remained in rapt attention and staggering confusion when they heard their own familiar and dear languages being spoken by a buncha fishermen. This was God making the gospel accessible to people and people ask the obvious question, "How'd these guys from Galilee learn our languages?!" This is pre Duo Lingo, Google translate, and Rosetta Stone (the software) so a language was learned by spending much time with a speaker of it, a time-consuming process rather left out by the Holy Spirit. "*Parthians, Medes, and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia,* ¹⁰ *Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome* ¹¹ *(both Jews and converts to Judaism); Cretans and Arabs – we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues!*" ¹² *Amazed and perplexed, they asked one another what does this mean?" (Acts 2:9-12)* A diverse group from every nation under heaven on the known earth! They heard the greatness of God in their own languages. God didn't give the ability to the people to understand Aramaic, he gave his workers the ability to reach others and give them the gospel. The crowd marveled, they were astonished, astounded, perplexed, confused, bewildered! Luke heaps up these terms to show they recognized the miraculous nature of hearing God's wonders in their own languages.

The naysayers, as they do when they don't understand something, mocked it and belittled the disciples as drunken winos trying to discredit them. Peter stood up to address them, which was bold for a guy who, just a month earlier, had hidden in fear. Now, he'd seen Jesus alive, he'd been forgiven, chosen by him for his work. He knew Jesus loved him, so what'd the opinion of anyone else matter? He watched Jesus ascend to the Father and knew he was ruling for his good. Now filled with the Spirit, he stood not just as a man forgiven – but as a man sent. Jesus kept his promise the joy of that resulted in tremendous confidence for Peter who eloquently shared the joy of the great thing God did in Jesus who suffered and died for the world's sin to save sinners.

Peter does this by first dismissing the silly accusation of too much wine, "Nice try, guys. It's 9 a.m." and gets to the important stuff explaining that the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on all people they were mocking was God's plan. God promised this through Joel the prophet. Pentecost was the fulfillment of God's promise – a display that his Spirit had come to empower his daughters and sons to proclaim Christ. Quoting Joel, Peter said, "*In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your*

sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams.” (Acts 2:17) In the last days, after the Messiah completed his work, God gave his Spirit to his people so they’d prophesy, proclaiming what God would have people hear. Who does this? Women *and* men! Sons and daughters of the Most High who’ve been made a kingdom of priests, a group of people designated by God himself to proclaim Jesus Savior. Man, woman, old, young – doesn’t matter! God gave the same Spirit to all so all would preach Christ crucified. The urgency of knowing and sharing Jesus is so much greater than human distinctions (not that some of those aren’t important!) **Galatians 3:27-28** says, “*For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.*”²⁸ *There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.*”

God through Joel doubled down on this point, “*Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy.*” (Acts 2:18) On his servants, male and female, God poured his Spirit for the purpose of them speaking his truth, his salvation, through Jesus. On Pentecost, God equipped his children with his Spirit to talk about his Son with conviction and love. “They will prophesy,” Peter said, but **Joel** didn’t in **2:29**.

Why would the Spirit include this now when Peter speaks? So that every one of God’s people – all of us, daughters and sons alike – would know exactly what we’re called to do: find people from anywhere and everywhere and share with them, declare to them the magnificent things God’s done! Peter makes it a million percent clear that all God’s people are to share God’s saving love in Jesus. So, what God planned to do from OT days and did on Pentecost in giving his Spirit to all people to preach Christ, let man not stifle. Go out there, sister, go out there, brother, and tell the great things God’s done for you and literally everyone else. The Holy Spirit will keep on being given until Jesus keeps his promise to return delivering us to heaven on the great and glorious day of the Lord.

The result of all this – of Pentecost, of the Spirit’s power, of our preaching – is this: “*Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.*” (Acts 2:21) That’s the heart of it. When you speak the gospel, it works, people believe. When they believe, they call on Jesus and are saved. But they can’t believe unless somebody tells them. And no one can tell them unless God sends them. That’s where you come in. You’ve been called. You’ve been washed. You’ve been filled with the Spirit – he lives in you! You know Jesus – his death, his resurrection, his reign. You know the forgiveness that covers every sin. You know his love that reaches every heart because it’s reached and changed your own!

From the Spirit, you have the love, compassion, and drive to find a way to surmount or smash through barriers to meet people and bring them the gospel in a way that hits home. Put in the time! Learn the language – for real – the customs, the culture. Be curious. Make the effort. There’s opportunity for this right here in Appleton. Go. Go in the name of Jesus. Go with the power of the Spirit. Go with the message of grace for everyone. You’re God’s daughter. You’re God’s son. This is your calling. This is your joy. Tell everyone what God has done. Amen.