

Pentecost — Flowing Into All the World

June 4, 2017

Scripture: Acts 2:1-21

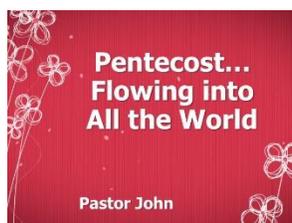
On the day of Pentecost all the Lord's followers were together in one place. ² Suddenly there was a noise from heaven like the sound of a mighty wind! It filled the house where they were meeting. ³ Then they saw what looked like fiery tongues moving in all directions, and a tongue came and settled on each person there. ⁴ The Holy Spirit took control of everyone, and they began speaking whatever languages the Spirit let them speak.

⁵ Many religious Jews from every country in the world were living in Jerusalem. ⁶ And when they heard this noise, a crowd gathered. But they were surprised, because they were hearing everything in their own languages. ⁷ They were excited and amazed, and said: Don't all these who are speaking come from Galilee? ⁸ Then why do we hear them speaking our very own languages? ⁹ Some of us are from Parthia, Media, and Elam. Others are from Mesopotamia, Judea, Cappadocia, Pontus, Asia, ¹⁰ Phrygia, Pamphylia, Egypt, parts of Libya near Cyrene, Rome, ¹¹ Crete, and Arabia. Some of us were born Jews, and others of us have chosen to be Jews. Yet we all hear them using our own languages to tell the wonderful things God has done.

¹² Everyone was excited and confused. Some of them even kept asking each other, "What does all this mean?" ¹³ Others made fun of the Lord's followers and said, "They are drunk."

¹⁴ Peter stood with the eleven apostles and spoke in a loud and clear voice to the crowd: Friends and everyone else living in Jerusalem, listen carefully to what I have to say! ¹⁵ You are wrong to think that these people are drunk. After all, it is

only nine o'clock in the morning. ¹⁶ But this is what God had the prophet Joel say, ¹⁷ "When the last days come, I will give my Spirit to everyone. Your sons and daughters will prophesy. Your young men will see visions, and your old men will have dreams. ¹⁸ In those days I will give my Spirit to my servants, both men and women, and they will prophesy. ¹⁹ I will work miracles in the sky above and wonders on the earth below. There will be blood and fire and clouds of smoke. ²⁰ The sun will turn dark, and the moon will be as red as blood before the great and wonderful day of the Lord appears. ²¹ Then the Lord will save everyone who asks for his help."



Today is Pentecost Sunday!! Today we celebrate the gift of the Holy Spirit that descended on the early church and empowered them to live out the great commission to take the gospel out into the world to make disciples of all peoples and nations. It was a powerful way to experience the inbreaking of the Holy Spirit. There was a mighty wind and what looked like tongues of fire settled on each believer gathered there that day. They were each filled with the power and presence of the Holy Spirit. Today, as we remember the coming of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost, we will explore four keys ways the gift of the Holy Spirit continues to be at work in and amongst us. Let us pray.

The first gift that the Holy Spirit gives are the gifts or talents that all believers receive. Each of us, as followers of Christ, receive gifts for the building of kingdom here on earth. 1st Corinthians 12, verse seven says, " *The Spirit has given each of us a special way of serving others*". We receive our gifts so that

each and every one of us can use our special gifts to serve one another. It is through these gifts of the Spirit that believers have been empowered and that the church has been built over the 2000 years since Jesus lived on this earth.

In our passage from Acts, we see the first gift of the Holy Spirit was to communicate the good news of Jesus Christ to non-believers. Those there on that first Pentecost Sunday



were filled with the Holy Spirit and they spoke in many different languages, all proclaiming the good news of Jesus Christ. Now, let's look at the scene for a moment. First, there were Jews from all over the known world gathered in Jerusalem at that time. They were gathered to commemorate and to celebrate the giving of the Law on Mount Sinai. Moses had received the Law from God fifty days after the first Passover. Second, God used a mighty wind to draw everyone's attention and to gather all these Jews up around the assembly of believers. Third, the Holy Spirit empowered all the believers to share the good news of Jesus Christ in languages that people from all over the known world could understand. This is the first example of bringing the good news to the ends of the earth. Chapter two of Acts goes on to tell us that about 3,000 were added to their number that day. Most of these 3,000 new converts probably went back to their hometowns and brought the good news with them.

This first gift of the Holy Spirit is given to each of us as well. Again, I draw your attention to first part of the mission statement on the back wall and one the cover of our bulletins: *bring people to Christ*. The Holy Spirit empowers each and every one of us to be bearers of the good news. Through the power and

presence of the Holy Spirit, we each are gifted to share the good news. When we allow the Holy Spirit to lead and guide us, we will find opportunities to share our faith in Jesus Christ with others. We must trust in the guidance of the Spirit and allow it to bring us the words to say for the opportunity that presents itself. We saw a great example of bringing others to Christ this week at Vacation Bible School. Young lives were changed and impacted as they experienced the love of Jesus Christ and were given an opportunity to learn and grow in their faith. As we each go forth into the world this week, we know that the Holy Spirit will give us opportunities to share our faith. Be aware and open to the Holy Spirit and there will be opportunities.



The second gift we each receive from the Holy Spirit is guidance and direction in our day to day lives. We all have felt the nudges to do something or not to do something.

Maybe it was to help the neighbor you saw working in their yard or maybe it was to not go out with those friends that night. We have all heard the whispers of the still, small voice too. Maybe it was to go and offer some words of comfort to your coworker who just lost a parent or maybe it was to go and offer encouragement to a teammate who just had a bad play. Maybe you remembered that Bible verse about the tongue being able to start a whole forest on fire just as the temptation to gossip was really gaining traction. Or maybe you have felt the conviction of the Holy Spirit. Sometimes temptation gets the best of us and then we feel the conviction of the Holy Spirit settle in and that leads us to repentance and forgiveness. Or maybe you have felt the conviction when you let an opportunity to share your faith pass by. That can lead us to go

back and make the most of that opportunity or it can sharpen our sensitivity to respond the next time God places an opportunity before us.

The next gift of the Holy Spirit is to the whole church. The third gift of the Holy Spirit is that it brings dreams and visions to grow the church. In our passage from Acts, Luke writes of the Holy Spirit bringing the believers visions and dreams to guide the church and its growth. Reading verses seventeen through nineteen:



Your sons and daughters will prophesy. Your young men will see visions, and your old men will have dreams. In those days I will give my Spirit to my servants, both men and women, and they will prophesy. I will work miracles in the sky above and wonders on the earth below.

Luke was quoting from the prophet Joel. Just as the early church had to dream and have vision for how to bring the good news to the ends of the earth, so too does our church need dreams and vision for how we are going to bring the good news to Winner, South Dakota, and then on to the ends of the earth. Not only do we have to be intentional and strategic in how we “*bring people to Christ*” but we also need dreamers and visionaries to help us see how it can happen. God promises us that Spirit will be given to His servants, to you and I, so that we will have dreams and visions. Why? For what purpose? Hear verse nineteen again: “*I will work miracles in the sky above and wonders on the earth below.*” These miracles and wonders will help us to spread the good news of Jesus Christ.

Two Sundays ago, at the Leadership meeting, we went through an activity called “Dream Out Loud”. Teams of three to four worked together to define how we see ourselves as a church, how the community sees Winner United Methodist Church, and how God wants to use us. We also brainstormed to identify where we hope to be as a church in five years. The last step was to write a headline that we hope to see in the Winner Advocate five years from now. Two headlines were very much alike. They are represented in the first headline I am about to share. Here are the five-year headlines, brought to you by the Leadership Team of this United Methodist Church:

- ✦ Come Join Us to Dedicate the New Fellowship Hall
(You Will NOT Go Away Hungry!)



- ✦ Winner United Methodist Church Disciples Across
Nation via MYF and New Pastors



- ✦ Winner United Methodist Church Sets Record for
Service to Community



I do not know about you, but these headlines put a lump in my throat. They give me a warm feeling deep down in my heart. And they put a smile on my face. These are the dreams and the vision of the leaders of this church. Take a moment and think about these three headlines. As you do, remember



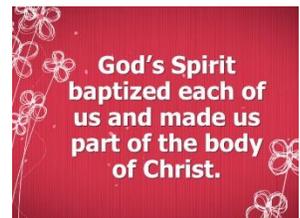
God's promise: "*I will work miracles*". My question to you: how will be a part of these dreams and visions?

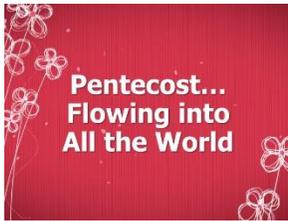
And finally, the fourth gift of the Holy Spirit is to build unity in the church. In 1st Corinthians 12, the apostle Paul writes about unity in the church. He opens in verse three with this reminder: "*Now I want you to know that if you are led by*

God's Spirit, you will say that Jesus is Lord". When we profess Jesus as Lord, we are pledging our allegiance to follow Jesus and to walk in His example. As we do so, we will be led by the Spirit. Paul continues to write in 1st Corinthians 12 of the many gifts that we receive from the Holy Spirit. And like Luke, Paul also reminds us that we are all called to use our gift to serve the same Lord.



Although we each are blessed with different gifts, it is in our diversity that we are made a greater whole. Paul writes about this in 1st Corinthians. Reading verses twelve and thirteen: "*The body of Christ has many different parts, just as any other body does. Some of us are Jews, and others are Gentiles. Some of us are slaves, and others are free. But God's Spirit baptized each of us and made us part of the body of Christ*". We are one body with many parts. We are each unique, yet by the power of the Spirit we are baptized into the one body of Christ. This is what makes us one body, together in Christ.





On that first Pentecost Sunday, the believers were gathered together in one place. The Holy Spirit came and entered each person who called on Jesus as Lord. It empowered each believer to share the good news of Jesus Christ with others. The Spirit and the promise are true for each of us as well. Let us pray.

GPS – Grow, Pray, Serve

- 1) What do you feel are your gifts of the Spirit? How are you using them to build the kingdom? If you are not using them, how can you use them?
- 2) How successful are you at sharing the good news of Jesus Christ? What can you do to be better able to share the good news with others?
- 3) Which dream or vision of the Leadership Team are you most drawn to? How can you become a part of this dream or vision?