

“Pour Out the Spirit Upon All Flesh”

Acts 2: 1-21

Holy Spirit. The Advocate. That third part of the Trinitarian Formula. Big Fancy Church words to describe something we really don't know much about! If we are honest with ourselves, the Holy Spirit is that part of God's promise that we, Disciples, are not too comfortable with talking about in our churches and in our very own lives of faith. So we try to formulate reasons and teachings about the Holy Spirit so that we all get a better handle on this indescribable illogical powerful thing we call the Holy Spirit. We throw in some big fancy church words But in reality, we fail to understand that no amount of questions or explanations will ever really capture the essence of the Holy Spirit. No matter how hard we try!

So to deal with this uncertain reality, we as the church have found that it is best to ignore the Holy Spirit, and bring it out only for Pentecost for our purpose and then try to stick it back in the closet again until we have need of it again, probably at our next Pentecost celebration. And that plan usually works for us as people of faith and the church or at least that is what we have fooled ourselves into believing.

But the funny thing about the Holy Spirit is that when we weren't looking, when we thought we had it locked up tight in the closet, when we thought we were in control, the Holy Spirit slipped by us! Just when we thought we had a handle on it, the Spirit of God moved and changed our expectations. And now it is out there in the world, out there in our churches, stirring things up, creating problems and keeping all of our lives interesting! The only difference is that the Holy Spirit doesn't see itself creating problems in our world and in our churches. It sees itself living out its calling by creating opportunities for ministry, opportunities for mission, opportunities for all of God's people to experience God's love and grace. It's just waiting for us as the church and as people of faith to catch up to what it is already doing in our world! It is waiting for us to open ourselves to the amazing possibilities of new life that have been promised to each and every one of us if only we would allow ourselves to be. The Spirit of God is working in the world. It's just waiting for us to catch up!

Now that's not necessarily bad news for us as people of faith. In fact, that's what the Spirit of God has been doing from the beginning of time! It has moved. It has created. It has formed and shaped. It has called. And it has nudged. And all along, it has been waiting for the people of God to open their eyes to the opportunities of grace that lay before them as gifts from God.

From the very beginning, the Spirit of God has moved among the people, bringing forth new life, changing plans and details, shattering limited expectations, and opening eyes and hearts to the grace of God already at work in the world, all the time just waiting for the church to catch up!

And the good news is that it finally did on that first Pentecost morning when the Spirit of God moved among the disciples, changing their plans, and opening their hearts to the calling that God was giving them as ones called to go forth and share the Good News!

The truly interesting part of the Pentecost story is that I think if the disciples had had the chance and if it had been up to the them, they probably would have gone back home following the resurrection, gone back to their routines, gone back to their schedules, gone back to their to do lists. And why not? They had already seen the risen Christ. They had already experienced the power of new life. I think if it had been up to the disciples they would have probably gone home after the resurrection with their fond memories, their outrageous stories, and their amusing antidotes and settled back into their routines, their lives, their schedules before Jesus. They had already seen and done it all at least in their minds. What else was there to do? What else were they supposed to do?

Those are some dangerous questions to put towards the Spirit of God right there. Because as we know, there was more to come. And as we all know, there was more to do. And as we all know, when we ask those routine questions, we realize that there is nothing routine about the Spirit of God and where it will lead us!

And that's where the story gets good! We find The disciples in an upper room, waiting and praying and suddenly, there is a sound like the rush of a violent wind filling the house. And suddenly, there are divided tongues like fire appearing among them. And all of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and they began to speak in other languages through the gift of the Holy Spirit. As we said, there's nothing routine about the Spirit of God!

On that first Pentecost morning the Spirit is moving and shaping the disciples. The Spirit of God is shattering the disciples' expectations. The Spirit of God is changing their plans and routines and bring forth new life. In that moment, There is A new wind of Creation. There is A new fire burning in each of these disciples. There is a new period of promise and passion for all the people of God, very much like on that first day when God created the world. In that upper room, The breath of God was sweeping across the routine and forming a new community of the people of God. A community for the whole people of God:

young and old, male and female, Jew and Gentile. At that moment The Spirit of God was poured out on all flesh and from that point on, life for the disciples would never be routine again!

On that day, It was a new day for them as disciples as ones called to share the good news. Their eyes were opened to what God was already doing in their community and they realized that the Spirit of God had been waiting all along for them to catch up! In that moment, everything changed. No more routines. No more schedules. No more to do lists. In that moment, all there was left were opportunities for mission and ministry. The story of the resurrection was no longer a fond memory for just a called few. It was a proclamation for the whole people of God. It was not a time for the story to come to an end or come to completion. On that morning, that Pentecost morning, it was a time to move forward into a new way of being, into a new way of doing, into a new reality of the Kingdom of God here on earth.

The Spirit of God had opened their eyes and shattered their expectations. That's why the words from the prophet Joel are so poignant and powerful. The church had finally had caught up and realized that the Day of the Lord was not a day of despair or disaster. It was a day of new life. It was a day where sons and daughters would prophesy and the old would dream new dreams. It was a day

when the community of God would be one, full of grace, full of peace, full of hope!

A day that God had promised the people of God from the very beginning. God was just waiting for us to catch up!

By sharing these words from the prophet Joel, Peter knew that God had poured out God's spirit upon the world and now God's new creation was given the call to build and create a community of faith and justice! The Spirit had come in an unconventional way and had begun to rock the boat! Because the Good News Peter realized that day was that God had always wanted our relationship with God to be more than a set of rituals and rules. God had always wanted to restore us to God's dreams of who we can be. God had always wanted us to move our faith from our heads to our hearts. God had always wanted our faith to go from duty to passion. God had always wanted the Spirit to take up residence in our hearts, so that we would be restored, so that we would proclaim, so that we would shout out the Good news. God was just waiting for us to catch up!

The Good news that we celebrate today is that the Holy Spirit didn't come to solve our problems. It came to create opportunities for mission and ministry. It came to stir the pot. It came to challenge us and push us out of our comfort zones.

Through the sending of the Holy Spirit then, now and always, God is breaking into our lives and saying, Faith is not passive. Faith is active. Faith is passion for God's people and all of God's creation. Faith is a new wind of creation. Faith is a new fire burning in all of us! God is saying The day of the Lord has come and it is a time when young and old will dream new dreams. It is a time when sons and daughters will prophesy. It is a time when we will proclaim that God's Spirit has been poured out over all of us and all of God's creation. It is a day when nothing will silence our voices! It is a day when we embrace that nothing in our lives will ever be routine again!

Today, we are opening ourselves to the wind of the new creation. Today we are asking God to sweep over us, to turn our dry as dust lives and faith into a new being, into a new passion, into a new mission for the Kingdom of God. Today, we celebrate rather than bemoan the fact that despite all of our plans, that despite all of our committees, that despite all of our spell checked bulletins, that only God can give the church and us as people of faith what it needs, what it wants, what it seeks.

And that blessing for all of God's children, that promise for all of God's creation is that we have been given a new life through resurrection of Jesus. new life through

the gift of the Holy Spirit. A new life and relationship with God that is filled with passion and promise.

Today, feel God's Spirit being poured out over us and may we build and create a community of faith and justice! Today feel God's Spirit being poured out over us and may we enter into a new relationship with me and feel the passion of faith.

Today feel God's Spirit being poured out over us and may we dream new dreams, may we see visions, may we actively seek the Kingdom of God. Today, may we open our eyes to the opportunities for mission and mission that the Spirit of God is already doing in our community. God is just waiting for us to catch up!

May we do so with hearts aflamed with justice and hands willing and ready to do the work. Amen.