



Calvary Presbyterian Church  
Sunday, SEPTEMBER 24, 2023

**Christening Calvary: "The Wind"**  
Rev. Eyde Mabanglo

**NEW TESTAMENT READING**

Acts 2:1-21

New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition

**The Coming of the Holy Spirit**

<sup>2</sup>When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. <sup>2</sup>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.

<sup>3</sup>Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. <sup>4</sup>All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability.

<sup>5</sup>Now there were devout Jews from every people under heaven living in Jerusalem. <sup>6</sup>And at this sound the crowd gathered and was bewildered, because each one heard them speaking in the native language of each.

<sup>7</sup>Amazed and astonished, they asked, "Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? <sup>8</sup>And how is it that we hear, each of us, in our own native language? <sup>9</sup>Parthians, Medes, Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, <sup>10</sup>Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, <sup>11</sup>Cretans and Arabs—in our own languages we hear them speaking about God's deeds of power." <sup>12</sup>All were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, "What does this mean?" <sup>13</sup>But others sneered and said, "They are filled with new wine."

## Peter Addresses the Crowd

<sup>14</sup>But Peter, standing with the eleven, raised his voice and addressed them, "Fellow Jews and all who live in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and listen to what I say. <sup>15</sup>Indeed, these are not drunk, as you suppose, for it is only nine o'clock in the morning. <sup>16</sup>No, this is what was spoken through the prophet Joel:

<sup>17</sup>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.

<sup>18</sup>Even upon my slaves, both men and women, in those days I will pour out my Spirit, and they shall prophesy. <sup>19</sup>And I will show portents in the heaven above and signs on the earth below, blood, and fire, and smoky mist. <sup>20</sup>The sun shall be turned to darkness and the moon to blood, before the coming of the Lord's great and glorious day. <sup>21</sup>Then everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.'

## SERMON

So, a pirate walks into a bar...and meets up with a sailor. They take turns talking about their adventures on the seas. The sailor notes that the pirate has a peg-leg, a hook, and an eye patch.

The sailor asks "So, how did you end up with the peg-leg?"

The pirate replies: "We were in a storm at sea, and I were swept overboard headed for Davy Jones' Locker. Just as me men were pullin' me out, a shark bit me leg off."

"Wow!" said the sailor. "What about the hook?"

The pirate went on, "We were boarding an enemy ship and were battling the other sailors with swords. One of the enemy cut me hand off."

"Incredible!" said the sailor. "And how did you get the eye patch?"

"Arrr. That were from a seagull dropping fell into me bloody eye," replied the pirate.

"You lost your eye to a seagull dropping?" the sailor asked with disbelief.

"Shiver me timbers!" said the pirate. "It was me first day me had me hook..."

I told the story, so that we could talk a little bit more about the Pirate's Eye Patch. Now an eye patch is the small swath of material that covers a pirate's eye. In the medical field it is called a pad for the eye, and it is NOT to be confused with what we all know as an iPad. It is apparently part of pirate folklore and mythology that a pirate might have another reason to wear an eye pad/patch and that was to train his eyes to see in the dark.

As you can imagine, it was in the belly of the ship that pirates might store their plunder, and in raiding another ship they would have to go from the deck of the ship in the bright of day and go down under to look for the loot. They did not have electric flashlights or fancy lanterns, but they did use torches in those days; however, the plunder was often kept in the same general area as the gunpowder.

So, there's a word that describes the sound one might hear if one were a pirate holding a torch searching for lost treasure in the bowels of a ship full of gunpowder:

KA-BOOM!

It takes our eyes almost 25 minutes to adjust to the dark, so the pirates needed to find a way to train their eyes to be able to better see in the dark spaces. If they had one eye covered, then they could switch the eye pad/patch over the other eye and go down below--then-in reverse-they could come up and switch the eye PAD/patch and then see in the daylight.

Mythbusters, Episode 71, was a Pirate Special that determined that that this was "highly probable"... The science does work, but whether pirates really used patches in this way has yet to be historically proven, but science does support that our eyes are trainable.

And this is what today's passage is about, that the eyes of our hearts and the eyes of our minds can also be transformed by the Spirit. This is the

primary work of the Holy Spirit—that is to give us new perspectives, to give us eyes to see as God sees...A GOD FILTER. Our prayer today is that we all might have our perspective transformed by the power of the Holy Spirit... to not only see our neighbor, but to continue to find new languages and ways to help the whole world understand what it means to live our life inside the life of God's love. The power of the Spirit helps us to transcend difference in our relationships with one another.

Last Tuesday was Talk Like a Pirate Day...it's been around since 1995.

Pentecost was kind of like **Talk Like the Other Day**...because people were speaking like their foreign neighbors, and everyone was understanding that they were talking about God's powerful deeds.

Pentecost was based on Jewish pilgrimage to Jerusalem to bring the "first fruits" of the harvest. It marked seven weeks/50 days after the Passover and commemorated the day that the Israelites received Torah—the written word by God's Spirit and the oral tradition as well. We understand even today that Torah refers to the heart of God... it is important for us to see Jesus as the living Torah, the Incarnate Word of God.

Pentecost is "talk like others" day... the Spirit blows into the scene and through the people of God. The Spirit is not a thing, but a person (the third person of the Trinity). We know the Spirit has been living and moving since before Creation and revealed at Jesus' christening (baptism). In the same way that Jesus was empowered by the Spirit of God, so we are empowered to fulfill God's purposes in the world. The Spirit caused the people to speak in all the different languages of every nation, so that the visiting Jews from non-Jewish lands would hear about the powerful deeds of God in their own native tongue. The witness of the disciples was for the benefit of the "listening outsiders" and fulfilled the purposes of God. Pentecost is "talk like others" day and we can participate with the Spirit if we make every day Pentecost.

The Spirit was promised by Jesus when he said that he would not leave his people orphaned...he gave this promise not to individuals but to the body of believers...the Spirit was sent to the church to stand with and support their ministry as a collective, a body of believers, the body of Christ.

The Spirit was also promised by the prophets. Today's passage quotes the prophet Joel. This helps us to understand that a more expansive vision of God's reach is deeply rooted in our Jewish heritage. The words from Joel emphasize the multi-cultural, far-reaching heart of God was his divine purpose from the beginning. The power of the Spirit transcends difference. There is a radical egalitarianism embedded in our Judeo-Christian DNA that may offend some of our Christian siblings ears...there is a Jewish Cosmopolitan world view that is the foundation of our own discipleship, ordained by God, enfleshed in Jesus, and empowered still by the Spirit of Christ.

According to Joel and Peter, the Spirit is poured out...at Creation, at Jesus' baptism, at Pentecost, and today. The Spirit is poured out... equally, without discrimination, without concern for gender, age, or social status—and those who are prideful about any of those should listen carefully to the Word of God today.

I'd like to retell the story at Pentecost in my own words...because it is a very confusing story.

The people are all gathered together in the Upper Room (as Jesus told them to) and there is a dramatic revelation of the Spirit in a loud and violent wind and also described as a flame that subdivides into smaller flame-like entities let upon each person. Those in the room begin to speak languages that they don't already know.

There are also visiting Jews from non-Jewish nations and staying in the area for the festival. They are from every nation...they hear the sound and assemble with everyone else, AND THEN they recognize their own languages being spoken and are drawn to this mysterious moment. **What's going on?!...** they are amazed and shocked, and they ask aloud why the locals are speaking their own native languages. Then we are given a list of the diverse nations represented and the languages spoken... they include Jews and non-Jews alike. And everyone was speaking about God's powerful deeds. In the confusion, the visitors ask: **what does this mean?** And skeptics say never mind; they are just drunk. Clearly, the scoffers are not listening (which seems like the definition of a scoffer)... to the Spirit in their midst.

They say it doesn't mean anything and then Peter steps up and says YES IT DOES! He addresses them all, Greetings Jews and Non-Jews, Listen up... nobody has been drinking, it's too early, this is the prophecy of Joel and then he quotes Joel about the promise of God's spirit and how God will pour out his spirit equally and without discrimination, without nonsensical concern for age or gender or social status, so that all will receive the Spirit and All will be liberated into God's freedom and peace.

The example of transformation in today's passage is our beloved Peter. The man who rejected Jesus' foretelling his own death, the man who denied Jesus many times, now stands up in this story and boldly addresses the multitude – the crowd filled with Jew and non-Jew alike to expose his transformation, his partnership with the Holy Spirit and the heart of God. Our God is inclusive, expansive, far-reaching, and his Spirit will stop at nothing until it has reached to the ends of the earth, every nation, and every tongue. The Spirit was moving at Pentecost and the Spirit is moving today. We are invited to be sailing partners with the Spirit...and our decisions, our words, our actions, our relationships, our mission must be based on our calling and not our presumptions, prejudices, assumptions, bad habits, and narrow vision of all things sacred.

1 Corinthians 2:7

*<sup>4</sup>Now there are varieties of gifts but the same Spirit, <sup>5</sup>and there are varieties of services but the same Lord, <sup>6</sup>and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. <sup>7</sup>To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.*

NT Wright Quote:

*God has promised that through his Spirit, he will remake the creation so that it becomes what it is straining and yearning to be...a world set right...the work of the Spirit in the lives of individuals in the present time is designed to be...a down payment and guarantee, as it were, of that eventual setting to the rights of all things.*

Friends, people's hearts and minds and perspectives and lives are not changed by our self-righteous angst, our talking louder than anyone else, our arrogance, our showy accolades, or our arguments, but by the power (DYNAMIS) of the Holy Spirit. Ask the Spirit to give you eyes to see as God

sees, to help you see beyond the blinders that you've been taught (some even by the church). Ask God to help you transcend difference in your life by the power of the Spirit of Christ.

Last Tuesday was Talk Like a Pirate Day... this coming Friday is the last Harvest Moon of 2023. It will be a Super Moon. As we gaze upon the harvest moon, let us remember the Jewish harvest festival where God's pilgrims brought their first fruits to celebrate God's Spirit moving in their lives. Let us look at the moon that the Spirit placed in the sky at Creation, let us wonder at the unimaginable power of our God, and invite the Spirit to use that power to change our hearts so that we might be better witnesses to that transformative power... so that in the life of Calvary, we might reap a harvest of God's people and not just produce, like fruits and vegetables. Let us learn to talk to others, listen to others, talk like others—in a meaningful way that they might understand that the living, moving God knows them and loves them.

May it be so.

