

## **“Is There Any Wind?”**

### **Acts 2: 1 – 21**

A pastor in Salem, New Hampshire, tells about a birthday card he sent to his dad. It was his father's 75<sup>th</sup> birthday and he was looking for “that perfect card.” Standing there in the card shop, his eyes kept going back to one card – one that had a picture of two boats tied to a dock in what appeared to be a New England town.

Although the pastor lived in New England, his parents lived in the hills of West Virginia. His parents had never owned a boat or even showed any interest in boating. His dad had a childhood experience that caused him to fear the water. He had never learned how to swim. But, the pastor continued to look at the card and there was something about it that made it meaningful. You see, the son described his father as a very simple man. His lifestyle was really uncomplicated.

As the son continued to look at the card, he noticed that one boat was a sailboat, the other a rowboat. He wondered, if his dad had to make the choice of which boat he would prefer to cross that body of water, which would he choose? He bought the card, and in a note to his dad, he shared the thoughts he had in the card shop. Then he asked his father this question, “In your simple style of living, and with your ability to decide things that make the most sense, which boat would you choose?”

Several weeks later, he received this response from his father, “I noticed that the rowboat had no engine, but the sailboat had a sail. My question before making a decision, is there any wind?”

Sunday May 31<sup>st</sup>. we celebrate the birthday of the church, known as the Day of Pentecost. And the question we want to ask today; is there any wind? Must we spend the rest of our days rowing, dependant only on our own power alone, or might we put up our sails and catch the wind of God? Is there any wind?

On the first Pentecost there was what sounded like a mighty wind. Early in the morning 120 believers were meeting together in a house in Jerusalem to wait and pray as Jesus has instructed them. As they were worshipping they heard what sounded like the blowing of a violent wind, something they had never experienced before. Then as they looked they saw what looked like tongues of fire landing on each person present. In that dramatic moment all the believers were filled with the Holy Spirit and they began to speak in other languages, “As the Spirit enabled them” (vs. 4).

Then an amazing thing happened. People on the streets and nearby houses heard the commotion and came to see what was happening. Soon the believers themselves, caught up in the Spirit, went out onto the streets also. There were people in Jerusalem from all over the known world and as the believers were speaking the people heard the message in their own native language. They were amazed and asked each other in (vss. 7 & 8), “Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? And how is it that each of us hears them in our native language?” It was truly amazing, nothing like this had ever happened before. But a wind was blowing, the wind of God's Spirit. There was a fire loose on that first Pentecost. That fire was fanned by the very wind of God.

Notice, however, that only those who were alert to God's activity understood what was happening. The people outside the believer's house were amazed and perplexed. They had no idea what was going on and their only possible explanation of what they were witnessing was that the speakers were drunk. The believers, on the other hand, knew exactly what was happening. They had been meeting daily for prayer and worship and as soon as the Holy Spirit descended upon them they knew that Jesus' promise to send "another comforter" was being fulfilled. When we are alert to God we can often see and hear things that other people miss. What happens when the winds of God blow across a person's life? Mainly, two things happen.

First of all, that which is mediocre becomes magnificent. Remember all the times Jesus taught his disciples when they just didn't get it. As we read the gospels we wonder why Jesus chose such men in the first place. Jesus spoke of humility and the disciples fought for positions of power. At one point they thought Jesus was going to take Jerusalem by force and Jesus was trying to tell them he was going to die there. Peter seemed to be the spokesperson for the apostles, but Peter had his share of shortcomings. When Jesus spoke of his death and resurrection Peter said, "God forbid it, Lord." After Jesus' arrest, Peter denied even knowing him. While Jesus was dying on the cross, Peter was hiding somewhere fearing for his own life. In Jesus' hour of need Peter was nowhere to be seen. All of this changed, though, when the wind and fire of the Holy Spirit descended upon the believers. Peter and the others were transformed from a band of cowards into courageous advocates of their faith. Once timid and afraid, Peter was now bold and outspoken.

Pentecost was Peter's great moment. Peter heard the remarks about these disciples being drunk and he explained to the crowd that was not the case. Rather he explained by quoting from the prophet (Joel 2: 28 – 32). This was not the same Peter we have encountered earlier in the gospels. He is now empowered by the Holy Spirit and he addressed the crowd with boldness and eloquence. A mediocre life had become magnificent. That happens when the wind of God blows. Oh, that we might become aware of the power we possess as the Holy Spirit lives within us.

The second thing that happens when the winds of God blow across a person's life is even more impressive, that which is dead can come alive. We have all, no doubt experienced things that have looked dead and then something happens and there is life again. Winter comes and all the multicolored foliage turns brown and bare, but then spring comes and things brighten up and soon are in full bloom. During a dry hot summer, many of us have walked across our lawn and heard the grass "crunch" under our feet, and then the rains come and once more the grass is green and growing. Throughout our life time there are many things that go through this kind of cycle. That is what happens when the warm winds and refreshing rains come upon the land.

That is also what happens when the wind of God's Spirit blows across our lives. We are refreshed, empowered and transformed. And so the question now: "is there any wind?" Must we row our boat slowly and painfully through the waters of life alone, or may we put up our sails to catch the wind of God? The word for Spirit and the word for wind are the same in the Hebrew language. I would tell you at this Pentecost Sunday that the Spirit of God, the mighty wind of God, is available to all who desire it.