

PENTECOST – ACTS 2:1-13

MONDAY 5.16.16 Read Acts 2:1-4. The birth of the church and single greatest moment in the story of our faith (next to the Resurrection itself, of course) only receives 4 verses. Why is that? Wouldn't this miracle merit more detail? Luke doesn't think so (Luke wrote the Gospel of Luke as well as the Book of Acts as a two-volume set) and focuses on the Spirit's powerful effect in the mission to Israel. *Think about your own conversion story, how you came to Christ. While that moment is sacred, what lasting effect has it had on your life? What story would you write for yourself that began with that first moment? How would you want to finish it?*

TUESDAY 5.17.16 Read Exodus 23:16, 34:22; Leviticus 23:15-21; Numbers 28:26, and Deuteronomy 16:9-12. The word "Pentecost," or 50th day, was used by the diaspora Jews for a day-long harvest festival more commonly known as the Feast of Weeks and scheduled 50 days after Passover. *What significance might the timing of the fire from Heaven have? Was it just increased population for witnesses in the city of Jerusalem? Was it truly God providing a "harvest?"*

WEDNESDAY 5.18.16 Read John 20:19-22. Jesus gathers with the disciples and gives them the Holy Spirit privately. I remember teaching on the Holy Spirit once with a group of young people and one remarked on this passage, "Jesus burped the Holy Spirit?!" Another said, "I hope his breath didn't stink." And a third said, "It's Jesus we are talking about, he probably didn't have bad breath." Regardless of their commentary, John's account is vastly different from Luke's. I like John's the best because it reminds us to share our faith, the Holy Spirit, we must be connected and close to others; close enough to breathe on them. *Which account of the gift of the Spirit do you prefer? Why do you think that is?*

THURSDAY 5.19.16 Read 1 Corinthians 12:14-30. In Acts, Luke is making sure that we know the gift of the Holy Spirit belongs to a people of God as their "shared, permanent property." Luke reinforces this point clearly by repetition, "they were all together" in a "whole house where all were sitting," when the Spirit came to rest on "each of them" so that "all of them were filled." They then received the ability to speak in languages they did not know. Paul's discussion of speaking in tongues and gifts of the Spirit says those gifts are used to empower Christian ministry to *other believers* for Christian formation. In Acts it was to begin to tell the story of Jesus to those who had not heard it in their own languages. *What is the value of this sort of gift today? Could it also be a spiritual gift for those who can pick up new languages easily?*

FRIDAY 5.20.16 Read Acts 2:5-13. The devout Jews were hearing a "sound" whose source was "Galileans." This is somewhat humorous because most educated Jews would consider Galileans incapable of mastering a second language due to lack of intelligence and education. They could hear the particular Galilean dialect in the languages. It wasn't perfect. God works with and through real people. *What times in your life has God used the least likely and reputable messenger to speak to you? How should this speak to us when we feel 'unworthy' to work for God's cause?*

SATURDAY 5.21.16 Read Acts 8:17, 10:44-11:18, 19:1-6. How is the Pentecost event used to anchor other times when God "shows up?" *Does this serve as a reminder that God's powerful presence through the Holy Spirit was not a one-time event but an ongoing presence among those who follow after God's Messiah?*

Love: How do these devotions teach about the love of God and the love for one another?

Learn: What have you learned about where Jesus walked that helps you with where you walk?

Share: What key insights have you learned this week on how to share your faith with others?

Serve: Look at the prayer list. Who can you pray for? Who needs a little extra help in an area where you can make a difference?

Healing Strength: Lurana Babcock, Robert Sprong (friend of Caitlin McCarty), Rex Townsend, Stan Ensck, Chris Osborn (Ken and Sandy Grubb's daughter), Janet Coons (Donna's daughter)

Homebound Members: Mary Hicks, Mary Schmidt, Joann Young, Jeanne Carman

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