

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO US
ACTS 2.1-13

Well Happy Birthday.

Did you know it was your birthday, today? Our birthday?

The Church's Birthday? No, not the birthing or founding of FUMC, but we celebrate today the birthing of the church universal, the church of Jesus Christ.

Today marks the birthday...many years ago,a Pentecost Day marked the birth.

Here is how it came about...

Forty days after His resurrection,

Jesus was with his disciples and then he left them, he ascended into heaven.

He told the disciples to go to Jerusalem and wait-wait for the Holy Spirit.

Then 10 days later, Acts 2.1 says, ***"When the day of Pentecost came,"***

Pentecost has evolved from one of the major holidays of the Jewish faith. Historically it marks the occasion of Moses receiving the commandments in 1200 BC on Mt. Sinai.

It was also holiday for the harvest time-it's like our Thanksgiving season. It's the time of the year when the first crops are harvested in the fields or the first fruits picked from the trees and offered to God.

As the day of Pentecost unfolds in Acts 2, we see the harvest symbolism. The disciples and new converts are the first fruits of Jesus' labor.

Pentecost was also a Pilgrim festival.

People made a pilgrimage to Jerusalem to experience God.

But if we think about it, in our Christian theology, Pentecost is really another experience of God's coming to us. The Holy Spirit is sent to us.

We know the Holy Spirit visited the OT people for a short time.

The Spirit gave them power, strength, or wisdom and then left.

But Pentecost reminds us that God's Spirit not only comes to us, but continues to live in us.

I like to remember Pentecost most as our beginning, our birthday, the birthday of the Christian community, the birthday of the church.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO YOU...HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO US!!!

Let's talk about what happen on that day of Pentecost.

Verse 1a, *"they were all together in one place."*

"They" are probably the 120 disciples that Jesus told to wait in Jerusalem.

They may have started out in the upper room but this particular morning they had come to the temple, enjoying a great time of praying and praising God.

It would be like a fair time public holiday time with different groups around and in the temple area.

Now let's see and hear what the Holy Spirit does

1-THE HOLY SPIRIT CREATES

Verse 2, *"Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting."*

The house was the house of God, the temple,
See the Southern Stairs of the temple on your right.
The "migvahs" close by are used for the baptisms.

The sound of a violent wind, the Greek root word for sound comes from the same word, pneuma that means breathe, wind, or spirit.
The wind is a symbol of the Holy Spirit.

Even though we don't see the wind, we know when it is present.
The wind is powerful, it move things, it gives life, it creates and recreates.

Remember in the beginning, Genesis 1.1-2

"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters."

The Holy Spirit hovers over the darkness, the void, and the raging oceans.
At God's commanded the Spirit moved in and created order, beauty, and life.

God created the heavens + the earth, God created +recreates you and I.
God created a community of believers, God created the church.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO YOU...HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO US!

1-THE HOLY SPIRIT CREATES and
2-THE HOLY SPIRIT CONVICTS. Verse 3,

“They saw tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them.”

Did you know that flames of a fire are also a symbol of the Holy Spirit? Notice the United Methodist Logo has flames whipping around the cross.

Why is fire a symbol of the Holy Spirit?

We know fire purifies. In Numbers 31.23 God told Moses, **“Gold, silver, bronze, iron, tin, lead, and everything else that can withstand fire must be put through the fire, and then it will be clean.”**

Much like a silversmith burning the impurities out of precious metal, the Holy Spirit “burns” the impurities out of us...burns the sin out of us.

That doesn’t sound to comfortable does it?

It’s called conviction. The Holy Spirit convicts us of our sin.

It’s that still small voice that makes us uncomfortable when we sin.

Ezekiel 36.27 says, **“And I will put my Spirit in you to move you to follow my decrees and to be careful to keep my laws.”**

As believers if we are too comfortable with our sin, if there is no conviction, guilt, or remorse...

maybe we’d better think about whether or not our salvation is the real thing. Maybe there are some things we’re not giving to God.

The great evangelist, John Rice was asked if he had gotten to the place in his spiritual life where he never sinned. He said, “No, but I’ve gotten to the place where I can’t enjoy it.”

The guilt created by conviction is designed not to drive you crazy but to drive you to confession.

Do any of you have those dog collars that give electric shocks if your dog tries to leave the yard? The dog experiences pain if it crosses the line. That pain is to make the dog turn back and go into the yard.

So too God has set boundaries for us. When we experience the pain of guilt we’re to confess, repent, or turn back to God.

We also know that fire just as wind creates energy.

Have you ever heard the expression, “He’s on fire for the Lord.”

It means one has a great love or passion for the Lord.

Ages ago in the fair village of Geddes I was conducting a wedding.
I introduce the song to the unity candle and then stepped back to the side.
In doing so I actually backed into the candelabra.
All of a sudden I saw smoke coming over my shoulder.
Then I felt the hand of the best man padding my back.
The crisis was snuffed out and the service continued very smoothly.
The couple was unaware anything had happened but one of their friends
had seen it all. He came up after the worship, and said,
"Pastor Tom, that was great. You were really on fire for the Lord."

What a compliment, II Kings 10.16 says,
"King Jehu said, come with me and see my zeal for the Lord."
David says in Psalm 69.9, **"For the zeal (passion, love, fire)
of your house has eaten me up."** (Fire consumes doesn't it)
And Galatians 4.18 tells us that, **"it is good thing to be zealous."**
It is good to be excited about the Lord, or "on fire for the Lord."

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO YOU...HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO US

THE HOLY SPIRIT CREATES, THE HOLY SPIRIT CONVICTS 3-THE HOLY SPIRIT HELPS US TO COMMUNICATE

Listen to this. **4All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them."**

Don't confuse this with the experience of speaking in tongues or prayer tongue. Listen.

5Now there were staying in Jerusalem (check the center of the map) God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven. **6**When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard them speaking in his own language. **7**Utterly amazed, they asked: "Are not all these men who are speaking Galileans? **8**Then how is it that each of us hears them in his own native language? **9**Parthians, Medes and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, (On the map Iran and Iraq-to the east of Jerusalem-on your right) Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, **10**Phrygia and Pamphylia, (Map-to the north-Turkey) Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene;(Map-to the south, Egypt, Libya) visitors from Rome **11** (both Jews and converts to Judaism); Cretans and Arabs (Map-to the west, Italy and Greece-your left), we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues!" **12**Amazed and perplexed, they asked one another, "What does this mean?"

First notice that these people were from all directions, they came to the festival, heard the Gospel and would return homes to do what-to share what they had heard. Second, notice that the Galileans were speaking in their own tongue and all these different tribes heard the Gospel in their native language.

The Holy Spirit helps us communicate with God and with one another.

We know the Holy Spirit does help us speak to and about God. Listen Romans 8.26-7, *“In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express.”*

Mother Mary came to visit cousin Elizabeth and in Luke 1.42 *“Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and in a loud voice she exclaimed...”*

In the first chapter of Luke, Elizabeth’s husband, papa Zechariah in obedience, named his new son John, was filled with the Holy Spirit, and then praises God. He sings about the wonderful character of God and all the things God will do.

In the second chapter of Luke it is Simeon’s turn, verse 25, This faithful old man has been in the temple all these years and *“He was waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not die before he had seen the Lord’s Christ. Moved by the Spirit, he went into the temple courts...Simeon took him in his arms and praised God saying...”*

The Holy Spirit helps our communication with God and others.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO YOU...HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO US

THE HOLY SPIRIT CREATES...CONVICTS...HELPS COMMUNICATE
And lastly THE HOLY SPIRIT CONVERTS, the Holy Spirit changes lives.

12-13 *Amazed and perplexed, they asked one another, “What does it mean? Some, however, made fun of them and said, “They have had too much wine.”*

Remember this is festival time, a spirited time.

Peter jumps up to set the record straight, to preach. He puts God’s spin on these unconventional circumstances, verse 14b and following, **“Fellow Jews and all of you who live in Jerusalem, let me explain this to you, listen carefully to what I say. These men are not drunk...it’s only 9:00 in the morning. This is what was spoken by the prophet Joel...”**

Peter continued to preach and at the end of the day verse 41 tells us, ***“Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.”***

Changing hearts is the work of the Holy Spirit.

And Spirit not only changes hearts but keeps them.

How many of you know what a sump pump is?

How many of you have needed a sump pump sometime within the last month.

What would have happened if your sump pump quit working?

You need power to keep the sump pump going. Electricity provides that power.

The Holy Spirit is the power that keeps us going in our Spiritual lives.

Colossians 1.11 says, ***“And we pray this in order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please him in every way; bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God, being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have...”***

“Power” is the operative word. Without it we’ll never get changed or continue to be changed into Christ’s image.

The word for power in Greek is dynamo.

Guess what other word that makes in our language. Dynamite.

It means just what we know it to mean—an explosive power.

The Holy Spirit is the power to create and recreate.

The Holy Spirit is the power that convicts and converts.

When we have the Holy Spirit within us we have that power.

We are instruments of God’s power and can help change lives.

Our problem with this is either we try to do everything in our own power or don’t trust God’s power can change lives.

I want to tell you a fishing story, a different kind of fishing story.

The game warden suspected a certain fisherman was fishing with dynamite. So one day he asked the fisherman if he could fish with him.

The fisherman said OK. They got in the boat and pushed out a ways.

Sure enough the fisherman lit a stick of dynamite and threw it in the water.

There was a big explosion, water gushing, fish flying, and believe it or not, (I told you was a fishing story), the fish all landed in the boat.

The game warden couldn't believe what he saw but had presence of mind to say to the fisherman, fishing with dynamite is illegal.

The fisherman smiled, took another stick of dynamite, lit it, and tossed it into the lake.

There was a big explosion, water gushing, fish flying, and believe it or not, the fish all landed in the boat.

The game warden was ready, "I'm going to arrest you."
The fisherman smiled took another stick of dynamite, lit it, but this time, handed it to the game warden.

The warden was shocked into silence and looked foolish holding the dynamite. The fisherman still smiling asked, "Well, are you going to fish or not?"

We're to become fishers of men aren't we?
But like some of us, the friendly warden didn't quite know what to do with the power he'd been given.

Not so for Maneul Villar Bedoya.
He lives in a remote region of Peru.
He lives in the same house he was born in 61 years ago.
There is no electricity or plumbing.
He does not own a car and has to walk 6 hours to get to the main road.

His job-he plants churches, he helps birth churches.
How? He prays and fasts until he is given a vision by the Holy Spirit.
Then he goes into the jungle to find the place he has seen while praying.
He continues to pray and fast until the Holy Spirit gives him a picture of churches pastor. He finds the pastor and establishes a church board.
Then he heads home to begin again praying and fasting.

In one village he was attacked by a terrorist and shot in the back of the head. He regained consciousness and had no idea what happened or where he was. He eventually found himself back at home.

He doesn't know if the bullet is still in his head or not.
But he does know he has a hole in his head and the Holy Spirit in his heart.
Guess what he is doing today?

Incredible isn't it, the presence and power of the Holy Spirit.
The Holy Spirit changes people's lives and changes communities.
Hey, anybody want to go fishing? Oh by the way Happy Birthday.