

On the Rush of a Wind

Acts 2: 1-21

Pentecost

June 5, 2022

Rev. Donna Vuilleumier

Earth, Wind and Fire—a dramatic reading for Pentecost in 3 voices

A: The fire,

B: the wind,

C: the water.

A: The liberation of God's people began with

C: the burning of a flame.

B: The voice of the Lord flashes forth flames of fire.

A: Moses led his flock beyond the wilderness, and came to Horeb, the mountain of God.

C: There the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire out of a bush:

B: Is not my word like fire, and like a hammer that breaks a rock in pieces?

A: He looked, and the bush was blazing, yet it was not consumed.

C: The voice of the Lord shakes the wilderness.

A: The liberation of God's people continued with fire

C: and with wind.

A: On the morning of the third day there was thunder and lightning, as well as a thick cloud on the mountain,

B: and a blast of a trumpet so loud that all the people who were in the camp trembled.

A: Moses brought the people out of the camp to meet God. They took their stand at the foot of the mountain.

C: The voice of the Lord flashes forth flames of fire.

A: Now Mount Sinai was wrapped in smoke, because the Lord had descended upon it in fire;

B: the smoke went up like the smoke of a kiln, while the whole mountain shook violently.

C: As the blast of the trumpet grew louder and louder, Moses would speak and God would answer him in thunder.

A: God's people remembered their liberation out of Egypt in the celebration of three festivals:

B: Passover, or the Feast of Unleavened Bread;

A: Shavuot, or Pentecost;

C: and the Feast of Tabernacles.

A: For God had said:

C: Three times in the year you shall hold a festival for me.

B: You shall observe the feast of Passover, which marks the first spring harvest.

C: You shall observe Pentecost, the thanksgiving festival of the harvest of wheat,

B: and remember the giving of the Law.

C: You shall observe the Feast of Tabernacles at the end of the harvest,

B: when you gather in from the field the fruit of your labor.

A: These are the three times in the year when all your males shall appear before the Lord God.

C: The fire, the wind.

B: The water.

A: After his suffering, Jesus presented himself alive to the apostles by many convincing proofs, appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God.

C: While staying with them, he ordered them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait there for the promise of the Father.

B: “This is what you have heard from me; for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.”

A: When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place.

B: The voice of the Lord flashes forth flames of fire.

A: And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind,

C: He makes winds his messengers, flames of fire his servants.

A: and it filled the entire house where they were sitting.

B: And anything else that can withstand fire must be put through the fire, and then it will be clean.

A: Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them.

B: Has any other people heard the voice of God speaking out of fire, as you have, and lived?

A: All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability.

C: The fire,

B: the wind,

A: the water.

C: Now there were devout Jews from every nation under heaven living in Jerusalem.

B: Now the whole earth had one language and the same words. And as they migrated from the east, they came upon a plain in the land of Shinar and settled there.

C: And at this sound the crowd gathered and was bewildered, because each one heard them speaking in the native language of each.

B: And they said to one another, “Come, let us build ourselves a city, and a tower with its top in the heavens, and let us make a name for ourselves; otherwise we shall be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth.”

C: Amazed and astonished, they asked, “Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? And how is it that we hear, each of us, in our own native language? Germans, Swedes, Palestinians, and residents of Moscow, Geneva and Beijing, Pretoria and Cairo, France and Indonesia, Egypt and Libya.

B: The Lord came down to see the city and the tower, which mortals had built. And the Lord said, “Let us go down, and confuse their language there, so that they will not understand one another’s speech.”

C: In our own languages we hear them speaking about God’s deeds of power.

B: So the Lord scattered them abroad from there over the face of all the earth, and they left off building the city.

C: Is not my word like fire, and like a hammer that breaks a rock in pieces?

A: All were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another,

C: “What does this mean?”

A: But others sneered and said,

C: “They are filled with new wine.”

A: But Peter, standing with the eleven, raised his voice and addressed them,

B: “Men of Judea and all who live in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and listen to what I say. Indeed, these are not drunk, as you suppose, for it is only nine o’clock in the morning.

C: The fire,

A: the wind, the water.

B: This is what was spoken through the prophet Joel: “In the last days it will be,” God declares, “that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh,

A: out of the believer’s heart shall flow rivers of living water.

B: And your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams. Even upon my slaves, both men and women, in those days I will pour out my Spirit;

C: those who drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty.

A: The water that I give will become a spring of water gushing up to eternal life.

B: And they shall prophesy. And I will show signs in the heaven above and signs on the earth below; blood, and fire, and smoky mist.

C: The sun shall be turned to darkness and the moon to blood, before the coming of the Lord’s great and glorious day. Then everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.”

B: “You that are Israelites, listen to what I have to say: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with deeds of power, wonders, and signs that God did through him among you—this man, handed over to you according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of those outside the law.

A: So that, when they look on the one whom they have pierced, they shall mourn for him, as one mourns for an only child, and weep bitterly over him, as one weeps over a firstborn.

B: This Jesus God raised up, and of that, all of us are witnesses. Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this that you both see and hear.

C: On that day a fountain shall be opened for the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, to cleanse them from sin and impurity.

B: Therefore let the entire house of Israel know with certainty that God has made him both Lord and Messiah, this Jesus whom you crucified.”

A: Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and to the other apostles,

C: “Brothers, what should we do?”

A: Peter said to them,

B: “Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you, for your children, and for all who are far away, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to him.”

A: And he testified with many other arguments and exhorted them, saying,

B: “Save yourselves from this corrupt generation.”

C: Even now the axe is lying at the root of the trees; and every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.

A: The fire, the wind, the water.

A: All who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need.

C: Each man will be like a shelter from the wind and a refuge from the storm.

A: Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple,

C: they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts,

B: praising God and having the goodwill of all the people.

C: With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation.

B: And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.

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Acts 2: 1-21

When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. 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. Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability.

Now there were devout Jews from every nation under heaven living in Jerusalem. And at this sound the crowd gathered and was bewildered, because each one heard them speaking in the native language of each. Amazed and astonished, they asked, "Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? And how is it that we hear, each of us, in our own native language? Parthians, Medes, Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabs—in our own languages we hear them speaking about God's deeds of power." All were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, "What does this mean?" But others sneered and said, "They are filled with new wine."

But Peter, standing with the eleven, raised his voice and addressed them, "Men of Judea and all who live in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and listen to what I say. Indeed, these are not drunk, as you suppose, for it is only nine o'clock in the morning. No, this is what was spoken through the prophet Joel: '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. Even upon my slaves, both men and women, in those days I will pour out my Spirit; and they shall prophesy. And I will show portents in the heaven above and signs on the earth below, blood, and fire, and smoky mist. The sun shall be turned to darkness and the moon to blood, before the coming of the Lord's great and glorious day. Then everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.'

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When the day of Pentecost had come---the day seven weeks after Passover had been celebrated was the celebration of the giving of the Law to Moses on Mount Sinai---devout Jews had gathered in Jerusalem for this annual sacred and holy day. Yet also gathered there were Peter and the other disciples, including Matthias who had just become one of the 12—the sacred number of the tribes of Israel. And with the 12 were over 100 followers, including Mary and Jesus' brothers, and women who had been healed of illness or evil spirits: Mary Magdalene, Susanna, and others who not only followed Jesus, but were uniquely able to support Jesus' work using their own resources. The inbreaking rush of the Pentecost wind was God's messenger as the voice of the Lord flashed forth as flames of fire just as Joel had so long ago prophesied, "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."

Male or female, young or old, whoever you are by God's design and creation, whatever language you speak, wherever you are from, wherever you call home, this good news of God's redeeming love and grace is for you. You shall prophesy, you shall see visions, you shall dream

dreams, as the first act of the Spirit was to transcend differences, kindling a whole new way that God was being known, revealed, in the world.

The empowering fire of the Holy Spirit enabled each of the disciples to speak in a language other than their own, to bring God's redeeming grace through Jesus Christ to the ends of the earth, and through all the chaos and commotion of the thousands gathered as the Christian church was born.

The empowering breath of the Holy Spirit enabled Peter to speak to the crowds so that they could realize that this was not wine but living water. Not only was his message heard, but so accepted that 3,000 people decided that day to follow Jesus.

On this one particular day, the Holy Spirit transcended layers of differences to accomplish God's many purposes. Differences of language, differences of faith practices among the different synagogues, and societal differences between women and men, young and old, were overcome, transcended, surpassed by the tailwinds of the Holy Spirit.

In our particular day, in our time in which mass shootings unbelievably happen all too regularly, when hostility and aggression have become a pandemic of their own, when there is rampant misuse of creation's resources in the name of progress, and when there is hateful and divisive conflict in the various ways that God is worshipped, and how each of God's beloved have been created, how many of our differences could be transcended if we allowed the power of the Holy Spirit to be kindled and burn, if we allowed the breath of the Holy Spirit to blow in the winds of radical love in our lives?

On this Pentecost Sunday, may the Holy Spirit be poured out on all flesh, that we may not only prophesy, envision and dream of the world as God desires it to be, but may we act with the boldness, courage and wisdom of the Spirit that came on the rush of a wind. Amen.