

THE PASSION TO RENEGOTIATE
[Written in oral style]

Acts 2:1-21
Pentecost, Year C

June 5, 2022
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Today, we recall the coming of the Holy Spirit at the Pentecost festival. Pentecost was a holiday that attracted people from all around, including those from different cultures.

For us, Pentecost signifies God's Spirit coming to and moving into the hearts and minds of the believers in Jesus.

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A meagre 120 faithful were waiting in Jerusalem for divine help and revelation. Jesus had told them God's Spirit would come to their aid.

Waiting with anticipation is an invitation.  
That type of waiting is open, inviting to hopeful change.

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Even so, we can imagine their anxiousness.
Jesus had left them. Their leader was gone.

They were likely thinking:
How can we continue without him?
Are we ready? Are we experienced enough?
What should we do?

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This may appear like an election defeat when the leader resigns, but...It was more profound than that.

The situation is more like a flight instructor jumping out of the plane, promising to return, and leaving the students to figure things out.

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The waiting faithful had to redefine their lives.
It was a time of renegotiation because so much had changed.

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Then suddenly, God's Spirit arrives in a big way.

Those effected said it felt like the rush of a violent wind, and they sensed tongues of fire penetrating all around, touching each one.

They could feel the presence of God's Spirit; however, God's Spirit does much more than evoke an awe-filled emotional response.

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Many people often regard God's Spirit as merely a feeling, and there are some who seek to possess an intense "spiritual" rush.

Yet, God's Spirit is more cognitive in function than it is a sensation. God's Spirit is referred to as a person--a person that enlightens, convicts,inspires, directs, ...equips and enables...Action.

At Pentecost, the followers felt the presence of the Spirit arrive, and THEN ...they were equipped with the ability to communicate in foreign languages.

The Important message in this is They were able to understand and be understood. [repeat]

They were changed. Divine Love gave them compassionate understanding. Pentecost signifies transformation and empowerment.

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God's Spirit informs and empowers for action,..... and to be sure, the essence and nature of God's Spirit is Love.

God is love, and so it makes sense that the activity of God's Spirit is from and for love. Even so, being filled with the Spirit does Not just mean being full of warm fuzzy emotions and loving regard.

God's Spirit evokes much more than "thoughts and prayers."

God's Spirit enlightens, convicts, ....inspires, directs, ...equips and enables...Action! ....LOVE in ACTION, including compassionate understanding.

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When the famous 16th century Mennonite martyr heard the crack of thin ice and the splash of his pursuer falling into the frigid water, Dirk Willems did not stop, turn and say, "I'm so sorry for you. I do love you very much and so does God, but I have to keep going or you'll take me back to prison and have me killed.

So, you better ask God for forgiveness, while you can. Bye."

The Spirit of God enable, empowered Dirk to defy self preservation and rescue the man in peril.

God's Spirit moves us to action, compassionate action.

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Jesus is not around. Jesus is gone. Jesus is not with us. He is not here to demonstrate the way of salvation.

To be sure, Jesus' death did not bring salvation, but it is part of the way.

God sent Jesus to show us / to model the way to live and be, and after Jesus, God provided God's Spirit in order to carry on that ministry and message.

Teresa of Avila (a veal ya), the 16th century saint, described what it is like living without Jesus extant.

Here is what she wrote:

Christ has no body but yours,  
No hands, no feet on earth but yours.  
Yours are the eyes with which he looks with compassion on this world.  
Yours are the feet with which he walks on earth to do good.  
Yours are the hands with which he blesses all the world.  
Yours are the hands, yours are the feet, Yours are the eyes, you are his body.  
Christ has no body now but yours, No hands, no feet on earth but yours.  
Yours are the eyes with which he looks with compassion on the world.  
Christ has no body now on earth but yours.

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God's Spirit guides and directs us, and it can be profound.
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Recall, from last month, the small plane in Florida where the pilot passed out?

He suffered a torn aorta, and survived after emergency surgery.

The passenger called on the radio for help. He told the air traffic controller what happened, and yelled that he had no flight experience.

Just as he had trusted the pilot, he then had to trust an unseen person giving instructions. See the parallel?

Amazingly, he safely landed the plane by obeying each step given to him. That is an allegory for salvation.

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God's Spirit is not an unknown voice whispering in our ear helpful tips for good living and how to survive.

We know the Spirit. The Spirit is God.
We are in a relationship with God.
The Spirit comes to those who wait and invite God in.

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At some point, we made a covenant with God. Vows were said, and we invited God's Spirit into our hearts and minds. That was when the journey of our relationship with God began in earnest.

Yet, relationships are not static. Relationships are active, and time, events and circumstance alter relationships.  
Conditions can change, and that changes the provisions, the stimuli and the person,.. ..... thus affecting the relationship.

After a while and after a change of circumstances, a relationship must be revisited / reviewed and renewed or it will wither away.

We are not the same person that entered a relationship with God.

We have changed; the world around us has changed, and so new life needs to be breathed into our relationship with God.

Moreover, this applies to any kind of relationship, and we do not want to neglect and starve relationships founded on love--they are too precious to ignore.

Marriages/ covenanted relationships / any love based relationship must be examined and refreshed when things change, such as when a child is born,..... when jobs change,..... when health changes,..... OR..when children become teens, .....**especially then.**

Today, we acknowledge children becoming youth with a rite of passage.

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There are times when a developing teenager feels like they are being overwhelmed by a violent wind and flashes of fire.

We know hormones are the cause, but labelling it does not help.

The youth can feel much older, even independent, and then quickly flip and feel like a suffering child.

They are changing. Circumstances and conditions are changing.

Likewise, parents may sense a violent wind and bursts of flame coming from their once sweet child.

Then be surprised the next day by their vulnerable, tender youth.

Parenting a teenager is extremely hard on a marriage.

The relationship **must** be renegotiated.

It will need a breath of new life.

Sometimes professional counselling is needed, and always relationship inventory needs to be taken,.....which must include recalling the wonder and beauty of love.

Love opens the door to relationships.

Love motivates loving behaviour / actions.

Love nurtures the soul.

Love expands the mind and spirit to extend beyond self.

And,..... love has been the glue that lets us put up with a lot of ugly, painful and disappointing things over the years.

Yet, never abuse. Abuse is never to be tolerated.

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Love is transforming. Recall the Pentecost experience.

Love / God's Spirit enabled compassionate understanding.

They spoke and were heard.

They listened and understood.

Parents, Youth, pause and invite God into the situation.

Strive to understand and to be understood, with compassion.

In addition, wait with expectant hope and **pray!**  
Pray with each other and with your youth. It is powerful. <

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Without renewal.....a loving relationship will lose its spark and passion.

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We can sense when that happens with God.....because our lives seem to be fading,.....too.

Fortunately, God's Spirit will call us back to life.

The call could feel like regret.

God reaching out may feel like a keen sense of grace bubbling up.

It may be like a violent wind or piercing flames.....that prompts us to action.

It could be a new opportunity or a turn of events that pulls us to God.

Perhaps, there is a nagging torment like an endless knock on the door.

God **will** call us to renewal / to refresh our relationship with God.

Similarly, partners in relationships will give signs, too, that it's time to re-energize things.

They could be positive and inviting in nature,.....at first.

Yet, if ignored, they tend to be more piercing and desperate,... like a baby crying in the night.

And,.....our own spirit will give us signs when a love based relationship is in turmoil and fading.

The signs can be a sense of discontentment,..... of aloneness,... of anger or sadness.... of alienation, even hopelessness.

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In order to live and to thrive..... we need to be in loving relationships that are vibrant and fresh--that are filled with loving actions.

And, those actions include regular and frequent renewals: call it being refilled with the Spirit or recommitting to a covenant...or healing and restoring old promises.

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When circumstances change, particularly in an undesirable fashion,  
Wait with expectation that God will show us a new way, empowered by God's Spirit.

And finally, there are NO green pastures waiting for you.

The green pastures are what we nurture.

The better way is NOT another way, but rather a renewed, transformed way of being in love,...again.

By the power of God's Spirit, Christ is alive in you and me.  
God / love comes for you, for all of us.