

Sermon Starter – Pentecost Sunday

This is God's Doing

Acts 2:1-21, Romans 8:14-17, Psalm 104:24-35, John 14:8-17, 25-27

God's Spirit is poured out on all flesh as the Spirit gave them the ability and confidence to speak about God's good deeds: that we are all (Jews, Greek, male, female, black, white, gay, straight, wealthy, poor) children of God and heirs of God. Peter reminds them that God declared that in the last day these things would happen.

We are all a part of this outpouring, receiving of the Spirit. We are called into the power of thinking through our lives and the lives of others anew. We have divine power to speak life into our own lives and the lives of others. God will give us visions and dreams to share with the world. We are not without value or worth in the eyes of God, but instead are Spirit-filled heirs with the ability to create (Psalm 104:30) even greater works than we can imagine (John 14:12).

Therefore (Romans 8:15) we are no longer slaves, no longer captive to the spirit of fear: fear of the unknown; fear of our past; fear of our future; fear of broken promises; fear of making promises; fear of grief and loss; fear of relationships; fear of people who are different from us; fear of being different; fear of change. We are free to choose this day and every day to allow the Holy Spirit to create a new narrative for our lives and the lives of those around us.

Because we are blessed to be part of God's beloved community, the unified church in which it's not just about what I can do or what I have done but about something bigger than me, the whole community of believers: when I am down, someone is there to lift me up. When my spirit is low, someone is there to guide or direct me back to the pouring out of God's Spirit.

Invitation to accept the pouring out of the Spirit

The pastor recites the Joel passage, inserting the names of various members, such as: "In the last days it will be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh like Martha and Lee, and your sons and daughters like Keith, Nate, Lexus, and Mercedes shall prophesy, and your young men like Mekhi and Noah shall see visions, and your old men like Jerry and Clent shall dream dreams." Then the pastor invites people to come forward for anointing as a sign of accepting or receiving the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

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