

A New Fire for the New Gods

I'm sure they thought their prayer time would be like any other. As religious as they were, the ordinariness of everyday life always threatens to get in the way. They had work, and fellowship, and then they had errands around the city. They had lives to live outside of that upper room, but, nevertheless, they were faithful. So, they gathered as usual, gathered to sing the Psalms, gathered to make the prayers and break the bread. Gathered to drink the wine and remember their master, their teacher, their friend. Life didn't slow down for the Apostles, didn't offer them any courtesies it didn't offer everyone else. They had to work, and scrape, and claw to get by, so when they finally showed up to that upper room, you know they were exhausted, their minds occupied elsewhere as they settled in for a prayer time like any other.

I've been there, been at the point when every liturgy feels like *every other liturgy*. When all of this feels so...ordinary. So routine. So normal. We bring into this place everything about our lives out there. The pains. The joys. The distractions. The things that have us excited about the upcoming week. And because most Sundays at St. Peter's look and feel the same, it's easy to treat this as just one tiny sliver of our lives and expect that every liturgy at St. Peter's will be like every other liturgy. As normal as they come. As boring as they come. There's a problem with that thinking, though. Because the disciples thought it was a prayer time like any other, too. Until it wasn't.

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. Just like that, everything changed. Everything

changed about how they understood themselves, how they understood God, and how they experienced God in the world. Not just a god up there, a god out there, a god separate from their daily lives. Their God came down in a cacophony, a symphony of noises that both ended their world and birthed for them a new one. They were filled. The cavern of their hearts now made the home of God. Their lungs now breathing with the breath that hovered over the waters of creation, their bodies now made alive with the same Spirit that raised Christ from the dead, trampling down death by death. They were made more than human. They were stitched together, like those bones in Ezekiel's vision. They were made to be stronger, and braver, and they were now driven not by the pursuit of ordinary life, but by the pursuit of extraordinary transformation!

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. They emerged from their room changed enough, transformed enough that the gathered crowd thought they were drunk, thought they were out of their minds. And in a way, they were, yet not on wine, but rather on an elixir of Spirit and Sanctification, an elixir that filled them with the conviction enough to leave their comfort and safety and preach to that hostile and demeaning crowd.

Fractured and broken after the ending of Jesus' earthly ministry, the disciples were now pieced back together in order to piece the world back together. They were made alive so that they could go into the world and bring it back to life! They were given the gift of God's Very Spirit, made more than human, so that the extraordinariness of God could make all of humanity

something *more*. It's as the Psalmist has said in the 82nd Psalm, "*I say, 'You are gods, children of the Most High, all of you.'*" We were made, and remade, for so much more than we settle for. God did not become flesh in Jesus, crucified and risen, in order for us to be satisfied with the prison of mundane normalcy. God sought to accomplish our growth, our evolution into a people who flex with the power and strength given to us, who reach out beyond our walls to ALL, especially to those different than ourselves.

The Apostle's thought they were showing up for a prayer time like any other, and perhaps you thought the same today. They left there having had their very bodies filled with the energy of God's Holy Spirit, becoming more than merely human. Should you choose it, you'll leave here with a belly full of God, having tasted of divine goodness in the sacrament of Christ's body and blood, becoming more than merely human. You've got everything the Apostles had, and more! Like them, you can change the world, and thus the course of human history. Don't hesitate for the right words to say, or a list of the right things to do. Just start sharing this goodness with anyone you can. God will take care of the rest!