

“May these words of mine please God.
We will rejoice in the Lord.” AMEN!

Pastor’s rarely ever shut up.

There is the common joke about
the danger of giving a pastor a microphone and
the audience prepares to not do
anything for the next 60 minutes.

The advice we learned in seminary was
to always have sermon prepared in your mind
so that at the ready you may preach it.

But what I want to talk about today is
what happens when we become quiet?

Not only the pastor but each of us.

I am human and you are human...
what happens when we become quiet?

It might seem strange to ask on a Pentecost Sunday.

A day celebrated as anything but quiet.

The Holy Spirit came
crashing into the scene in Acts.

A violent wind, and a cacophony of languages
all speaking at once and then
this supernatural vision of flames resting
over peoples' heads as all of them
were filled with the Holy Spirit.

The actual event was anything but quiet!

I wonder, though was the miracle of
that day in the speaking of tongues or was
it in the ones who were quiet and listening
to those voices speaking in
their own languages?

Most of us tend to simply look at
the miracle of the speaker, and that is
not a bad thing,

but today I want us to consider the miracle
of the listening.

And listening can only happen
when we become quiet. (Pause)

So, what happens when we become quiet?

It just may be that the Spirit of Truth
will become poured out over the quiet one.

Like the wind, the Spirit moves us
in different ways, sends us to different places
and connects us onto other people's ground.

What happened long ago on the
Spirit-filled day spoken of in Acts was not
the first time the Spirit of God entered
the cosmos.

Truly that Spirit had always been.

But this event with Peter and the apostles
was an experience of something new.

An outpouring of the Holy Spirit onto a group
that became emboldened by God to share
the gospel of Jesus Christ in languages
that were previously unknown.

Then every devout Jew came and heard
their proclamation as they let them speak
and they listened.

By letting themselves enter the quiet
they encountered new forms of consciousness
and awareness and realized a new commitment
from God being introduced to them.

That new commitment was that God's election
remains with the Jews, and it also extends
to the Palestinians, to the Greeks,
to the Egyptians and to all
the other places read that are hard
to pronounce. 😊

This Pentecost was a time of both
being uprooted and being grounded deeply

in our place as the created. (Pause)

Wouldn't it also be a miracle today if
we too found ourselves being uprooted
and deeply grounded?

It happens when we, who hold the seats of distinction
or the places of power, sit quietly and listen
while others speak. (Pause)

Who are the ones who have voices
but are often not allowed to speak?

It is not hard to think of those in the world
who are often silenced.

People of different races,
gender descriptions, citizenship are often
silenced even in American.

A place where we pride ourselves as
being the land of the free and home of the brave.

Even here, there are those not allowed

to share the God Spirit inside of them.

But doesn't God delight in
these human beings, too?

There is no doubt about that!

As in Psalm 104 we find that
"In wisdom God has made
them all and us all.

An earth full of creatures...
living things small and great."

And then a little later in the Psalm
at verse 29 we read,

"When you hide your face, they (we) are terrified."

In other words when God removes
God's Self from human beings it is like
our own breath is taken away...
we die and return to dust.

This word for “breath” in the Psalm is
the Hebrew word, “Ruah.”

A word reminding us of breath.

It even sounds like breathing, “ruah.”

It is God’s breath in us and in every living creature
that gives us life and makes room
for the Holy Spirit to live in us;
voices to speak and courage to listen.
(Pause)

This is what the Holy Spirit does.

God’s breath uproots and deeply grounds us.
(Pause)

So what, then?

In the midst of Jesus’ farewell discourse in
John’s gospel where he was gathered
with his disciples.

He knew Peter would deny him and
Judas was absent by now, going to make
the handing over of Jesus happen
as smooth as possible.

In the midst of that,
we are drawn into Jesus' pastoral
moment of prayer when he wondered
if anyone else was going to leave,

and at the same time He must tell them
that He must leave them.

The remaining faithful knew now
they were about to have their "Helper,"
their "Comforter," their "Advocate" leave.

Jesus was all of these to them and
He was going away to the Father and
they could not follow Him.

And then the words of promise we celebrate today.

"Another will come," Jesus said.

This other Breath of God will not
be bound by human flesh and bone like Jesus was
but will be the Spirit of Truth that will
guide them (and us) to glorify Jesus
and keep us in God. (Pause)

Today, beloved of God, we too
are experiencing a regathering.

There is something very new about
what is going on today.

But this is not us going back to recapture
what was before.

We must not; we cannot go back to normal.

How do we sit quietly and hear the scripture
today leading us to what is new?

In other words, “Where will the Spirit take us?”

How will the church follow Jesus to Galilee

and see Him there?

What a powerful reminder for us today
to know that when in physical distancing
Christ's Spirit was with us, and now today,
our first day of regathering in

physical presence with one another that
same Spirit is present and we are
learning to be quiet.

We encountered being dispersed but that
does not mean we were adrift or existing
without purpose.

Many God-inspired things were done in
the last 14 months.

I personally am so grateful for the love
this congregation is not afraid to share.

We are coming together now to tell stories of
the things we experienced in our diaspora.

To speak the experiences of loss and trauma

that were and are real.

Tell those stories to one another,
to reconnect, and to listen.

For God offers a new future as things will
be different than they were, but not
the connection we have to one another nor
the connection we have to God.

This we can be sure, is stronger than ever.

Come Holy Spirit, we are listening.

AMEN!