



On this Pentecost Sunday, we remember the rather drastic, entire world-shaping changes the Holy Spirit brought to life: all these disciples empowered to speak in languages that were not familiar to them, in order to reach precious children of God near and far away. It's rather baffling how it all came together long ago with all those Parthians and Medes and Elamites and everyone else. Except, if we are not careful, this whole Pentecost thing can be incredibly intimidating, to say the least. That, if we present-day disciples aren't pulling off something similar to that level of world-shaping alteration, then we are not doing our ministry nearly well enough.

Now, soon enough, we'll be singing what has become a standard for us on Pentecost Sunday, with "For the Healing of the Nations," as we lift up the modern-day Parthians and Medes and Elamites and beyond. We will pray "peace be yours" not only for war-ravaged nations like Afghanistan, Sudan, and Ukraine, but also for other places who may not be experiencing quite the same level of conflict, and yet with many individual citizens yearning for their own personal peace.

One of those countries has a most extensive history to rival the ancient Parthians, Medes, and Elamites, not to mention it is considered to be one of the most beautiful lands to explore in all the world today. Its historic Acropolis and picturesque Santorini, among many other sites, make it one of the most popular tourist attractions for those near and far away. Again, Greece may not be experiencing quite the same level of violent struggle as neighboring Turkey and Israel and Iran, countries that as we sing "peace be yours," we hope for something rather drastic, an entire world-shaping level of Holy Spirit miracle to rival that of Pentecost, in order to bring some semblance of Christ's calm and hope to such war-torn lands. But, sometimes, on this Pentecost Sunday, we also need to remember that the Holy Spirit does a fair share of ministry on a seemingly simplistic scale: some changes that may appear small in the grand scheme of God's miraculous work, but still brings some semblance of the peace that surpasses all understanding in Jesus Christ.

So, with that in mind, although Greece remains one of the greatest places to explore, it is also one of the least accessible countries for those who must travel in wheelchairs. It's not just that the ancient Greeks didn't think about being prepared for people of all varying levels of physical mobility. It's also that so much of Greece's breath-taking beauty comes from the water surrounding the country. A sea of awe-inspiring tranquility that not only brings in millions of tourists, but soothes its ten million citizens. But again, for the numerous confined to wheelchairs, they could only experience those wonderful sights from a far-off distance.

Except, in recent weeks, Greece went above and beyond in doing their own seemingly simple, but incredibly powerful response to those desperately seeking a breath-taking level of peace. The nation with one of the most illustrious histories took advantage of the gifts of modern technologies in creating electronic wheelchair ramps to not only get such often overlooked individuals to the sandy beaches, but all the way into the waters, including giving them an opportunity to swim, if they so choose. It allowed precious children of God whose opportunities are limited in so many ways to not only see and feel, but be immersed in a most soothing peace of God's tranquility in the Creation of their own native backyard.

It may not seem like much in comparison to a rush of a violent wind or people being able to speak in different languages out of nowhere to start spreading the Gospel to the ends of the earth, and yet, the nation of Greece still pulled off its own powerful version of the Pentecost story. After all, long ago, God not only took care of a divine ramp of sorts bringing Jesus Christ to humanity, but the Holy Spirit did its own ramp-building with the rest of humanity in making sure that we could more boldly proclaim God's hope and love and grace to as many children of God as possible. And when Greece constructed over 200 ramps for those in wheelchairs, it served as a reminder that the peace that surpasses all understanding is meant to be experienced by absolutely everyone regardless of physical, mental, or any other abilities. And it doesn't just stop with a serene body of water. No matter where we live, no matter where we are in life, the Holy Spirit continues to immerse us all in a hope and new life that can never be taken away from us in Jesus Christ, our Risen Lord. And for that Greatest News brought to life in Greece, in the places we call home, and throughout the world, we most certainly give thanks to God, indeed! Amen!

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