

Pentecost
May 31, 2020

“The Pentecostal language of these last days – the Gospel!” (Acts 2:17-18)
By Rev. Ed Weber

Grace, mercy and peace be to you from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, who will save all who call on His name by the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,
Our text for this Sunday of Pentecost is from our epistle reading from Acts 2:17-18.

**“And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, that I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your young men shall see visions, your old men shall dream dreams.
¹⁸ And on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days; and they shall prophesy.**

Here ends our text.

Yesterday was quite a day wasn't it? It had been 10 years since the last U.S. astronaut had entered space. And if you were like me, it was fascinating to watch it all unfold in high definition. There was live video within the space capsule. We saw what the astronauts saw as they were being hurled into the sky at amazing speeds. We saw the separations of the rocket at the different stages. All went well. Thanks be to God! The Dragon is on its way to the international space station for docking.

And if you were like me, it was intriguing to hear another language being spoken...a space language like nominal trajectory, meaning all is going according to plan. There were phrases for different checkpoints that only the astronauts would understand. Yes, we can understand 5,4,3,2,1 blastoff, but what we were privileged to hear yesterday got really technical very fast.

Today, we celebrate the unravelling of languages first knotted up at the tower of Babel. Before Babel, everyone spoke one language. But, not everyone spoke God's language. Sinful men thought they were so important that they didn't need God but needed to make a name for themselves. They thought they could build a tower to the heavens. How mistaken they were! God confused them. They couldn't accomplish

what they set out to do, because only by God's mercy and grace can a man accomplish anything in life. Everything broke down in an instant.

On the day of Pentecost, God, only God restored what was confused. In an instant, He gave men and women the ability to speak another language. There was no need for a linguistic crash course. God gave man these gifts, always by His grace and mercy.

And though, everyone who gathered to see what was going on, heard the disciples speaking in their native tongue, some weren't really hearing. Are these not Galileans? They must be drunk.

They were hearing with their ears, but not with their heart. Unbelievers continue to hear the Gospel of the marvelous works of God as a foreign language.

- I. The Pentecostal language of the Gospel continues to be a foreign language to the unbeliever in these last days

The only language that saves sinful man is the language of repentance and belief in the promises of God of the Savior.

“With many other words he (Peter) testified and exhorted them, saying, “Be saved from this perverse generation.” (Acts 2:40)

Noah believed God's word and was saved. But, the descendants of Ham who built the tower of Babel and also became the Canaanites, worshipped false gods and no longer spoke God's language.

All men are born in sin and are unable to communicate with God. Only by the power of the Holy Spirit can a person say that “Jesus is Lord”. (1 Corinthians 12:3)

Our generation is no different. We only need to look at what's going on in Minneapolis and other major cities...the rioting, the looting, people without self-control.

In Paul's second epistle to Timothy, he describes the last days.

“But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: 2 For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers,

disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, 3 unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, 4 traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, 5 having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away.” (2 Timothy 3:1-5)

Pentecost ushers in the last days. Yes, you heard it right there in our text, “in the last days, I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh”, God says. But, that was over 2000 years ago! Yes, one day is as 1000 years to God!

God is patient and slow to anger. He wants all men to be saved. And the pouring out of the Holy Spirit is for all men, on all flesh. It’s universal for all men need to be saved!

Have these last two months of global sickness made us pause to remember this a little more? Jesus disciples asked Him not long before His crucifixion.

“And what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?”

4 And Jesus answered and said to them: “Take heed that no one deceives you. 5 For many will come in My name, saying, ‘I am the Christ,’ and will deceive many. 6 And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not troubled; for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. 7 For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places. 8 All these are the beginning of sorrows.” (Matthew 24:4-8)

Yes, this has been a great pestilence that we’ve been going through. We are reminded that with the coming of Pentecost, the last days were ushered in and all men are called on to repent of their sinful language of unholiness and godlessness, and hear the language of the Gospel which alone gives life.

- II. The Pentecostal language of the Gospel is a universal language of God’s love for all sinners taught by the same Holy Spirit in these last days

Today’s a special day. We see the red around us. We only bring out the red colored paraments and stoles for special days...Pentecost, Reformation Day, days of martyrs. Well, sometimes it’s used on Palm Sunday, or what’s now called Passion

Sunday. Red gets our attention. If it's something important and timely, then it's in red letters. And Pentecost is important and very timely!

What Pentecost reveals is that God loves all people no matter what language they speak. He wants all people to know His marvelous works. He wants all people to speak His language, the Gospel language. What does that mean? God wants all people to know Jesus Christ as the Way, the Truth and the Life. That was Peter's Pentecostal sermon in a nutshell. We'll hear it in full next Sunday. Here's his opening words.

“Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a Man attested by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs which God did through Him in your midst, as you yourselves also know— 23 Him, being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death; 24 whom God raised up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that He should be held by it.... 36 “Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.”” (Acts 2:22-24,36)

That's the Gospel, the marvelous work of God that through the death of one Man, all would be saved. He is Lord and Christ.

This is the Gospel message for us who are also living in the last days. God always kept His promise to send the Savior. He kept His promise to Adam and Eve, to Abraham and to all people. And Pentecost is the Spirit's giving of the gift of life that Jesus won for all – young, old, men, and women. When God's marvelous work of salvation is proclaimed the Holy Spirit is poured out into sinful man's hearts and he learns a new language, the Gospel language, the language of God's love, mercy and forgiveness!

III. This Pentecostal language of the Gospel must be heard and believed before the great and glorious end of these last days.

When Pentecost came, the New Testament church was born. The era of the New Testament is the last era for it will end with the coming of Jesus! With the coming of the Holy Spirit, there is only one more coming to wait for...Jesus coming! It can happen at any time. We live in the last days, just as the disciples did on that day of Pentecost.

Peter's sermon connects the two comings of the Holy Spirit and Jesus final coming in one breath! For as soon as Peter says that the Holy Spirit will be poured out on all flesh, he speaks of the signs of the end times!

**I will show wonders in heaven above
And signs in the earth beneath:
Blood and fire and vapor of smoke.
20 The sun shall be turned into darkness,
And the moon into blood,
Before the coming of the great and awesome day of the Lord.**

Why? It is because the coming of the Holy Spirit who alone gives faith in Jesus to a sinful man is only what can make Jesus final coming a great and awesome day of the Lord for him. There is still time for man to repent. Peter proclaims, **“that whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.” (Acts 2:21)**

That's the Gospel language that excludes no one. It beckons all to repent and call on the name of the Lord before it is too late. For we live in the last days and we don't know how much time is left.

It makes us as disciples of Jesus to be more bold like Peter... to be more urgent in our proclamation of the Gospel. It's our language that God has given to us to speak daily. We are sent to give to the confusion of our generation with the clarity of Jesus love and forgiveness. The Holy Spirit is not just poured out on some flesh, but all flesh...young and old, men and women. The same Pentecostal Holy Spirit has been poured out on you in your baptism and has given you a new language to speak. You know of God's marvelous work in Jesus. You receive His very body and blood today for your forgiveness.

In these last days, God gives you strength to face all types of sin, sickness and sorrow. And in these last days, God also gives you the great joy of telling others to call on the name of the Lord to be saved so that the last day will be a great and awesome day! Amen

“The peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.” Amen. (Galatians 4:7)