

January 29, 2012
First Presbyterian Church - Coeur d'Alene

Series: Gone Fishing - Acts 1-3

Message: Acts 2:1-13 - 'Filled with the Spirit'

1 When the day of Pentecost arrived, they were all together in one place. 2 And suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. 3 And divided tongues as of fire appeared to them and rested[a] on each one of them. 4 And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.

1. **Slide1** At the start of the Book of Acts, 40 days after his resurrection and right before he departs for heaven, Jesus gathers the disciples to give them his mission for them.
 - a. But instead of launching them off to do great things right away - he tells them to wait.
 - i. The new Christian Church is a work in progress. Remains on the pad with the countdown on hold.
 - ii. But the waiting time is IMPORTANT. Things need to happen, and these opening verses of Acts describe how the church gets ready, figures out its purposes, puts the missing pieces in place.
 - b. We are in a waiting time.
 - i. Waiting for several years for new leadership, sense of direction, renewed purpose as church here in downtown.
 - ii. Still a sense we are waiting, but it's an important, rich time for coming together and hearing from God about how to prepare and do it the right way.
 1. Want to use this time well.
 - c. As we get to the opening of chap.2 the wait seems over. Here we go!
 - i. But not quite yet.
 - ii. The event Jesus promised to the disciples happens, but picture is still being completed.
 - iii. Today, we read about getting to the answer to a key question.
2. **Slide2** A word about Pentecost
 - a. Pentecost in Greek and Hebrew: the 50th day. Also called "Festival of Weeks."
 - i. **Slide3** 7 weeks, 50 days, between Passover and when people arrive at Mount Sinai and receive the Torah - the Law of God. This is when it is felt they truly became the people of God.
 - ii. Was really thought of as the birthday of the Jews.
 - b. **Slide4** Now, Pentecost would take on a whole new meaning. With the coming of the Holy Spirit it would be the birth of the church, the new People of God on earth.
3. The story picks up in Chapter 2 with the disciples gathered together in the Upper Room, their home base. Being Jews, they were also probably going to celebrate Pentecost.
 - a. **Slide5** All of a sudden - a huge sound - a rushing wind

- i. **Slide6** In 2004 three hurricanes passed through our county. I remember sitting on the front porch as the storm moved in. Like a hundred jumbo jets revving engines all at once. I will never forget it.
- ii. Let's try a little Sound simulator exercise! Rub, Click, pat, pound, stomp.
- iii. The presence of wind is a common experience of the presence of the Holy Spirit in scriptures:
 - 1. Shows up at Creation, blowing across the waters. Elijah hears it in the cave. Disciples in the boat on the sea.
- iv. Must have been a sense of awe and excitement. Now it's happening! Only just beginning.
- b. **Slide7** Next, a Sight - tongues of flame
 - i. Greek suggests it was one flame that then was distributed to everyone in the room
 - ii. Let's see what that might have looked like:
 - 1. Pass out orange tissue
 - iii. Fire is also an experience of God's physical presence.
 - 1. burning bush, pillar of flame, smoke and fire on Mt. Sinai, candelabra in the temple.
 - iv. Luke says that the tongues of fire rested on them. Sat on their head so they became a human candles.
 - 1. I imagine they not only saw the flame but felt the heat without getting burned. Pretty intense experience.
- c. **Slide8** And then - not a sound or sight but an incredible Feeling - something we can't simulate and only just imagine.
 - i. A unique experience for each person in the Room, but yet one coming from same source and happening to everyone at the same time. A total community experience.
- 4. **Slide9** Everything up to now a passive/receiving experience. Having had this experience, what will be the first thing the disciples are compelled to do?
 - a. They speak.
 - b. This, it seems to me, is so important for us to realize. Speaking is the church's #1 activity. Other actions are important, but not as important and never as a replacement for speaking out.
 - i. The message the church has for the world is called news. It is spoken by all Christians from pulpit, family dinner table, Facebook, hospital bed, battlefield, and coffee shop.
 - 1. Words of comfort for the sick, grieving and hurting.
 - 2. Words of justice for the oppressed and outcast.
 - 3. Words of welcome for the newcomer.
 - 4. Words of peace and hope in a world of war and evil.
 Examples.
 - ii. So many options for how to speak - but silence is never an option.
 - c. Luke makes sure we understand that the words we speak have to be intelligible. Uses the word 'Glossa.' Means language which is used and spoken so people understand each other.
 - i. Later he says the people of Jerusalem heard the disciples and heard what they said 'in their own language.'

- ii. So important for the church to keep in mind. It must strive to speak in words 'in *their* own language' and not just 'in *our* own language.'
 - d. And The speaking also has to be initiated by the Spirit. They spoke only 'as the Spirit compelled them.'
 - i. Sometimes it is a time to wait to speak. To discern and pray before you open your mouth.
 - ii. But sometimes you must be ready to just speak, you can't let moment pass. What are other moments like that?
- 5. And then Luke comes to the response of *other* hearers.
 - a. The disciples are not alone. Others hear the sound and were compelled by the Spirit to come.
 - i. From the outset God's great mission is revealed: the good news gathers people to it so that the community of speakers - the Koinonia - is expanding.
 - b. **Slide10** But Luke has some sobering news about this. Not everyone was open to hear what the disciples were speaking.
 - i. Mocking, rejection was a part of the church's first experience.
 - 1. The birthday party was interrupted by cranky guest.
 - ii. This isn't pleasant, but must be expected and not allowed to altar the message so more pleasant or acceptable.
 - 1. The moment message changed to meet demands of hearers the moment no longer the Spirit's message.
 - c. But Luke also shares good news which interestingly enough is revealed by the presence of bewilderment and questions
 - i. **Slide11** Luke pours into the verses as many words as he can think of to express it: the people were "bewildered, amazed, astonished, amazed (again), perplexed."
 - 1. Interesting to think that the best response to the church's message isn't a nodding head but a gaping mouth.
 - ii. And then the Key question is asked - "what does this mean?"
 - 1. The people wonder what it is natural to wonder: How do I understand what is happening and what I'm hearing? How do I put in context, how can this conform to my categories?
 - 2. This is such a key question not because it's the right question but because now the door is open for the next step.
 - d. In the next section of chapter 2, which we'll look at next week, Peter will get up and share the full message of the good news.
 - i. **Slide12** Question will change from "what does this mean?" to "what shall we do?"
 - ii. That's our goal. To answer this question for ourselves then figure out how to speak so it becomes the question of those God send us to speak to.

6. Slide13 First step is to train ourselves to speak as Spirit directs us.
 - a. Will take time to loosen our tongues. Ask Spirit to direct our speaking each day.
 - b. Will take overcoming irrational fear of rejection. True message is a message of God's perfect love, comes as is, needs no refinement on our part. No pressure.
 - c. Will be triggered by an experience of being squashed also filled to overflowing with the Spirit of God.
 - d. Let's try it!