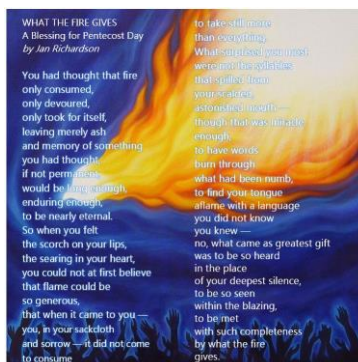


SPIRITUAL ACTIVATION



Scripture:

Acts 2:1-17

¹When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. ²And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. ³Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. ⁴All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability.

⁵Now there were devout Jews from every nation under heaven living in Jerusalem. ⁶And at this sound the crowd gathered and was bewildered, because each one heard them speaking in the native language of each. ⁷Amazed and astonished, they asked, “Are not all these who are speaking Galileans?” ⁸And how is it that we hear, each of us, in our own native language? ⁹Parthians, Medes, Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, ¹⁰Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, ¹¹Cretans and Arabs—in our own languages we hear them speaking about God’s deeds of power.” ¹²All were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, “What does this mean?” ¹³But others sneered and said, “They are filled with new wine.”

¹⁴But 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. ¹⁵Indeed, these are not drunk, as you suppose, for it is only nine o’clock in the morning. ¹⁶No, this is what was spoken through the prophet Joel:

¹⁷“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.

1st Corinthians 12: 4-13

⁴Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; ⁵and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; ⁶and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. ⁷To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. ⁸To one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, ⁹to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, ¹⁰to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the discernment of spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. ¹¹All these are activated by one and the same Spirit, who allots to each one individually just as the Spirit chooses.

¹²For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. ¹³For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.

This is the Word of the Lord! Thanks be to God!



SPIRITUAL ACTIVATION

Let’s activate the Holy Spirit within us. That means to embrace or charge up or ignite the power

of the Spirit that has been given to the church and to all of us who participate in building up the kingdom of God here on earth.

That day of Pentecost was a day of activation and new birth. It was a day when the power of God descended upon the disciples and gave them gifts to spread God's message of love and the courage to go out and share it with everyone.

The Spiritual gifts that were given that day to the disciples were gifts that promote unity within diversity, peace where there is chaos, and love where there is hate.

Rather than make everyone the same and all of the people speak and understand the same language, God gave the spiritual ability to appreciate diversity and speak many languages and allowed God's love to be understood by all.

So let's activate that now. Let's use the power of the spirit within us and learn to share God's love in some different languages.

The main message of the Gospel is:

God is Love

In Spanish: Dios es amor

In French: Dieu est amour

In German: Gott ist de liebe

In Swahili: Mungu ni Upendo

In Korean: 신은 사랑이다.

(sin-eun salang-ida)

In Hawaiian: akua mea aloha

DIVERSITY

It's fun to learn other languages. Still, life would be easier if we all spoke the same language and had the same culture. Then there would be no misunderstandings. Well, then, what culture would you choose? What language would it be? The most common language and culture in the world is Chinese. If there was a world vote, I'm sure they would win the majority vote. Mandarin Chinese is spoken by over one billion people in the world. The next most common language is Spanish followed by English. Guess what the fourth most common language is? It is Hindi, thanks to the population of South Asia. Did you know that our words shampoo, jungle, and bungalow are Hindi words?

When it comes to food, the most favorite takeout food in the United Kingdom is Indian food.

What is the most favorite takeout food in the US? It is Chinese and Italian (pizza). We need diversity.

All the languages spoken that first Pentecost day showed how God loves diversity. Can you imagine if all we had in American culture was traditional Irish food, with potatoes, meat, and corn everyday? How boring!

APPRECIATING DIFFERENCES

Pentecost is a day when the Spirit helped the disciples appreciate differences. The story of Pentecost helps us understand how God sees our differences. Diversity is one of God's greatest gifts to the world. It is everywhere in all of Creation. Diversity makes us stronger and the world healthier.

God meets us in the messiness of different languages and does not ask us to speak just one language but to speak God's language of love. God's love language appreciates diversity and uniqueness. Pentecost is a reminder that God chooses to come to us as we are, speaking different languages, eating different foods, and living in different cultures.

The first disciples were accused of being drunk not only because they spoke in other tongues but also reaching out beyond their own kind was not a common way to be in that era in Jerusalem. People typically stayed within their own faith and culture. But after the Spirit of fire arrived the disciples were so happily speaking other languages. The spiritual activation charged them up to seek out all kinds of people and take risks to embrace them. They were no longer hiding in upper rooms, but they courageously embraced the diversity of God's message of love and went to work spreading it near and far.

GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT

That is also our job today: To embrace the gifts of the spirit and use them to spread God's love far and wide.

Do you know what gifts of the Spirit you have been blessed with to use for God's work? Let's look at the gifts of the Spirit and see which ones you can activate.

Romans 12: 6-8 says: We have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us: prophecy, in proportion to faith; ministry, in ministering; the teacher, in teaching; the exhorter, in exhortation; the giver, in generosity; the leader, in diligence; the compassionate, in cheerfulness.

(A survey form was handed out to fill out and use for your own understanding of your gifts of the Spirit.)

Pentecost holds the promise that God has something new in store for the whole church community. Pentecost is a time for renewal, excitement, energy, movement, birth and fresh commitment to being sent out together into the world to do the work of God. As a church we worship together, pray together, sing together, and reach out to others. All of this makes us more aware of the Holy Spirit working in and through us as a church family.

What the Fire Gives

Jan Richardson, who wrote *What the Fire Gives* (see poem printed on page four), encourages us to remember that the journey to Pentecost began with ashes on our foreheads, and a reminder that all we are is dust and to dust we shall return. These past months since Ash Wednesday have been a journey of knowing. Knowing who God is in Jesus Christ, knowing what the mission of Jesus Christ is all about, and knowing how the Holy Spirit keeps us on the path God intends for our lives.

**It is amazing that God uses us,
who have been formed
from the dust of the earth,
to do God's work in the world
through the power of the Holy Spirit.**

Richardson says, "On the day of Pentecost, as the Spirit descends upon the gathered assembly, we see with dramatic clarity how the knowing that Christ gives us is not for ourselves alone: it is for the life of the community and the life of the world. On Pentecost, those who spoke in the Spirit did not recognize what they were saying. But they were understood by others in the crowd. This shows that

our knowing and understanding is incomplete without the presence of community."

We are dusty disciples made of common earth, fashioned of ordinary matter. And we are called to humility that cautions us against acting like we have all the answers and know all of God's designs for creation. Yet the story of Pentecost bids us to remember what the Spirit can do with dust. Pentecost reminds us that the Spirit draws us together. This day challenges us to open ourselves beyond the limits of our individual lives to the Spirit who sets us ablaze and activates us for the healing of the world. Amen

Benediction:

And may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you now and forever more. Amen



**Rev. Dr. Cindy Alloway
Presbyterian Church of the Roses
2500 Patio Court
Santa Rosa, CA 95405**

Words to the poem that is in the picture below the sermon title on page one.

WHAT THE FIRE GIVES

A Blessing for Pentecost Day

You had thought that fire
only consumed,
only devoured,
only took for itself,
leaving merely ash
and memory
of something
you had thought,
if not permanent,
would be long enough,
enduring enough,
to be nearly
eternal.

So when you felt
the scorch on your lips,
the searing in your heart,
you could not
at first believe
that flame could be
so generous,
that when it came to you —
you, in your sackcloth
and sorrow —
it did not come
to consume,
to take still more
than everything.

What surprised you most
were not the syllables
that spilled from
your scalded,
astonished mouth —
though that was miracle
enough,
to have words
burn through
what had been numb,
to find your tongue
afame with a language
you did not know
you knew —
no, what came
as greatest gift
was to be so heard
in the place
of your deepest
silence,
to be so seen
within the blazing,
to be met
with such completeness
by what the fire
gives.

— *Jan Richardson*