

## “Drunk Again”

Acts 2:1-8, 11b-17, 21; 1 Corinthians 12:3b-7, 12-13

Chan Willis – F.P.C.-L.C./Welsh

May 31, 2020 – Pentecost Sunday

Last week I spoke of how important it was to be able to ‘speak the language’ of others... to establish common ground so that those who might come from a different background can better understand and relate to what we’re talking about... especially with regards to our Christian faith. Well, I don’t think that ANYONE here would need ANY ‘interpretation’ of today’s sermon title. The meaning for this phrase needs no contextual explanation. Either for it’s literal definition, or how it relates to today’s central passage from *Acts*. Those cynical Jews who heard those ‘inspired’ believers in Christ speaking in different languages than their own attributed this ‘babbling’ to being *“filled with new wine.”* That these simple folks from all around the countryside had simply hit the sauce earlier than usual... they were, plain and simple, just **“Drunk Again.”**

Now when I hear this phrase, I am reminded of my mother, who has been gone over 20 years now. Whenever I would ‘hiccup’... which wasn’t exactly a daily occurrence, but when it did, it usually came out of nowhere and was pretty ‘pronounced’... she would look at me, shake her head, and say... “Drunk again!” Now, of course, I was not... 😊 but we know that to hiccup is a ‘classic’ indicator of one’s drunkenness. Along the same lines of **unintelligible speech**, which can also be marked by a greater ‘**volume**’... both in quantity and intensity... when one is ‘under the influence.’ Not only are those words uttered by one who is intoxicated often **louder** and more **profuse**, their ‘filters’ are usually affected, and they are much more **open** and **candid**... often in ways better left unsaid. Not to mention the uninhibited giddiness and **exuberant laughter** that often is a ‘byproduct’ of one’s lack of ‘sobriety.’

So, my mother’s jovial accusation of being inebriated was, besides being a joke, based on, in legal terms, using ‘circumstantial evidence’ as proof of guilt. Just as those cynical Jews accused those earliest church members of being drunk because of their behavior. But, in truth, you might say that they WERE ‘drunk’... ‘intoxicated’ with a different variety of ‘spirits’... the HOLY SPIRIT. Judging from how they could be heard out-on-the-street, it would appear that they were pretty ‘loud and proud.’ They were likely pretty excited to be hearing all of these heretofore strangers

speaking in their own tongues, and were filled with exuberance in being able to share in “joy of the Lord.” They could speak **openly** in ways that they never had before.

And so, as we revisit the ‘birthday of the church’ known as Pentecost, let us learn from their ‘giddy,’ ‘exuberant’ experience. Of how we are also called to be filled... not with ‘new wine,’ but a Holy Spirit at work since the dawn of time. May we learn from those earliest ‘party animals’ of how we too are to continue to drink deep from the ‘well-drink’ of the Spirit... to be **“Drunk Again.”**

Of foremost importance in the Spirit’s role is for our own personal faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. One of the most fundamental statements in Scripture is the one we read in Acts: **“Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”** (Acts 2:17) This goes hand-in-hand with another foundational ‘Affirmation of Faith’ in Romans 10:9: **“If you confess with your lips that “Jesus is Lord”, and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.”** (Romans 10:9 )

These Scriptures declare that if anyone wished to be saved from the fear of death... saved to the promise of everlasting life... it’s ‘simple.’ **Believe** in your heart... **confess** with your lips... that “Jesus is Lord.” Not ‘simply’ Lord of all the earth... all those millions of people you don’t know... but Lord of YOUR life. How do we come to say that? Because we figure it all out in these great brains of ours? Yeah, right. In Paul’s words to the church in Corinth, and LC/Welsh... **“...No one can say ‘Jesus is Lord’ except by the Holy Spirit.”** (1 Corinthians 12:3)

I’m going to make a statement that may be considered heresy to many Presbyterians: ‘NO amount of education will make you a Christian.’ For many people, the greatest distance to travel in their journey of faith is “12 inches”... from their head to their heart. How many of you fell in love ‘intellectually?’ To marry this man or woman is a very ‘logical’ thing to do? Right. ‘Logic’ has nothing to do with it. Love is blind. (and marriage is an eye-opener). When we fall in love, there is that ‘small, still voice’ that says that this is the right person for you. And yes, there are far too many folks who might question just WHOSE voice they heard. But that ‘voice’ that speaks to you of love for **Christ**... that conviction that comes from deep within to CONFESS that “Jesus is Lord”... that is not of this world. But of God. The Holy Spirit of God. When we pray that

another person would come to know Jesus as Lord, we must include in that prayer that God's Holy Spirit be at work on their heart and soul...

After one 'confesses' Jesus as Lord, we are called to share that 'confession' with others who have NOT 'called on the name of the Lord.' In the word of Paul to the Romans, ***"How can they call on him to save them unless they believe in him? And how can they believe in him if they have never heard about him? And how can they hear about him unless someone tells them?"*** (Romans 10:14) Which bring us to second 'intoxicating' quality of the Spirit: to **COMMUNICATE** one's faith in Christ to another.

Now, I know that we have a LOT of good 'communicators' in this room. Well, at least we have a lot of good 'talkers,' ok...? 😊 And what do we spend our time talking about? Of course, these days, 'Coronavirus.' Economy. Crime. Division. Sports. (well, the LACK of same). But how much do you 'communicate' about something of LASTING value? Something that can help another to deal with all of the negative 'stuff' that FILLS the 'airwaves?' We can have no problem in talking at great length about our physical ailments and the doctors we see for them. But how often do you talk about the GREAT Physician who brings ultimate healing of every debilitating 'infection' of body, mind, and soul?

Sure, those first 'Pentecostals' were all excited to be hearing perfect strangers speak in their own language. But most importantly, because it was the language of FAITH. Not simply subjects of *earthly* value... but *eternal* value. Remember what they said? ***"...In our own languages we hear them speaking... about God's deeds of power."*** (Acts 2:11) By the Spirit's power, they were able to speak other languages... ones that communicated God's POWER, and God's HOPE. So too are we called to speak... not by our own strength, but by the Spirit... to communicate God's power and hope. I'll give you a brief example:

The next time you encounter someone talking about how dismal, how bleak our world is today, filled with 'gloom and doom' ....which might be expressed in person or online... here's three words: **"God's got this."** [repeat] How can you be so sure? We learned it in grade school: "He's got the whole world in His hands." Which includes you and me...

And finally, in addition to the Spirit's empowering us to **confess** Christ as Lord, and to **communicate** that reality to others, the Spirit also brings us into **COMMUNITY**. It is the power

of that Holy Spirit that drew all of you here to worship this morning... in some cases, despite the potential risk to your physical health. WHY? Because you recognize the importance of gathering together as the body of Christ to maintain your SPIRITUAL health. That as you come together, you are actually employing spiritual gifts... gifts of encouragement, of dedication, of LOVE for one another. You are living, present testimony to the truth of Paul's words: ***"To EACH is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good."*** (1 Corinthians 12:7)

EACH and every one of you have been given MULTIPLE 'manifestations' of God's Spirit... WHY? To pat yourselves on the back and say, 'What a good Christian am I?' NO. For the ***"Common good."*** Those masks on your face are a tangible example of a ***"manifestation of the Spirit for the common good."*** You sure don't wear them because of their *comfort* or being a *fashion statement*. You wear them because of your concern for the 'common good' of others. A tangible demonstration of the unconditional, unselfish love of Christ.

This Pentecost Sunday celebrates the power of the Spirit to unify followers of Christ from different 'tribes and tongues'... to testify to the truth of Paul's words that ***"in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and were all made to drink of the one Spirit."*** (1 Cor. 12:13) And yet, as I read of all this UNITY and PEACE that we are to experience as the body of Christ known as the church, all I can SEE on the news is examples of DIVISION and ANGER. The death of George Floyd as the result of blatant brutality by a group of policemen in Minnesota (of all places) has led to widespread violent protests all around the country. And while I am grieved at the looting and destruction that in many cases has 'robbed' those protestors' very own friends and family of their livelihoods, this senseless destruction is a symptom of much deeper, larger problems in our society. The acrimonious division we have in our country politically is perhaps indicative of the divides we also have socially, racially.

So, as we remember the power of God's Spirit to allow very different people from different backgrounds and languages to **understand** one another, and to live in a **joyful, peaceful community** with one another, let us PRAY that same power be displayed in and through US. By the power of God's love, may our lives and lips CONFESS Christ as Lord... COMMUNICATE **openly** and **lovingly** with others, particularly those **different** than we are... and seek to build COMMUNITY... in our towns, our nation, and in our world. In the same way that those 'founding

members' of the 'Church of Jesus Christ' drank deeply of the Holy Spirit, may we too be accused of being 'drunk again'... 'intoxicated' by powerful, compassionate, and reconciling Spirit of God. To God alone be the honor and glory, dominion and power, this day and always. Amen!

**SENDING FORTH:** Earlier we read these words in Acts: *'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. THEN Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved. (Acts 2:17, 21)*

These words remind us God empowers ALL of His followers, no matter their 'age or stage' of life, to speak prophetically and see as visionaries. To that end, I encourage you to join in this responsive charge:

Go forth now as Pentecost people, filled with the Spirit, dreaming dreams, and seeing visions of God's possibilities.

**We go forth, knowing we are beloved and blessed  
by a God who never leaves us alone.**

Go, to be surprised by the Spirit in all that you do and everywhere that you go.

**We go, claiming our identity as Pentecost people—  
people of wind and fire, dreams and visions,  
people filled with that most amazing and transforming Spirit.  
Holy Wind of God, blow strong... blow fresh... blow NOW! Amen.**