

Pentecost - Reverse of a Curse

On Sunday June 4th, the Holy Christian Church celebrated Pentecost Sunday. We remembered a miracle that happened some 2,000 ago. It happened 50 days after the resurrection. *"Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them."* (Acts 2:2-4).

Acts 2:5-6 records that there were Jews in Jerusalem from every nation under heaven. They heard the disciples speak in their native language. They could not believe that these simple men were able to speak their native languages so eloquently. This miraculous outpouring of language from God points us back to the Old Testament; to the 11th Chapter of the Book of Genesis.

Genesis Chapters 8 and 9 describe the flood which covered and destroyed the whole earth. The account of the flood declares that God had saved a remnant of animals and humans to repopulate the earth. God told Noah, his wife, and their three sons and their wives to be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth.

Noah's descendants were fruitful and they multiplied. They did move about the earth, however, they moved about as one big clan. They all spoke one language. They came to a certain place (modern day Iraq and Iran). The people who all spoke one language resolved to build one city and in the middle of that city one tower. The city and the tower were to be signs and symbols of their unity in language and in purpose. They declared without these symbols of unity they were in danger of being scattered all over the earth. (Genesis 11:4) By their words and actions they defied God's command to move out and fill the earth.

God was grieved by their actions and their sinful attitude. In response, He performed a miracle. God miraculously changed each and every person so that they could no longer speak the language that united them. Without a common language, the people split into groups and spread out over the world.

The miracle of tongues performed by God in the 11th Chapter of Genesis was in the final analysis a curse. It separated people from one another and from God. What a dark time and a dark world. Would God's light ever enter into the world again?

The Gospel of John declares that Jesus, God's one and only Son, was a new light that came into the world. His light fell on people living in the shadow of death. Jesus came to reverse the curse of Eden. Unlike Adam and Eve, Jesus lived a perfect life. He was tempted by the devil with every temptation possible. Yet, Jesus did not succumb to those temptations. Jesus obeyed all of God's commandments. In so doing He loved God with all his heart, mind, soul and strength and his neighbor as himself. By his innocent suffering and death on the cross he paid for all our sins. By his resurrection from the dead, Jesus opened the gates of heaven and eternal life to all who believe in Him. The resurrected Jesus gave his disciples a great commission to go into the world and baptize in the name of the Trinity and make disciples of all nations.

On the first Pentecost Sunday, the fulfillment of Jesus' great commission took on flesh. Once more God performed a miracle involving a spontaneous outpouring of languages. Jesus' disciples spoke in languages they did not know. God used these various languages to announce one message: "For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life." (John 3:16)

The first Pentecost was a foretaste of what happens all over the world. Every day God's word is read and proclaimed publicly and privately in every language under heaven. God's purpose in the outpouring of tongues at Pentecost was to call people who speak many languages to a oneness that transcends the differences in language. No matter what language Christians speak, we stand with the Apostle Paul and declare: "There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; one

Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all." (Ephesians 4:4-6)

Every day the Holy Spirit uses God's living Word, the Gospel of Jesus Christ, proclaimed in every language imaginable to convict people of their sin and call them to repent. The Gospel seeds are sown in the hearts and minds of many. The seeds sown take root and mature into a living faith in a living God. Jesus promises: "Very truly I tell you, whoever hears my word and believes Him who sent me has eternal life and will not be judged but has crossed over from death to life"

Come experience the miracle of Pentecost. Come hear that living Word in every Sunday morning at Grace at 9:00 and 10:30. See you soon!

In Christ

Pastor Ed Skutshek