

## Saying Goodbye Part 4: It's Time To Fly Acts 2:1-4

Well, it's arrived. We can no longer call ourselves just the resurrected people. We are people who have died with Christ, rose with Christ, and are filled with the Holy Spirit **of** Christ. Today, we are reminded of what happened after Christ rose from the dead and ascended into heaven. Quite often, we celebrate this day by calling it the church's birthday. It is a day that the church began, but it's more than just another year gone by. As I grow older, a birthday is just another day. What I see in church celebrations can, also, at times, be interpreted as, "it's just another day." However, this is a day of renewal, rejoicing, and a fresh start. I see it as the day the church takes flight in new ministries. We call this day, Pentecost. Let's take a look at the first birthday celebration to see what really happened and what is expected to happen at today's Pentecost.

We find the Disciples have again gathered together. Once the last Disciple arrived, a strong sound came from what they could only identify as heaven. They described it as a "howling of a fierce wind [that] filled the entire house;" (Acts 2:2) but it wasn't just a sound. They also describe seeing "what seemed to be individual flames of fire alighting on each one of them." They noticed a change in each other's spoken words. Each syllable was pronounced in the other's native language; without the use of

an interpreter. One voice simultaneously spoke in many nationalities and dialects. It was peacefully eerie, refreshingly mystical, and confusingly enlightening. What was happening was the wind of a truly and empowerment by the mightiest power of all, God.

Jesus had promised the Disciples, He would send the power of the Holy Spirit upon them as they began their ministry. It's, also, the prophecy of Joel coming true when he wrote, "In the last days, God says, "I will pour out my Spirit on all people." The Holy Spirit has just appeared in the world; giving the Disciples the mystical powers of God to fly, feed, and repopulate the world with God's love. This mystical power comes in the form of a strong wind. It's interesting to me that the Disciples use the word "wind" to describe the Holy Spirit. Wind is something that is constantly moving, changing in direction and velocity. However, depending on the intensity of the wind, the wind will move objects from the size of a blade of grass, to the mass destruction of a hurricane or tornado. Wind is a life changer.

I can't help but think it was the motion of this mystical power of the Holy Spirit that pushed the Disciples into the mission field to show God's love to God's people. At this time in history it wasn't an easy task to leave Jerusalem and continue what Jesus had started. The early church began with hiding in secret, yet, common signs indicated one was a Christian.

 (Thus, the image of the fish as one of the first Christian symbols.)

Secrecy was their protection from persecution and death by the church and Roman empire. However, occasionally the fierce wind of the Spirit would give them the push and courage needed to step out in faith and build the community of Christian believers. They were the only ones who believed Jesus was the Messiah, the true Son of God. It wasn't a myth, Jesus really was the promised leader. It was a truth that needed to be told and still needs to be told today. But this truth doesn't come solely with words, it comes through the wind of a natural Spiritual action.

I believe this mystical Spiritual power is struggling to be felt in the church today. What I hear from the millennial generation is that they no longer want or need to hear the "stories", they need to see and experience the "stories" with power of the Holy Spirit in their lives. They want hands on situations where they can move from **knowing** about God's love, to actually **being** the physical body of Christ for the world. They want to watch eyes light up as they teach what unconditional love is to, what United Methodists call, the least, lost, and invisible. They want the people in their community, and around the world, to know that even though they may have made a bad choice; they are not bad people. They want to show someone, who is in need of food, that the food pantry is more than a place to get

physical nourishment that will only last a couple week. I believe this younger generation can help us, the church, learn what is like to move from **telling** God's story to **showing** the truth about God.

I believe this generation can teach us, the church, how to fly, feed, and repopulate the church. However, in order for this to happen, I believe we, faithful Christians, need to move out of our cocoons and learn how to fly with them. This is what the Holy Spirit of God can do for you. It's not a surrender to their, the millennial's, ways. It's a cooperative journey where we all bring our best attributes, listening, ears, and Spiritual voices, so we can soar on the wind of God's Holy Spirit. Soaring high on the currents of God's Holy Spirit, takes practice, trust, and faith. I believe that once we learn how to talk to each other, listen to each other, validate each other, and be the church together, the mystical power of God's Holy Spirit will once again have hungry souls flocking to the church.

Here at Denison FUMC, you are no longer the Christians you were when I came twelve years ago. You are stronger in your faith. You have a deeper education of God and who God is to you. You are more confident in your leadership as a Disciple of Christ. The time has arrived for you to fly on your own. No none can take away what God has given you. You know how to be the church in celebration and in struggles. I have done all I

can to prepare you take flight. You are never alone, God is now your leader, guide, comrade, courage, and hope. I invite you to claim your role as the imago dei. You are the active presence of God in Crawford County. Where will God draw you to serve? It's time to fly on your own as an adult imago dei. Amen.