

Act of the Spirit

Acts of Hope: Part 7 “Act of the Spirit”

Rev. Cameron D St.Michael – June 5, 2022

Pentecost

Readings: Acts 2:1-21

Reflection: Psalm 104:24-35

Greeting: Surely God is my salvation. I will trust and not be afraid. The Lord, the Lord is my strength and my song. He has become my salvation. Praise the Lord! (*Isaiah 12:2*)

Prayer: Almighty God, through your only Son you overcame death and opened to us the gate of everlasting life. Grant that we who celebrate our Lord’s resurrection, by the renewing of your Spirit, arise from the death of sin to the life of righteousness; through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Reflection: Psalm 104:24-35

O LORD, how manifold are your works! In wisdom you have made them all; the earth is full of your creatures. There is the sea, great and wide; creeping things innumerable are there, living things both small and great. There go the ships and Leviathan that you formed to sport in it. These all look to you to give them their food in due season; when you give to them, they gather it up; when you open your hand, they are filled with good things. When you hide your face, they are dismayed; when you take away their breath, they die and return to their dust. When you send forth your spirit, they are created, and you renew the face of the ground. May the glory of the LORD endure forever; may the LORD rejoice in his works— who looks on the earth and it trembles, who touches the mountains and they smoke. I will sing to the LORD as long as I live; I will sing praise to my God while I have being. May my meditation be pleasing to him, for I rejoice in the LORD. Let sinners be consumed from the earth, and let the wicked be no more. Bless the LORD, O my soul. Praise the LORD! (Psalm 104:24-35 NRSVue)*

We read the words of Psalm 104 and hear of God’s wisdom and majesty. We hear of God’s glory in all things. In what ways do you rejoice in the Lord? How has God renewed your life? Do you share the blessings of the Lord with others? Do you praise God to those around you? What does that praise look like? How are those things reflected in your prayers? How do we share in the joy of our Risen Savior?

Prayer: O God, when all things come to their end, you bring us into the city of resurrection of your Son. Shelter every nation and tongue with your Spirit and feed us all with joy unending. Help us with our doubts and fears and strengthen us in love as we come before you in prayer. May you guide us in all things; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. Alleluia.

Now let the words of our mouths, and the meditations of our hearts be acceptable in your sight, O Lord, our Rock and our Redeemer. Amen.

Sermon:

Our scripture reading for today comes from the Common English Bible. Our reading for today comes from Acts chapter 2 verses 1 through 21.

When Pentecost Day arrived, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound from heaven like the howling of a fierce wind filled the entire house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be individual flames of fire alighting on each one of them. They were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages as the Spirit enabled them to speak. There were pious Jews from every nation under heaven living in Jerusalem. When they heard this sound, a crowd gathered. They were mystified because everyone heard them speaking in their native languages. They were surprised and amazed, saying, “Look, aren’t all the people who are speaking Galileans, every one of them? How then can each of us hear them speaking in our native language? Parthians, Medes, and Elamites; as well as residents of Mesopotamia, Judea, and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the regions of Libya bordering Cyrene; and visitors from Rome (both Jews and converts to Judaism), Cretans and Arabs—we hear them declaring the mighty works of God in our own languages!” They were all surprised and bewildered. Some asked each other, “What does this mean?” Others jeered at them, saying, “They’re full of new wine!” Peter stood with the other eleven apostles. He raised his voice and declared, “Judeans and everyone living in Jerusalem! Know this! Listen carefully to my words! These people aren’t drunk, as you suspect; after all, it’s only nine o’clock in the morning! Rather, this is what was spoken through the prophet Joel:

*In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy. Your young will see visions. Your elders will dream dreams. Even upon my servants, men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy. I will cause wonders to occur in the heavens above and signs on the earth below, blood and fire and a cloud of smoke. The sun will be changed into darkness, and the moon will be changed into blood, before the great and spectacular day of the Lord comes. And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.
(Acts 2:1-21 CEB+)*

This is the word of God for the people of God. Thanks be to God.

This We finish our Easter series “Acts of Hope” with our Pentecost message that has an “Act of the Spirit.” Today’s reading sees the Holy Spirit descending on the Apostles. Filled with the Spirit, they begin speaking to the gathered crowds in many languages. Peter reminds them

of the words of the prophet Joel, about how God will pour out his Spirit on all people. And I kept coming back to the same thing as I read this familiar account. Many celebrate today as the birthday of the church. But I think of this as more than just a remembrance of the birth of the church. It isn't just a lesson we learn about the interaction of the Holy Spirit with the apostles. The story of the Holy Spirit coming to Christ's followers is our story. It is our story because it is happening here and now. We are still finding ourselves blessed by the Holy Spirit. We still find the Spirit empowering us to speak the gospel truth. In many ways, this is not just a timeless story that will always be relevant, but it is a story that is still being played out this very day. It is an event that has never stopped. Because we are still living this story. We are baptized by water and the Spirit. The Holy Spirit is with us today, right here and right now, enabling us to speak the truth of Christ. Enabling us to love deeper and to love more completely. Because the Spirit helps us to reach out so that we can stand up to injustice and speak the truth in difficult situations. The Spirit helps us to stand up for what is right and what is good, and to speak God's truth.

Because that's the promise of Pentecost. That this isn't just something that happened to those followers long ago. This isn't just a lesson we learn from them, but it is a promise made to us as well. That the Spirit will be upon all people who seek the Lord. That we will see visions and dream dreams. That old and young will prophesy. That all who call on the name of the Lord will find salvation. This is happening now. But we have to be willing to embrace the Spirit. We have to be willing to act with the Spirit. We may think that we can't do any of those things that the Spirit is supposed to enable us to do. We may think that we cannot prophesy, thinking that all prophecy is telling the future. But prophecy is all about speaking the truth of God and giving God's message. Can you speak of what Christ has commanded us? Can you bear witness to God's love? Do you believe that the Holy Spirit is with you today? Then you surely can speak prophecy. Because I can't find where God put an expiration date on the Holy Spirit. I can't find where we were told that God would stop speaking to us today. No, this is a mantle we take up when we stand up to speak the truth of Christ in the face of adversity. This is a mantle we take up when we rise up in the name of the Lord to fight against injustice. When we put God's Word into action so that we may feed the hungry, cloth the naked, and reach out in love to all those who are in need, we are moving with the Holy Spirit, and you can prophesy.

I firmly believe the Holy Spirit is with us today. Not just in some vague way to let us know the Spirit is with us. Not just that the Spirit is there to guide us in a far-off kind of way that we only feel hints of. But that the Spirit is with us here and now to bolster our faith and enable us to do God's will, so that we can do all of the things we know need to be done. And we don't have to be surrounded by people of many languages in order to see the Holy Spirit bridge divides. We stand in a society now with a common language that is full of ideological barriers and people whose opinion is so loud that they cannot hear anything but themselves. We are often faced with people who would rather here a comforting lie than to face an uncomfortable truth. It can seem like we speak different languages when it comes to how we view the world.

But I firmly believe that the Holy Spirit emboldens our faith so that we can speak and be understood. That when we speak God's truth, we can overcome any division. That when we speak the truth of Christ, that we overcome barriers and difficulties through the Spirit. That it will not always be easy, but it will always be worthwhile.

So let us remember the importance of acting with the Spirit. That we have been entrusted with this power. That the strength of the Spirit is our strength. The boldness of the Spirit is our boldness. That we can stand up for what is right because we know that it is the right thing to do. That we can speak the truth of God to reach out to all people. That we may speak the truth so that we can make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. May we always find strength in the Spirit so that we can do all the things that Christ taught us. That we may speak up for the least and the last, giving a voice to the voiceless. That we may address the problems we see head on, and not try to simply avoid those difficult discussions. But it is when we act that we see the Spirit at work. Over the last few weeks, we have seen that when Christ's followers went out to make disciples, they set out to help people. They didn't just go around praying and waiting for things to happen. They went and they acted to help people. They went and they did. When they are speaking, they aren't just speaking to make a convincing statement, they are proclaiming God's kingdom and making a call to action. When Christ's followers are speaking to others, they are inviting others to enter into the new life they have found. They are inviting others to share into their calling. They are inviting others to action.

That is the challenge we face today. That we are not called to be a people who let thoughts and prayers be the beginning and the end of our response. But we let our thoughts and our prayers be the beginning of how we are called to act for God's kingdom. That no matter what difficulty we face, there is always something that can be done. That we will have the guidance and the strength of the Holy Spirit. That we have the teachings of our Risen Savior to guide us in our actions. That our heavenly Father is there for us to follow. We are called to action so that we can change the world, one step at a time, one act at a time, by God's grace. Because when it comes to the Holy Spirit, it isn't a matter of waiting for the Spirit, but knowing that the Spirit is with us right here and right now. And because the Spirit is with us today, the time to act is now. For wherever Christ goes, we are called to follow. May we proclaim the kingdom of God, that God's will may be done on earth as it is in heaven. And wherever and whenever we are called to act, may we do so with the power of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Prayer of Confession and Pardon: God, you are with us even when we turn away from you. Guide us back into your loving arms. Judge us not by the perfection of our actions but show us mercy and love. We have strayed like lost sheep from your ways, failing both in what we have done and what we have failed to do. Bring us back into your fold that you may guide us and lead us in all things. For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy upon us and forgive us. May we walk in your love and trust your ways. Amen.

Almighty God have mercy upon you. May the Lord forgive all your sins and lift you up in love through Jesus Christ our Lord, and by the Holy Spirit keep you in life eternal. Amen.

Offering: If you are so moved to make an offering, you may send it to the church treasurer, or you may send it to the PO Box listed below. We are still the church, and the church still needs your support to keep doing all the important work that we do.

Lord's Prayer

Dismissal with Blessing: May we go forth reflecting God's love in our lives as we go forth in the peace of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Our Current Series – Acts of Hope

Our current series will be looking at the Acts of the Apostles during the Easter season, with each week bringing a new act for us to look at.

April 24th – Act of Witness – Acts 5:17-32

May 1st – Act of Change – Acts 9:1-20

May 8th – Motherly Act – Acts 9:36-43

May 15th – Act of Acceptance – Acts 11:1-18

May 22nd – Called to Act – Acts 16:9-15

May 29th – Unexpected Act – Acts 16:16-34

June 5th – Act of the Spirit – Acts 2:1-21

Prayer List

Rev Charliam Renner	Bishop Frank Beard	Our Conference	Our Healthcare Workers
Patti Corder and the Greenup Ambulance Crew		Angie Veach	Eric Veach
Ed & Verna Titus	Henry Catey	Jake Kiser	Cindy Cisney
Nancy Hoke	Don Wells	Tricia Adkins	Don Stewart
Ronnie Winstead	Dwight Parsons	Lauren Stewart	Phyllis Gable
Sage Martin	Dalton McFarland	Ruth Ann Finley	Jodie Bunch
Tom Finley	Laura Carlen	Judy McCellan	Rosie Chancellor
Susie Callahan	Kenny Holmes	Ted Marrs	Darrell Quick
Chuck Hogan	Brittany Gilbert	Mammoser Family	Family of Albert White
Gary Pearce	Neal Ryan Family	Jackie Potter	
Richard Durham	Kathy Hanks	Wayne Carrell	Gary & Mary Winterrowd
Leo Smith	Bonnie Hite	Sue & Bob Smyser	Larry Thompson
Greg Williams	Family of Eloise Buffenmeyer	Martha Roberts	Charlie & Charlotte Baxter
Paul Schulte			

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