



the Source

Let anyone who is thirsty come to me...

I'm a dilettante, a dabbler! I speak English, but along the way I've had brief encounters of a couple of semesters with six other languages. It helped a bit in Quebec last summer, but I don't try to speak any of them, at least to be understood! And I've become fluent in Texan and United Methodist, but not geek or legalese, or any of the specialized vocabularies of a multitude of professions.

Which brings us to Pentecost, when God spoke through the Apostles to all of the Roman world in their own tongues. Genesis suggests that the variety of tongues was God's work originally, when the people of Babel became so ambitious they thought they could replace the Lord. Language certainly can keep people separated and hinder understanding, sometimes even when we think we speak the same language!

Still, God had not stopped speaking to the peoples of the world. Moses shared his encounters with the Lord through the giving of the Law. The prophets spoke judgment from the Lord to Israel through the years, but again, understanding fell short. We have been working through the book of Job, where his *friends* thought they were speaking for God – and where finally God communicates, not in words so much as in a tsunami of images of the creation and the glory of the Creator.

Then at Pentecost, we discover that the variety of languages from the crowds assembled for the Jewish festival proves no barrier to sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ. While it seems confusing at first, the Holy Spirit appears to bridge the divisions. To a people used to having to struggle to use the shared Hebrew (which was a learned tongue for many), hearing the message in familiar words, even from Galileans, was astounding! God works in wonderful ways!

So today we celebrate Pentecost as the starting point of the mission of Christ's disciples to bring about a reuniting of peoples. Language, once divisive, becomes a unifying gift. The Holy Spirit provided a new way to restore the order of Creation, calling all the people to their God.

— Rev. Dr. John Clifford, Retired Clergy-in-Residence

A Family Affair

Read Acts 2:1-12 together. Today Christians all over the world celebrate the holy day of Pentecost. It is a day to recognize when the church was started, like a yearly birthday.

From the story in Acts, people from all over different regions were visiting Jerusalem to celebrate the Jewish festival. They were all devout Jews, but everybody spoke different languages. The Holy Spirit filled them all and they were able to hear of the mighty acts of God in their own language.

The Holy Spirit lives and works within each one of us so that we can share the Gospel. As Christians we help show others God's love, whether through our actions or our words. Discuss how your family shares the Gospel with others. Discuss how our church shares the Gospel with our community. In what ways can you share the Gospel?

As a family, plan a way to share God's love with both words and actions for someone in your community. Some ideas include taking a treat to a neighbor, taking flowers to a nursing home, or leaving bubbles at a park. Your family may want to come up with your own! With your gift, include a note that says, "Jesus loves you!"

Dear God, Please help us reach out and share the love of Christ with those around us. Amen.

— Children's Ministry

Monday: MONDAY: Job 38:1ff

God's voice often seems overwhelming! Job's answers come in a flood of wonder, much like the astonishment of the Pentecost crowds.

- Many of us have had such moments of wonder and awe. Can you recall when God has appeared to you in such overpowering ways?

Tuesday: Acts 1:12-14

The disciples' preparation for the coming of the Holy Spirit was in following Jesus' directions to stay in Jerusalem and continue to gather for worship and prayer. Not knowing what to expect, they at least continued these things.

- Have you taken full advantage of all the times and places to gather for worship, times when God may be preparing you for something unexpected?

Wednesday: Acts 2:1-4

We tend to presume the disciples were "back in that upper room" of Acts 1 when the Holy Spirit appears. More likely, given the immediate response of the crowd, they were in the Temple courtyard, in a public place dedicated to prayer.

- Do we let our worship "box God in" to the church grounds? Are there public places where you can model faith (perhaps, for example, having prayer before meals in restaurants?)

Thursday: Acts 2:5-12

One response to the disciples was "aren't these all Galileans?!" They are seen as country hicks, backwards, simple folks. Yet God is speaking through them!

- How often do we see ourselves as inadequate to the task of sharing Good News?
- Do we assume that God cannot work through us, and will have to find someone else?
- Is the Holy Spirit really hiding from us? Or are we hiding from God's Spirit?

Friday: Job 38, Acts 2:1-28

Job encounters God in a whirlwind of challenge. The Holy Spirit of Pentecost appears as strong wind and fire. God tends to unsettle us before leading us beyond our comfort zones and into witnessing.

- Where has God been "causing discomfort" in your life?
- Where is God challenging your habits and traditions in order to reach others with the Gospel?

