

**Acts 2:1-21**

The sound of a loud rushing wind is not a sound that we generally look forward to. It usually means that a storm is coming, maybe with hail and tornadoes. In Myanmar last week, ten's of thousands of people were killed when a cyclone which spawned a tidal wave hit with massive force. We don't worry about tidal waves here in Missouri, but still, loud rushing winds grab our attention and often send us looking for shelter.

It may seem to us a little unusual, therefore, that God sent the Holy Spirit on Pentecost with the sound of a loud rushing wind. The disciples of Jesus were all gathered together in a house—about 120 of them. It was Sunday morning. It was time for worship. They were gathered just as we are gathered here today. But had there been a basement, they might have been tempted to seek shelter there when God mightily sent His Spirit to them. It would have sounded like a destructive tornado was coming. And yet, it was just the opposite. It was what Jesus had promised. It was the gift of the Holy Spirit—not a destructive force, but a wonderful blessing.

It's not often...in fact, I don't believe that it's ever happened in our lifetime that Pentecost Sunday has fallen on Mother's Day. And so I'm going to draw a parallel today between the two. When a mother is expecting a child, that expectation may be quite similar to what the disciples of Jesus had before the Day of Pentecost. They knew the Holy Spirit was coming; they just weren't sure exactly when. They were anticipating His arrival. They pretty much had to stay put like a woman who has doctor's orders not to leave town before the baby comes. "Stay in Jerusalem," Jesus had told them.

And when He arrived that Sunday morning, the drama and activity was comparable to a woman in labor. The loud rushing wind and the tongues of fire may have been overwhelming to the disciples, but with the coming of God's Holy Spirit, there was tremendous joy on the part of those believers in Christ. In the same way the overwhelming drama and labor pains in the delivery room give way to utter joy when the baby makes its appearance.

And once the baby comes, it's here to stay. The Holy Spirit may have come at different times throughout the Old Testament, but when He came on Pentecost Sunday...He was here to stay. And that's good for you and for me. For without the Holy Spirit, you and I would have no joy in Christ, no hope of heaven, no faith in our Savior, Jesus. "I believe," we confess with Luther, "that I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ my Lord or come to Him; but the Holy Spirit has called me by the Gospel..."

A mother is not a mother until the baby comes. After that she is always a mother. We are not the Church, God's Christians, His believers until the Holy Spirit comes to us through Water and Word and makes us who we now are—God's forgiven family in Jesus Christ. Just as a baby makes a woman a mother, so God's gift to us of His Holy Spirit makes us into Christians with the hope of life eternal; for He makes us believers—He brings us to Christ and gives us faith in our Savior.

I just read about a woman in Arkansas who is expecting her eighteenth child. I don't think this mother has a craving for delivery rooms. It's not the drama of labor or the pain of

childbirth that keeps bringing her back to the hospital. I'm quite certain that she simply loves her babies. She loves raising children. She loves having a large family.

But what mother, (her included) would want to be in the delivery room over and over again because she just can't get enough of the drama of childbirth? And yet, there are Christian churches which do this very thing when it comes to the drama of Pentecost. We have them in our own area here in Missouri—Christians who want the loud rushing wind, and the tongues of fire, and the speaking in tongues week, after week, after week. They want and expect the drama of Pentecost Sunday whenever they gather for worship. But that's like having fifty-two babies a year! Every Sunday the same excitement and activity that went on in Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost. What they don't understand is that the birth is over. The Holy Spirit came. It was a festive day...tongue-speaking, wind, and fire. But that day is in the past. The delivery is over. He's here to stay. The Holy Spirit is with us forever. He comes to us through God's Word and Sacraments, yet not with all sorts of drama, but more like a boy quietly and humbly giving a Mother's Day gift to his mother.

When Colton was baptized this morning the Holy Spirit came to make him a forgiven child of God. He gave Colton faith and eternal life; He gave him Christ. But there were no cyclones or loud rushing winds. The cross was drawn upon his forehead, but there was no tongue of fire there. Water was sprinkled, Jesus' words were spoken, the heaven's were opened to Colton—but what you and I saw with our eyes was nothing dramatic; we believe all this happens in baptism by faith.

We don't have the same drama and excitement as the Christians had on Pentecost. But that's okay; we do have the very same Holy Spirit, and He is just as powerful now as He was on that day. He does the same work today as He did back then. You're not here in church today because you decided to come. It is the Holy Spirit who draws us to Christ's Word and Sacraments, and works faith within us through these holy things. That's His wonderful work! God's Spirit is at work when God's Word is preached and taught to bring us to Christ and keep us always with our Savior. That may not seem as exciting as the events which the disciples experienced on Pentecost Sunday; but if you want excitement, go to a ballgame or a movie theater. If you desire Christ and His gifts of salvation, then this is where we need to be.

It's like raising a child. Every mother remembers the details of the day her child was born. That day is forever etched in her memory. But every day after that is not quite as vivid. Each day is as precious as the last. The baby grows and develops, and certain events will stand out above the others. But a day in his life at thirteen is not as dramatic and eventful as the day he was born.

And so it is with the Holy Spirit. The day He came on Pentecost stands out above all others. The exciting events of that day will never be forgotten. Here we are 2,000 years after His arrival. It's not Pentecost Sunday anymore. You won't see God's Spirit working in a blaze of fire atop the heads of His Christian people. You won't hear God's Spirit speaking in different tongues. If there is a loud rushing wind, run to the basement; it's not the Holy Spirit—it's a tornado! He doesn't work amidst all that drama anymore.

Are you disappointed? Maybe so. Our sinful flesh likes to see God's power at work in dramatic, exciting ways. But a baptism? Holy Communion? Sunday Bible Class? Sitting

in a pew for an hour singing hymns and listening to the Word of God? These just don't seem as dramatic as wind, fire, and tongues. How do we even know for sure that the Holy Spirit is here among us? What evidence do we have? They had wind, fire, and tongues back on Pentecost; what do we have today? We have Christ's Word and Sacraments and His promise to us. For where the Word of God is purely preached, there is God's Spirit at work. Where Christ's Sacraments are purely given, there the Holy Spirit is bringing sinners to Jesus.

Even on Pentecost Sunday the tongues of fire and the loud rushing wind did not make anyone a Christian. It was the simple Word of God that Peter preached to them. It was the Water and Word of Baptism. Through these means God's Spirit, then as today, was working faith in the hearts of sinners.

Is the Holy Spirit here in this House today? Absolutely, yes! He is here for you, friend. He is here because God's Word is in your ears. He is not here to put on a show. He is here to quietly and simply put Jesus into your heart. You see that baby over there? Little Colton is a Christian today because the Holy Spirit is here in baptism for him. He is one for whom Christ died, and he has life now in Jesus. You see that old man and old woman listening to the Word? The Holy Spirit is here for them. Christ died also for them, and He is giving Jesus to them. You see that child, that father, that mother? The Holy Spirit is here for them to work in their hearts. And He is here for you, for Christ died for each one of you.

He doesn't care whether you're young or old, a Democrat or a Republican; whether you're a member here or just visiting. He doesn't care whether you had angry words with your spouse yesterday, or whether you've been disrespectful, or rude, or disobedient. What He is doing for you now is giving you Christ today—and where Christ is, there is forgiveness, and life, and salvation.

You don't need to be a mother to receive a gift today. Every one of you is being given right now, through the hearing of God's Word, the gifts the Holy Spirit gives. You are all forgiven of all your sins. You have, in Christ Jesus, eternal life right now as your own possession. You have God's promise that He is at peace with you. That's what Pentecost means for you; not loud winds and fire, but forgiveness and eternal life in Jesus Christ, which is yours now by the power and working of the Holy Spirit. Amen.