

6/12/11

THE PRAYER OF THE DAY O God, send us the Holy Spirit, who cuts us to the heart with the Word of God, who opens our hearts to hear the language of Your love, and who enters our hearts that out of them may flow streams of living water; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

THE OLD TESTAMENT LESSON Numbers 11:24-30

(The Spirit descends on the elders of Israel)

24 So Moses went out and told the people what the LORD had said. He brought together seventy of their elders and had them stand around the Tent. 25 Then the LORD came down in the cloud and spoke with him, and he took of the Spirit that was on him and put the Spirit on the seventy elders. When the Spirit rested on them, they prophesied, but they did not do so again. 26 However, two men, whose names were Eldad and Medad, had remained in the camp. They were listed among the elders, but did not go out to the Tent. Yet the Spirit also rested on them, and they prophesied in the camp.

27 A young man ran and told Moses, "Eldad and Medad are prophesying in the camp." 28 Joshua son of Nun, who had been Moses' aide since youth, spoke up and said, "Moses, my lord, stop them!" 29 But Moses replied, "Are you jealous for my sake? I wish that all the LORD's people were prophets and that the LORD would put his Spirit on them!" 30 Then Moses and the elders of Israel returned to the camp.

THE EPISTLE LESSON Acts 2:1-21

(The Day of Pentecost)

1 When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. 2 Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. 3 They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. 4 All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.

5 Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven. 6 When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard them speaking in his own language. 7 Utterly amazed, they asked: "Are not all these men who are speaking Galileans? 8 Then how is it that each of us hears them in his own native language? 9 Parthians, Medes and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, 10 Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome 11 (both Jews and converts to Judaism); Cretans and Arabs-- we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues!" 12 Amazed and perplexed, they asked one another, "What does this mean?" 13 Some, however, made fun of them and said, "They have had too much wine."

14 Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd: "Fellow Jews and all of you who live in Jerusalem, let me explain this to you; listen carefully to what I say. 15 These men are not drunk, as you suppose. It's only nine in the morning! 16 No, this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel:

17 *"In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams. 18 Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy. 19 I will show wonders in the heaven above and signs on the earth below, blood and fire and billows of smoke. 20 The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and glorious day of the Lord. 21 And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."*

THE GOSPEL LESSON

John 7:37-39

(Jesus promises the coming of the Spirit as a spring of Living Water)

37 On the last and greatest day of the Feast, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. 38 Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him." 39 By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive. Up to that time the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified.

INTRO - If you had a guest from a foreign country staying with you, and your family and friends threw a surprise birthday party, that would seem somewhat confusing. After all, lots of people who are not normally there, food, presents, singing. It could seem confusing.

I. Talk about confusing, consider Pentecost Day, which we read about in our second lesson.

- A. With the disciples gathered together in an upper room, God acted.
 - 1. A strong wind began blowing that caught everyone's attention.
 - 2. Tongues or flames of fire appeared on the heads of the disciples.
 - 3. A large crowd gathered, people from all over, large enough that 3000 of them were later baptized.
 - 4. When Peter began sharing with the people it was heard in many languages as he shared an old Testament prophecy from Joel.

- B. Why would God act in this way?
 - 1. It had to be confusing to the disciples, never mind those who gathered.
 - 2. Peter tells us why. According to the prophecy in Joel, all these signs would happen so that *21 And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.'*

- C. Pentecost was not the only confusion.
 - 1. God created the world and its people in love and wisdom and power, but people rebelled bringing sin and ruin and destruction on the world and themselves.
 - 2. God loves us so much he sent His Son
 - 3. God loves us so much that Jesus came to die and rise for people who had sinned against God and deserve punishment
 - 4. God love us so much that Jesus rose from the dead.
 - 5. God loves us so much that He was willing to use confusion to catch the attention of people, to send the Spirit, so people could believe in Jesus, so that *everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.'*

II. Please consider the events of Pentecost, as you think about what transpired here yesterday.

- A. With Colony Days in town, our church participated in the parade and held a picnic.
 - 1. I saw a wind. It blew down the trees on the float once, and in the middle of the parade the tops of the trees (which were really umbrellas) went flying away, maybe 50 feet into the crowd along the parade.
 - 2. I saw fire. John Lotz and Jim Summer cooked over 300 hamburgers and maybe 400 hotdogs, standing over the fire and smoke to cook.
 - 3. I saw crowd of people who are not necessarily members of our

congregation. The estimate is at least 500 people were here last year. There were at least as many this year.

4. I'm not sure if you count this as a different language, but we had a steel drum band playing for 2 hours, and a man walking around in a gorilla suit.

B. Why would we go through all of this.

1. When Peter quoted Joel, he said the reason was so that *everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.*'

2. We welcomed people to our grounds, we invited them to vacation Bible School so that we can share Jesus.

3. We are like the disciples. God loved them, and he chose them to share that love He showed the whole world in Jesus. God loves us, and He chooses us to reach out and share with others as well.

III. I don't want you to think that God always works this way.

A. God sent the Holy Spirit on Pentecost in an event of spectacular nature. But, the disciples and the people left there and then shared the event, and share God's love in personal conversations in homes, at meals, and throughout the world right up to the present day as we read the story.

B. You see, yesterday was a big event, with a lot of people, and a lot of work and donation for many St. John people. But, that is not the only way we share God's love in Jesus. It gives us a chance to share God's eternal, forgiving, saving love in Jesus in conversations around tables and sharing with friends and family and acquaintances for a long time.

C. It is interesting how God chooses to use us.

CONCLUSION - I marched in the parade yesterday helping to carry the sign. (By the way, LuAnn and Chiemi worked hours with many others and did a great job.) Anyway, at the end of the parade our skating gorilla, Zach Richards, took off his mask and was walking beside me on the road. I said to him, "Zach, who would have thought that God could use you dressing up in a gorilla suit and skating around downtown Palmer in front of hundreds of people, so that we could invite people to Vacation Bible School and share Jesus with their kids." Zach sort of sighed, with a smile, and said, "I know." It is all for the same purpose as that first Pentecost, so that through God's love, as people learn about Jesus, *Acts 2:21 And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.*'