

It's Only 9:00 in the Morning

May 23, 2021—Pentecost Sunday & Graduation Sunday

Main Text: Acts 2:1-21

Supporting Texts: Joel 2:28-32; Acts 2:4; 4:8, 31; 6:3, 5; 7:55; 9:17; 11:24; 13:9 (other places in Acts where people are filled with the Spirit); and Acts 3:10; 5:3, 17; 13:10, 45; 19:28 (other places in Acts where people are filled with something else)

INTRO

In the pivotal moments of our lives, there is pressure to have everything figured out. We feel pressure—whether internally from ourselves or externally from those around us—to have things figured out.

Acts 2:1-21

Today is Pentecost Sunday. We celebrate the birth of the Church.

THE NOISE THAT LED TO THE NOISE THAT LED TO A QUESTION

The first sound was a noise like a violent blowing wind. Luke is clear that this is not the Holy Spirit; He is not a noise.

The second noise was the sound of 120 Galilean disciples of Jesus speaking in their own language.

The first noise that led to the second noise led to a question. **What does this mean?**

When we come to the pivotal moments in our lives, we know at least some of what they mean. They are not foreign noises. Yet people still want to know what they mean (e.g., “Where are you going to college? What’s your major? Who will you room with?” or “Do you have an internship? Are you moving back home? Any leads on a job yet?”)

It’s in those moments that it’s tempting to get disappointed with yourself because it seems like everyone else has their life figured out. Or with God, because He should be coming through in a bigger way with your life plan.

PETER ADDRESSES THE CROWD AS GOD’S INTERPRETER

First, with the joke about drunkenness. Peter doesn’t get offended. He laughs it off because he knows that it’s more important to be able to be heard than to rebuke them.

Second, with what has happened. Mikeal Parsons, in his commentary on Acts, says that Luke uses the same Greek words to connect what happened in the Upper Room with what Peter says here. In verse 14, Peter raised his voice to interpret what the sound was all about. The Greek for voice and sound is the same word. Also in verse 14, Peter “addressed” the crowd, the same Greek word used to say the Spirit “enabled” believers to speak in other tongues. “The effect is to underline not only that the speech of Pentecost is divinely inspired, but that Peter’s interpretation of that event is likewise authoritatively inspired.”¹

How does he do it?

¹ Parsons, Mikeal. Acts. Paideia Commentary. p. 41.

1. Peter knows how to answer their question because he knows what time it is—the last days.
2. Peter knows what that time requires. It requires Joel. Not Isaiah, not Jeremiah, not Ezekiel—Joel. Peter has become friends with all of these men. And for this particular occasion he invites Joel to join him and the crowd that has gathered.
3. It is the filling of the Holy Spirit that makes this possible. In Acts, it is possible to be filled with the Holy Spirit. Luke says this is true of people nine times (2:4; 4:8, 31; 6:3, 5; 7:55; 9:17; 11:24; 13:9)—mostly of individuals like Peter, Stephen, Barnabas, and Paul. And it is mostly used of people who are about to speak to others about what God is doing. Just like Peter.

But people can also be filled with other things:

1. People were filled with wonder and amazement when Peter and John healed the lame man (3:10).
2. Ananias and Sapphira's hearts were filled with Satan (5:3).
3. The high priests and Sadducees were filled with jealousy because the apostles were healing people (5:17).
4. Elymas the sorcerer is filled with deceit and trickery (13:10).
5. Jews in Antioch were filled with jealousy toward Paul and Barnabas (13:45).
6. The crowd in Ephesus was filled with fury at the threat to their business of making idols of Artemis (19:28).

WE ARE GOD'S INTERPRETERS

We are the people who are filled with the Holy Spirit. In the pivotal moments of life, when we are unsure of how to interpret what's going on around us, we can lean on the Spirit who is faithful to bring to mind the word of God in our time of need.

First, we are called to be interpreters of what God is doing to others, especially in the pivotal moments of life.

Second, we are called to let others interpret what God is doing for us. Dietrich Bonhoeffer wrote in his classic Life Together,

“God has put this Word into the mouth of men in order that it may be communicated to other men. When one person is struck by the Word, he speaks it to others. God has willed that we should seek and find His living Word in the witness of a brother, in the mouth of man. Therefore, the Christian needs another Christian who speaks God's Word to him. He needs him again and again when he becomes uncertain and discouraged, for by himself he cannot help himself without belying the truth. He needs his brother man as a bearer and proclaimer of the divine word of salvation. He needs his brother solely because of Jesus Christ. The Christ in his own heart is weaker than the Christ in the word of his brother; his own heart is uncertain, his brother's is sure.”²

How do we do this?

1. We know what time it is.
2. We become friends with parts of the Bible.
3. We become okay with not knowing and express it openly in church settings.
4. We ask other people to be our interpreters.
5. We trust that the Holy Spirit indeed dwells within us.

² Bonhoeffer, Dietrich. *Life Together*. pp. 22-23.