

### **Romans 8:14-17**

For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God. For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received a spirit of adoption. When we cry, "Abba! Father!" it is that very Spirit bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ - if, in fact, we suffer with him so that we may also be glorified with him.

### **Acts 2:1-21**

When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them and a tongue rested on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability.

Now there were devout Jews from every nation under heaven living in Jerusalem. And at this sound the crowd gathered and was bewildered, because each one heard them speaking in the native language of each. Amazed and astonished, they asked, "Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? And how is it that we hear, each of us, in our own native language? Parthians, Medes, Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabs - in our own language we hear them speaking about God's deeds of power." All were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, "What does this mean?" But others sneered and said, "They are filled with new wine."

But Peter, standing with the eleven, raised his voice and addressed them, "Men of Judea and all who live in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and listen to what I say. Indeed, these are not drunk, as you suppose, for it is only nine o'clock in the morning. No, this is what was spoken through the prophet Joel:

'IN the last days it will be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams. Even upon my slaves, both men and women, in those days I will pour out my Spirit; and they shall prophesy. And I will show portents in the heavens above and signs on the earth below, blood and fire, and smoky mists. The sun shall be turned to darkness and the moon to blood, before the coming of the Lord's great and glorious day. Then everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.'

## Sermon

Today is a day we celebrate the birthday of the church, the day of Pentecost where we remember that Jesus sent the Holy Spirit to the disciples so that they might continue the ministry he had begun. It was a new beginning, a new day. No longer were the disciples hiding behind closed doors, afraid that the religious authorities of the Roman soldiers might come at any moment. No longer were they waiting for the resurrected Lord to appear to them once more and give them one more direction, one more pep talk, before they were sent into the world. On Pentecost, the Spirit came, and the disciples broke out of their fear and waiting, and began a new day.

I wonder if you can think back to a day like this, a day where life turned - away from isolation into community, away from waiting into doing, away from fear and into passion? For some it was that first day of High School, or graduation day. Those moment where the new day is coming, whether we like it or not, but when it finally arrives we find great new opportunities, new maturity, and new communities.

Maybe what you remember is a first date, the day you proposed or the day of your marriage. You remember that feeling, of having your heart pounding in your chest before you ask for the first date, the fear and hope that comes with a first kiss, the cheesy or romantic proposal, the wedding day that goes by in a flash where your face hurts from smiling, but you keep on smiling because it is a new day, a new beginning.

In 1996, I was enrolled to begin College in the fall and I got a special invitation to an honor week that began a week earlier than Freshman orientation. About twenty students gathered on campus and moved to our dorms. We had a number of opportunities to gather with faculty and get to know one another. I'm not sure what the criteria was for getting an invitation, but looking back, I'm not sure how I got in. But I'm glad I did. This new beginning allowed me to meet new friends before the whole campus was filled. I did not begin College isolate or alone, but in a community.

Among these honor students was one beautiful girl with curly hair. I saw Sarah that first week in August, but it took me until November to ask her out. Three years later I asked her to marry me and a year and a half after that we were married.

Each step along the way came with fear and also hope. Each new beginning came with a drive to get out of the ordinary, out of the comfortable, out of the easy - and into discovering what I was supposed to do, and who I was supposed to be with.

The disciples were living in fear, but the spirit knocked upon the doors of their isolation and pushed them into the streets. The spirit overcame their anxiety and gave them a reason to live, a passion to serve, a calling in life. And as we look back at our own lives, we see where the Spirit has broken in and moved us as well - pushed, nudged or shoved us. We pray for our children, that they also will feel that push, not by violence or anger or despair, but by hope and faith and love and all other fruits of the spirit. We look forward to the wisdom and direction of our sons and daughters even as we recognize

that as we age we are still called by the Spirit to dream dreams and help make them become reality.

New beginnings often are very different, they look different, they sound different. The unfamiliar is hard for us but it is in the new that we find hope and renewal. It is in sharing that we grow into new relationship, and it is in risk that we find ourselves finding where the Spirit has called us - our passion, our gifts, our relationships, our lives! This is true in our individual lives, and most importantly it is true for our church life as well.

The spirit came, and the disciples began a new mission. The spirit still comes, and we are called into new ministries as well. It was a new day, a new opportunity, a new mission, a new beginning.

And God's spirit was there before, at the beginning.

And God's spirit was there in the midst of the new and the change and challenges

And God's spirit promises to be there in the end - which isn't really the end, but a new beginning. Thanks be to God for the coming of the Holy Spirit.