

Hearing and Speaking

Text: Acts 2:1-21

Romans 8:14-17 (Series C. Pentecost Sunday) Ps. 104:24-34, 35

John 14:8-17 (25-27)

"This is what I will do in the last days, God says: I will pour out my Spirit on everyone. You sons and daughters will proclaim my message; your young men will see visions, and your old men will have dreams. Yes, even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit and they will proclaim my message."

Let us prayer:

Several books have been written on the difficulty men and women have in communicating. It has been estimated that women say something like 6,000 – 8,000 words a day and that men utter 2,000 – 4,000 words a day. At the end of the day the man has spoken his 4,000 words and doesn't want to communicate any more.

He simply wants to sit quietly, watch TV and go to bed. A woman most likely won't have spoken her 8,000 words for the day yet. She may have 2- 3,000 words to go and uses them to share every event of the day. Let us look at this conversation for an illustration.

Wife: Hi darling ...it's good to see you home. How was your day?

Husband: Good.

Wife: I heard that you were going to finalize that big contract today. How did it go?

Husband: Fine.

Wife: That's good. Do you think the boss will give you a raise?

Husband: Maybe.

Wife: Hey! Today I found out that I'm pregnant.

Husband: That's good.....*and so on...* and then she goes on to tell everything that happened in her day. Communication can be difficult at times. There are communication gaps between genders, between the poor and the rich, between those with a basic education and those who are well educated.

There are communication gaps between people of different races, nationalities, and social classes. What hope is there for us ever to understand one another?

In Genesis story of the Tower of Babel, we are told that there was one original "language and few words" of humanity. This was disrupted forever by the profusion of languages and speech? *(This happened to me few years ago at McDonald restaurant in Repentigny, QC. there was a confusion because of language. The person across the counter didn't speak English, and I didn't speak French, and even though I pointed my order on the picture board on the wall I still got the wrong meal).*

It has been held that this Pentecost story is meant to signify a gracious reversal of Babel. On the day of Pentecost, we are told, that *"there were Jews living in Jerusalem, religious people who had come from every country in the world."* Here are all these people from every nation of the world talking in their own languages. The book of Acts, provides a lengthy list of places where those people came from.

You might say that those people gathered together that day represented the whole world. Amongst that group of people there were differences in race, economics, class, language, and nationalities that cause a communication headache. What a sound they must have made as they all spoke different languages trying to be understood.

How on earth will they get together? How can they hope to hear one another? How on earth will they be able to hear about Jesus' life, death and resurrection and God's unfailing love for them? How will they be able to communicate?

Then they heard what sounded like a rush of wind, and saw tongues of fire *"which spread out and touched each person there."* They were filled with the Holy Spirit and given the gift of *speech* and of *hearing*. We are told, *"They were all excited, because each of them heard the believers talking in his own language."*

When Peter stood up to speak to the crowd he quotes the prophet Joel. *"This is what I will do in the last days, God says: I will pour out my Spirit on everyone. You sons and daughters will proclaim my message; your young men will see visions, and your old men will have dreams. Yes, even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit and they will proclaim my message. (The Spirit of Mission).*

"*The prophet* is saying that the Spirit of God will descend upon:

- old women and men – pensioners in their own homes, those in retirement villages, nursing homes,
- young people students, some with work, others unemployed, young parents with families.
- successful and wealthy middle-aged business people,
- plain and ordinary people, happy with their small but adequate incomes.
- people who never get their picture in the paper or in magazines for some kind of special accomplishment,
- people who are never asked to speak before a crowd.

The Spirit of God descends upon all these and they speak and hear. Do you believe that? That such *speaking* and *hearing* happened back then, and if so do you believe it happens today? Is the Holy Spirit powerful enough to overcome those barriers and deep boundaries that frustrate our *speaking* and *hearing*? " I believe Yes!"

The Holy Spirit gives us the ability to overcome the things that divide us, to open our ears to what God has to say to us. Look at us this morning at St. Ansgar. All of the factors which can divide any gathering of human beings is among us. We come from all kinds of backgrounds, born in different countries and places in Canada.

Some of us grew up in loving and close families, others whose childhood memories only bring hurt and pain, and we rather forget it. We come with all kinds of life-experiences, and hang-ups.

- Some are happy, others are depressed and sad.
- Some are content, others nothing is enough.
- Some are healthy, others are suffering.
- Some are young, others are old.
- Some are frustrated and angry, others have experienced joy and happiness in their families or at work.

Now let's us bring it home, if we could analyse this congregation this morning, I'm sure we could fill a book with the amount of diversity amongst us, as small as we are. Yet, in the great store of God's grace, we are all here together, to worship, and we do hear.

One of the reasons why people keep coming back to church is that they hear something here that worms their heart, something that they might not find elsewhere. Things are spoken here which you don't hear anywhere else.

That's the Spirit. Like the crowd that first Pentecost Day, we come here with all of our differences, and yet we are still able to hear what God is saying to us. The Spirit of God has descended upon us as we gather and we hear his Word as it is applied to our own particular situation.

The preacher may use language that is charming and articulate without expression. Yet in every instance this is the Word of God – the Word of God through which the Holy Spirit speaks to us about God's love and forgiveness. We come to church, and despite everything, we hear the voice of God speaking to our heart.

Sometimes it's so tough for us to hear. We come here filled with anxiety and worry, or upset and depressed, and these block out what God is saying to us. We come here almost tone-deaf to the gospel, at times eh!

But in some way, we do hear that still voice of God. We may not all hear the same thing, and we may not all hear the same message. It's always interesting to hear what people get out of my sermon for instance.

The messages received can be quite diverse, even one that the preacher hadn't even intended. Regardless of all this the Spirit still speaks to us through God's Word and we take with us a message to help us cope with the week ahead.

The Spirit applies the Word of God to our particular need at that time. Like the crowd gathered at the first Pentecost, the Spirit opens our ears to hear, just as he opened the ears of that diverse group of listeners to Peter's sermon, and 3,000 people were baptized and added to the church that day.

But not only did the Spirit help people to hear God's Word at Pentecost but also gave the disciples the ability and courage to speak it.

God says, "*I will pour out my Spirit on everyone ... and they will proclaim my message.*" He doesn't say, "I will pour my Spirit out on pastors and preachers". He says, "*I will pour out my Spirit on everyone*" and young and old, male and female, rich and poor, black and white "*will proclaim my message*".

We gather here on Sundays and we hear God's Word so that we might get the courage and conviction to leave here and speak to our world. We learn, in our Sunday worship, the joy of hearing the truth about how great and wonderful our God is and what God has done for us in Christ Jesus.

Then we go out into the world, into our every life, into our neighbourhood, amongst our friends and workmates and *speak* to them in word and deed about what Jesus means to us. Surveys taken among people who recently joined a church indicate that they have joined because of their contact with Christians.

Who shared about their relationship with God, and invited them to come to worship or some other congregational activity, like home groups, children's ministry and so on. Yes, it takes great courage to bring the truth to others no matter what the consequences.

On Pentecost, God's promised Holy Spirit descended on all. At our baptism God's Spirit descended upon us. The love and grace of God came into our lives. We were made part of his family and assured that we would have life forever in heaven. The Spirit came into our lives and we received the power to speak, to tell the whole world, starting with family, friends and neighbours what Jesus means to us.

Today is the day to stop merely knowing the story. Today is the day to start *feeling* the *blazing fullness* of the Spirit! We have the Spirit within us and God's grace and the love and Salvation of Christ for just the wanting of it. Let us rejoice and be glad and joy-filled, and *alive* in it! What else is faith and *this* life, for?

May God's Spirit guide and help us as we go out from here today and give us the courage and power to speak his Word with conviction to others.

Amen.

June 5, 2022

Prayer concerns: *Matilda Molyneaux-Piper, Shirley Walker, Hanne Bourgeoise, Sven Berg, Astrid Hylland, Ellen Eriksen, Ellen Dahal-Lanteigne, Karen Abazio, Wilhelmina Tiemersma, Matilda Molyneaux-Piper, Soo Young, Shirley Walker, Pastor Timothy, Sharon Nielson (in Herbert, Sask.) the dire tension between Russia and Ukraine, Protectors at various places in Canada, Covid -19 patients, essential and Frontline workers, Note: of thanks to God as the Covid-19 virus is easing off and more restrictions are being lifted, and finally Families of departed souls in recent weeks and months.*

Prayer: God All-Knowing, guide the Spirit of Pentecost to set our souls ablaze once again, that we may keep Your commandments, do greater works, and live as joint heirs of Your eternal kingdom. We ask through Jesus, our Redeemer Christ, and the Holy Spirit, the Sacred Fire in our souls, who together with You reign as One God, now and for eternity. **Amen.**

Make melodies in your heart with these hymns:

- **Come Down, O Love Divine # 804**
- **Spirit of God Descend Upon My Heart # 800**
- **Come, Gracious Spirit, Heavenly Dove # 404**

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Jonathan Palma, Amir Zamani Alavijeh, & Lindsay Donald

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

n/a