

## Sermon: 2019/06/09 (Pentecost, Year C) - Acts 2:1-11 & John 14:8-17\_BTR

So, Jesus ascended into the "heavens" to resume/reclaim His place once again with God, and the Apostles returned to Jerusalem; where, for ten days they prayed *intensely* and earnestly for Jesus' mysterious partner to reveal Himself.

Then, *suddenly*, 'a violent wind' - those are Luke's words - 'a violent wind' almost tears the roof from the house.

It's like that early scene from *Wizard Of Oz*, except that the tornado isn't outside, tearing up the farm, swirling it into the sky; it is *inside* the room.

And there were 'tongues...of fire' too!  
Which enabled the Apostles speak - *instantaneously* - in foreign languages.

But, this morning, I want to call out "the elephant in the room":  
Perhaps you're sitting there right now feeling incredulous?  
Perhaps you're sitting there right now feeling cheated?  
"Why," you might be asking yourself - in light of what happened to the Apostles, "haven't I experienced - *sensed* - the Holy Spirit moving, *tangibly*, in my life?  
*Hm?*  
How come?"

Some people might take a perceived lack of this kind as proof - proof of the Holy Spirit's non-existence.

Some people might take His failure to *dramatically* manifest Himself (to them) in a fashion similar to that first incident as evidence *against* the New Testament as *historical, reliable* eye-witness testimony.

Some people might look at the hole in their lives and relationships where they *wished* they could see the Holy Spirit working miracles, and, not seeing them, conclude, well, He mustn't love me then.

I mustn't be one of His "elect;"

I mustn't be one of His children.

But these pessimistic "leaps" of speculation are lies;  
they are defeatist falsehoods.

The Holy Spirit is principally a *powerful* wind of change, and He is *always* blowing somewhere:

There is too much accumulated evidence in the Church - from around the world and our history - that He *is* real and that He makes a *significant* difference.

So, then, the question is; why not for *me*?

I'm speaking hypothetically, of course.

The "Advocate" - to use His other name - has made Himself known to me, personally, very palpably.

But, most oftentimes, we white, *western* Christians - especially in *this* denomination - struggle to really let go and embrace His surprising, challenging, prophetic, *euphoric* presence.

Well, here is my suggestion: it is a question, really; a *provocation*.

And it is this:

Why *would* God trust you with something as *incredible* as the *super*-natural if He can't rely on you to use your *natural* gifts and talents the way He has asked?

Think about that.

You and I - being made in the image of *the* Creator - are already capable of astonishing and wonderful things.

At least, we are when we put our minds to a task:

whether it is hanging suspension bridges across a gulf of water,

or composing stirring sonatas,

or making inspiring music,

launching satellites into space,

or just giving a sandwich to a hungry stranger...

God has made us with faculties and intellects and bodies that can make *massive* changes for the good all around, and yet we squander those things don't we?

We *vegetate* [*shake a leek*] in front of the TV when we could *cogitate* with a book [*wave Bible*].

We *spend* money on (personal) luxuries when we could *donate* it.

We *waste* our time with trivialities when we could *volunteer* it, no?

God has already blessed us with *such* potential, and in His Scriptures makes clear what we can do with it.

But we vacillate and hesitate and manipulate.

And we certainly don't *demonstrate* - that we are ready and willing to 'do greater works than these': [*Jn. 14:12*].

But, my friends, the power of the Holy Spirit is right there, in Heaven: only a sincere prayer away - a *floodwater* of grace held back by a reservoir of *our* making:

of our doubts and skepticism.

So, as the old hymn goes: [*Sing?*]

'Cast care aside, lean on thy Guide;  
His boundless mercy will provide,  
Trust, and thy trusting soul shall prove  
Christ is its life, and Christ its love.'

Amen?