

Pentecost

Laura Blazek - May 24th, 2015

John 15:26-27; 16:4b-15

Hearing the Gospel read in different languages at one time is exciting, and I want to thank all those willing and able to share their gift of language. As someone whose ability to learn a foreign language doesn't extend beyond being able to count to ten in Spanish and five in French, listening to others with that gift is a privilege.

Today, in addition to English, we heard Spanish, Italian, French, Portuguese and others- all the voices coming together as one. This never fails to stir something within my soul. I think perhaps it is because it requires me to focus, to be still and listen so that as the voices wash over me, I can hear what God needs me to hear.

In the midst of all the babble, in the midst of all the voices competing to be heard, what did you hear? Was it nothing more than noise? Did it sound like “blah, blah, blah” and so you tuned it out? Or did you let the Holy Spirit soar through your soul allowing you to hear the voice of God speaking to you? When there are so many voices vying for our attention, it is easy to get lost in the midst of it all.

It's not just voices that we can get lost in the midst of, but life itself. There is so much happening in our lives, so many things demanding our attention, so many options and choices that we can easily be overwhelmed. Today, is a good example of that as we celebrate Pentecost, offer up letters to our BARHD students, finish our collection of socks and underwear for Food for Friends, honor our graduates, look forward to our church picnic, open the Labyrinth, participate in Memorial Day remembrances, and worship. Then are the demands of family and friends, the work that sits on our desk unfinished, the dog that stares at you expectantly with a tennis ball in his mouth ready to play, the siren call of your bed to just sleep in, and by the way a text message just appeared on your phone during the opening hymn. And it's not even noon yet.

In the whirlwind of life, it becomes way too easy to forget why we are here and to forget who Christ calls us to be. Into the fray enters the breath of the Holy Spirit bringing us back to life when we feel dry as dust. Like the wind, the Holy Spirit soars as a constant companion. The Spirit pushes us, prods us, directs us, comforts us, and reminds us that Christ needs us to be His face in the world.

After graduating from veterinary school, I lived in St. Louis, Missouri for seven years. There were many things I missed about Oklahoma while I was there, but next to my family, the one thing I missed most was the wind. The air in St. Louis was often still or just a faint breeze. Oh, there would be the occasional true wind that would blow your hat off of your head, but all in all the wind in St. Louis was easy to dismiss and forget about, except when you wished it would blow to dispel the heat and odors of too many people living too close together.

In Oklahoma, the wind is alive. It has a personality and moods. One moment it may be gently caressing your face giving you a refreshing boost when you flag on a scorching day and the next trying to force your car into the other lane with a fierce gust. The wind in Oklahoma is ever present, uncontainable, and inescapable. You may shut your windows, slam your door closed, and sit huddled in your home, but the wind will find the cracks, stir the dust, and force you to face that which you might wish to ignore. It is in the wind that I feel the hand of God and the power of the Holy Spirit.

Wind and breath are often used in scripture when talking about the Holy Spirit. In Ezekiel, we encounter the Spirit giving life to a valley of dry bones “Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live.” In Acts, we encounter the Spirit where the disciples are gathered as it pushes them out into the world, “...suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind...” We encounter the Spirit wherever we are because as John says in chapter three, “The wind blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.”

We can't control the wind any more than we can control the Holy Spirit, but that doesn't stop us from trying. The outside demands and voices in our lives become wind breaks in our souls, relegating the Spirit to just another voice competing for our attention. Sometimes, it is individual things such as vegging on the couch rather than helping a neighbor, but it also the sheer number of demands, such as fourteen before noon, that cause us to throw up a barrier rather than trusting in the Spirit to guide us through and keep us from getting lost in the midst of it all. We want to be in control.

But the Spirit soars through us touching every cell of our being, finding the cracks, filling the voids, stirring the dust of our lives and forcing us to acknowledge those things we try to ignore. It breaks through the illusion of control to remind us why we are here and who Christ calls us to be.

On this Pentecost day, we remember the power of the Spirit pushing the disciples into the world. We celebrate and rejoice in the birth of Christ's community. We recognize the work of the Holy

Spirit in our lives and today more than any other are willing to allow the Spirit to fly unfettered through our hearts, minds, and souls. But if Pentecost is just a day, if we treat it just like we tend to do Christmas, Lent and Easter, then we are missing something. We should live Pentecost every day.

Every day, we need to let the Holy Spirit push us out into the world proclaiming the message of Christ's love for us. Every day, we need to let the Holy Spirit open our eyes to the pain and suffering that surrounds us so that we can live Christ's call to love our neighbor. Every day, we need to let the Holy Spirit guide us so that when faced with overwhelming choices we choose that which serves to glorify God rather than ourselves. Every day, we need to relinquish control, trusting in the Holy Spirit, so that we can hear God speaking to us and become who God created us to be. Every day, we need to let the Holy Spirit fly unfettered through our hearts, minds, and souls.

In the midst of the babble, in the midst of the chaos of our lives, we need to be still, turn our faces into the wind, and say, "Come, Holy Spirit, come."

Amen