

Good Shepherd Presbyterian Church

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The Day of Pentecost

Ezekiel 37:1-14

¹The hand of the LORD came upon me, and he brought me out by the spirit of the LORD and set me down in the middle of a valley; it was full of bones. ²He led me all around them; there were very many lying in the valley, and they were very dry. ³He said to me, "Mortal, can these bones live?" I answered, "O Lord GOD, you know." ⁴Then he said to me, "Prophecy to these bones, and say to them: O dry bones, hear the word of the LORD. ⁵Thus says the Lord GOD to these bones: I will cause breath to enter you, and you shall live. ⁶I will lay sinews on you, and will cause flesh to come upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and you shall live; and you shall know that I am the LORD."

⁷So I prophesied as I had been commanded; and as I prophesied, suddenly there was a noise, a rattling, and the bones came together, bone to its bone. ⁸I looked, and there were sinews on them, and flesh had come upon them, and skin had covered them; but there was no breath in them. ⁹Then he said to me, "Prophecy to the breath, prophesy, mortal, and say to the breath: Thus says the Lord GOD: Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live." ¹⁰I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood on their feet, a vast multitude.

¹¹Then he said to me, "Mortal, these bones are the whole house of Israel. They say, 'Our bones are dried up, and our hope is lost; we are cut off completely.' ¹²Therefore prophesy, and say to them, Thus says the Lord GOD: I am going to open your graves, and bring you up from your graves, O my people; and I will bring you back to the land of Israel. ¹³And you shall know that I am the LORD, when I open your graves, and bring you up from your graves, O my people. ¹⁴I will put my spirit within you, and you shall live, and I will place you on your own soil; then you shall know that I, the LORD, have spoken and will act," says the LORD.

Acts 2:1-21

¹When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. ²And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. ³Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. ⁴All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability.

⁵Now there were devout Jews from every nation under heaven living in Jerusalem. ⁶And at this sound the crowd gathered and was bewildered, because each one heard them speaking in the native language of each. ⁷Amazed and astonished, they asked, "Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? ⁸And how is it that we hear, each of us, in our own native language? ⁹Parthians, Medes, Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, ¹⁰Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, ¹¹Cretans and Arabs—in our own languages we hear them speaking about God's deeds of power." ¹²All were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, "What does this mean?" ¹³But others sneered and said, "They are filled with new wine."

¹⁴But 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. ¹⁵Indeed, these are not drunk, as you suppose, for it is only nine o'clock in the morning. ¹⁶No, this is what was spoken through the prophet

Joel: ¹⁷In 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. ¹⁸Even upon my slaves, both men and women, in those days I will pour out my Spirit; and they shall prophesy. ¹⁹And I will show portents in the heaven above and signs on the earth below, blood, and fire, and smoky mist. ²⁰The sun shall be turned to darkness and the moon to blood, before the coming of the Lord's great and glorious day. ²¹Then everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved."

"Veni Spiritus"

"Veni Spiritus" Come Spirit! Come, Oh Holy Spirit, come!

The Day of Pentecost.

It goes all the way back. The Holy Spirit is that person, that part, that fullness of God that was present in the creation. If we turn all the way back to the book of Genesis and read about the story of creation we see that the central action is on behalf of God. It is God who, from nothing, creates all that is to be.

God takes from the dust of the earth and fashions from the clay the human being. Then in an act which demonstrates the closeness of the creator with the creation, God breathes his life into the form of dust/clay and humanity comes to life. Alive.

There is no life apart from the breathing of God into the earthiness of our humanity. The Spirit is the source of life. The Spirit is the agent of life. The Holy Spirit is the aliveness part of being alive.

As that creation story goes on we further discover that on our own the result is death. Death is the absence of life. All the aliveness that is part of being alive is gifted from God—it is very substance and reality of our creation. That aliveness of God has been placed within us.

Pentecost is the celebration of that aliveness as it is breathed upon the church, upon those first apostles, and upon us as the disciples of this time and place.

"Veni Spiritus." Come Holy Spirit!

Oh the power of the Spirit --- there was that valley of dry, dusty, and life-less bones. Nothing to them. Then the bones connect – bone to bone, and muscle grows on them, and flesh covers those bones---those bodies. But they are life-less. Until --, until that Spirit---that Holy Breath of God.....until that Spirit fills them there is no life.

Once that Spirit fills them they are full of life! “Veni Spiritus” Come Spirit! Come, Oh Holy Spirit, come!

These Spirit stories this stories this day are so remarkable, because it is not just history of something that happened to the earliest church—its not just an account of how they witnessed and experienced the Spirit.

No—this is our story.

This is about us—and where we are as a people. When Jesus promised that out of the believer’s heart would flow rivers of living water, he was making a direct promise to us sitting in this room today.

We are the ones to whom the Spirit has been given.

We are the sons and the daughters that have been sent to dream dreams and have faith. To love and use the gifts of God.

The problem is—the problem is—we approach life from a spectator point of view. We watch way more than we jump in and participate.

Those disciples with their newly found ability to speak in the native tongues of the people----they could not watch—the Spirit lit them on fire with the Word. Their burning passion became that of sharing this wonderful gift of love from God in Christ Jesus.

“Veni Spiritus” Come Spirit! Come, Oh Holy Spirit, come!

We tend to get into this rut of thinking life is ordinary; life is hum-drum; life is predictable. Not too terribly exciting. Pretty much the same thing, day in and day out. Oh, that was the disciples too, now that Jesus was ascended—just cruising through, taking it easy. But then, along comes the Holy Spirit, just as Jesus had promised. That God presence intercedes and breaks through with a reality.

That is what God is still doing in the lives of people today. That's what God is doing in us today. That is what God is doing in the life of the Church today--- on this Pentecost Day.

“Veni Spiritus” Come Spirit! Come, Oh Holy Spirit, come!-God is trying to break in and make a way for us where everyday we can get more out of life than we ever expected.

You and I can get more out of life than we ever expected if we will daily focus ourselves on being in tune to God's breaking into the ho-hum, hum-drumness of our living. If we live with the burning passion of the Spirit of God that lives here and in us.

How do you and I do that?? Three things actually.

Number ONE.

Aim High.

You and I need to practice our skills at aiming high in life. So often we don't see the possibilities that God has birthed in us. Opportunity after

opportunity passes us by because we don't think we have what it takes or we don't have the right gifts.

That is setting ourselves up to be failures. God wants for us to live bravely and boldly in the Spirit. We need to boldly dream, and vision, and set goals.

Vision big --- have a vision of where you want to go. Reach for the moon and the sun and the stars. Bravely. Boldly. Aim High everyday. What are your dreams? What are your goals? What vision is out there for you?

What about the Church—what dream, what vision is God placing before us? Will we respond with bravery “aiming high” or will we in the words of the teenager, “wimp out.”

Aim high----think bigger, broader, wider, higher....aim high!

“Veni Spiritus” Come Spirit! Come, Oh Holy Spirit, come!

Number TWO. As you aim high, don't be bound by Physical Limitations. "Don't be bound by physical limitations."

So often in life we dismiss the possibility of doing something because we don't have the money, we don't have the time, we don't have enough help, we don't have the details worked out, we don't this, we don't that.

We end up setting limits and boundaries on ourselves and our living because of physical limitations. We do that in our church too. We don't do things because there isn't enough money, there isn't enough help. There isn't enough people.

Listen, don't be bound by those physical limitations. Do things unto God, live for the Lord and those physical boundaries disappear. We find

that in the church all the time. Surprise. There is enough money, and people, and etc..

Let God surprise you in your personal life too. Don't build walls around God's possibilities for you---don't be bound by physical limitation. The Holy Spirit will provide. The Holy Spirit will provide.

I know that God is challenging this church deeply to become the witness for this area----responding to that challenge is going to take burning passion for the Word and freedom from limitations.

I know that God is challenging you too—in your own walk of faith—to wrestle and struggle and risk----oh, how we are called to risk ourselves for the Gospel.

Don't be bound by the physical limitations that so often say "No." God's Spirit is the eternal "YES."

"Veni Spiritus" Come Spirit! Come, Oh Holy Spirit, come!

Finally, there is one last thing. First, aim high. Second, don't be bound by physical limitations, and Third: "Live each day in God's grace."

Live today, and tomorrow, and everyday after that in God's grace.

John Calvin, that Great Reformed theologian had this understanding of God's grace which is so wonderful---we need to live in it.

Every evening Calvin would pray thanking God for all that he had been able to do that day. And he rejoiced in those things. And he committed them to the Lord. And all the things that he did not accomplish that day---he prayed for the ability to do them the next day.

And then he went to sleep. And when he got up, he prayed that God would allow him to accomplish as much for God's glory as is humanly possible in one day.

What an example for us. We need to live each day in such grace. Where we don't beat up on ourselves about what was not done and where we rejoice in God's glory for helping us to do what we have done.

Live in such grace---God's wonderful grace; aim high in life--- don't let physical boundaries stop you-----because this God of ours is connecting us together and breathing that powerful Breath of Life into us.

Holy Spirit power----we have it.

Hallelujah! “Veni Spiritus” Come Spirit! Come, Oh Holy Spirit, come!

Amen.