

Rushing Wind

May 23, 2021, Pentecost Prayer: We are a part of the family of God. The Spirit dwells in us, guiding us along our journey. We live in love and fellowship in peace and power. The Spirit burns within us, giving us the strength to serve. Lord help us to live a faithful life full of grace and mercy. Amen.

Let's get back to Normal. It's Pentecost! It was and is the beginning of a new normal. The power of the Holy Spirit promised by Christ is about to be unleashed. The color red marks Pentecost. It caught the disciples by surprise. They find themselves blown away by God. It's like playing with fire. I am sure if you were there, you would be something like opening your windows or doors during the passing of Wizard of Oz Kanas's twister. A mighty wind rushes in. It explores the lives of the disciples and all who were present. It was like playing with dynamite. It's a power that is still available to us today. All we need to do is to let go. We hear in the Psalm the call, the cry to give a new heart, a new spirit, a new beginning. A change that is so radical will transform your life.

Annie Dillard attempted to capture something of this power in her famous quote about worship in *Teaching a Stone to Talk*:

Why do people in church seem like cheerful-brainless tourists on a packaged tour of the Absolute? Does anyone have the foggiest idea of what sort of power we blithely invoke? Or, as I suspect, does no one believe a word of it? The churches are children playing on the floor with their chemistry sets, mixing up a batch of TNT to kill a Sunday morning. It is madness to wear ladies straw hats and velvet hats to church; we should all be wearing crash helmets. Ushers should issue life preservers and signal flares; they should lash us to our pews. For the sleeping, God may wake someday and take offense, or the waking God may draw us to where we can never return. - Annie Dillard, *Teaching a Stone to Talk: Expeditions and Encounters* (New York: Harper & Row, 1982), 40-41.

Uncertainty is a constant in life. The normal is constant change. That's is what sanctification is all about. It is going from grace to grace. Realizing that the one constant in life is "change." Every time I turn on the TV, I hear about the new normal. I wonder what is normal? Is the new normal the place we long to get back where we are in control of our lives? Or is the new normal for us as Christian, Pentecost? When God is in control, it caught everyone by surprise. When it happens, it is life-changing, and it is life-giving. Old things are passing away. All things become new.

A Pentecost moment is a day for something new. A movement that calls and encourages us to step out of our comfort zones, where God asks us to stretch ourselves that moves us into a realm you never been before, even if we aren't quite sure what we are to do or say. Entering into a Pentecost space is where we aren't always in control of what is happening, or we might not understand what God is up to at the moment, but a Pentecost moment makes us readier to receive the Spirit when it comes.

Pentecost

Let there be red! Red is the color of Spirit and the color of flame. It is a reminder of that first startling presence that came and rested on them. Did you catch that, the resting?

When the divine gift of the Holy Spirit lands on your shoulders, there will be no "normal" again: Where he leads me, I will follow. It is that inextinguishable fire of the Holy Spirit moving in us.

John the Baptist predicts that Jesus will be the One to "baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire" ([Matthew 3:11](#)). When the Holy Spirit began His ministry of indwelling the early church, He chose to appear as "tongues of fire" resting on each of the believers. At that moment, "all of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them" ([Acts 2:3-4](#)).

Like on the day of Pentecost, people thought they were drunk or crazy. They laughed and mocked them. When the Holy Spirit jumps into your life, you'll think, say, do, and think things you never thought possible because God is in control, there is no "Let's get back to..."normal" because the Spirit has now captured your heart, mind, your soul, and you are on fire for Jesus.

The Spirit is like a fire. It brings God's presence, God's passion, and God's purity. The Holy Spirit is the presence of God as He indwells the heart of the believer (Romans 8:9). God guides and comforts His children with the Holy Spirit dwelling in our bodies—within us residue the "temple of the living God" (2 Corinthians 5:1; 6:16).

The Holy Spirit company creates the passion of God in our hearts. After the two traveling disciples talk with the resurrected Jesus, they describe their hearts as "burning within us" (Luke 24:32). After the apostles receive the Spirit at Pentecost, they have a passion that lasts a lifetime and speaks the word of God boldly (Acts 4:31).

The Holy Spirit creates a hunger for the divine and produces the purity of God in our lives. God's purpose is to purify us (Titus 2:14), and the Spirit is the agent of our sanctification (1 Corinthians 6:11; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; 1 Peter 1:2). I love the TV program "Forged in Fire". A silversmith uses fire to purge the dross from the precious metal to create a work of art. God uses the Spirit to remove our imperfections from us (Psalm 66:10; Proverbs 17:3). God create in me a new heart, a new spirit by the refining power of the Holy Spirit. By the purifying by God's presence and passion.

Let us get back to the powerful movement of Pentecost. Throbbing with power that's anything but comfortable. It is living into a new beginning; it is living into a love that transforms. It is the place where you see yourself as a conquer in Christ Jesus, casting your fears away even in uncertainty. Love giving you peace exceeding even your understanding. Responding, "Here am I, send me."

A Pentecost moment can happen in unexpected times. Most of you know at the end of June, I'm retiring. I know my time with you is short. I want to express my appreciation for your faithfulness and service during this pandemic. The good news is we will continue to experience Pentecostal moments on this journey. Pentecost moments are about new beginnings. I have discovered when one door closes, another one opens. When an unexpected door opens, we remember Pentecost, when God's unexpected moves in our lives. As we move forward, let us get back to Pentecost. Here am I, use me.

Prayer: We are not alone. God treasures each of us and dwells within us. God loves you. Through the promise, sacrifice, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, may the Holy Spirit be your light amid uncertainty and darkness. Go in the power of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen