

All of Them were Filled with the Holy Spirit



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Acts 2:1 – 21

Will you pray with me? God, may the words of my mouth and the meditations of all of our hearts be acceptable to you, our rock and our redeemer. Amen.

So, when I first came to this church, physically first came to this church, and many of you may not know this, I was gifted a gift basket and there were many things in that basket that were put there as a welcome, as a way for me to get to know the community a little bit more.

I still have not used the gift cards to determine what I think about the great ice cream battle of this area, but I will!

One of my favorite things in that gift basket is this. It's a book. It is a book that was created for the hundredth anniversary of this church back in 1988. Being new to the congregation, it's been really helpful for me to understand when and where this congregation was founded, something about the ministers and the life of the church over those 100 years. It's been fascinating. I hope you all have a copy and have been reading it religiously every night before you go to sleep.

One of the things that I found so interesting was that this congregation actually first met at the train station. It was only years later that this beautiful church was built, and the congregation began to gather here.

Think about that. 1888. The world was a completely different place at that time. So much that we take for granted had not yet been created. No cars, no internet. People hadn't gone to the moon. We didn't have all of the different medical miracles we often take for granted today.

Today we hear this story about the founding of the church, the church universal. But we have our own story about the founding of this church. And so, the backstory of our reading is that Jesus has ascended to heaven. He's gone. For many days, the disciples gather and they don't really know what the future is going to hold for them. Jesus has told them that the spirit will come and support them and guide them.

I'm not sure that they fully believed in their hearts.

But then it happens, and the spirit comes, and they start speaking in all these different languages and everybody gets to understand what each other is saying and there are some people there who say they drunk and Peter gets up and says they can't be drunk it's only nine o'clock in the morning. I love that line. I always laugh at that line because if you've been to New Orleans, you know a different story.

Think about our spiritual ancestors, the ones who first gathered to found this church. When they looked forward to what their church would become, could they have imagined it? If one of us was to go back in time and to say to them, "This is what the church is going to be like, would they have said to us, you're speaking in a foreign tongue? Are you drunk?"

I'll just take one example. This is Pride Month. Think about not so many years ago when certain members and leaders of this congregation would have said, "LGBTQI people in this church being fully welcomed, you're speaking a foreign language to me."

"You're going to call an openly gay man as your pastor. What are you drunk?"

Yet what the story we hear today tells us is that if we listen beyond the peculiarities of our own languages, we will hear the language of spirit speaking, that the things that may seem foreign, crazy, are actually the working of God's spirit in new and exciting ways.

Sophie, you and the other youth of this congregation will speak in new languages. You will tell us different stories and you will reveal to us new ways in which God's spirit is working not just in the world but might also be working in this congregation.

And some of us who have been here for our entire lives may say that sounds like a foreign language to me. We won't say you're drunk. It is up to us who have been here longer and are used to hearing church spoken in a certain kind of language, not just to open our minds and our hearts, but to open our spirits to the new language God is speaking through all of our youth. Because that is the future of the church. This church.

One of the things I have heard many times from many different people is a sort of anxiety about what is the future of our church, a church where the demographic is skewing on the older end of the spectrum, where there are less people in the pews than there had been many years ago. Today we hear this story about the founding of the church. But perhaps it is the story of the refounding of our church. The future of our church in which people who speak different languages of spirit are welcomed, the languages of youth who have something so beautiful to tell us about what God is up to. Not just 2,000 years ago, not just in 1888, but even today, even in 2025.

So, I invite us all to open our ears of spirit, open our hearts of spirit, open our minds of spirit. Hear the language that may seem so strange. Don't dismiss it too quickly because maybe if you listen you will hear exactly what is being shared. And it is nothing less than God's dream for us here today.

Amen.