

Holy Disrupted

Acts 2:1-13

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When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.

Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven. When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard their own language being spoken. Utterly amazed, they asked: "Aren't all these who are speaking Galileans? Then how is it that each of us hears them in our native language? Parthians, Medes and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome (both Jews and converts to Judaism); Cretans and Arabs—we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues!" Amazed and perplexed, they asked one another, "What does this mean?"

*Some, however, made fun of them and said, "They have had too much wine."
(Acts 2:1-13, NIV)*

The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going.

When the day of Pentecost was approaching,
they were all together in one place.
Sitting. Waiting.
Waiting for something to happen.

Jesus had told them to wait. To wait to be clothed with power from on high.
So they waited.
Their attendance was a little less than our attendance this morning.
They had around 120, more or less.
They were together, in one place, waiting.

There wasn't anything special about these people.
They were not television preachers, rockstar believers, best-selling authors, Nobel peace prize winners.
It's not like their worship had just the right blend of the contemporary and the traditional and contemplative and the charismatic
They were not holier than thou. They were not better than you.

These were men and women who worked hard to put food on the table.
These were people holding babies on their laps, the smell of cooking fires
still on their clothes.
These were children squirming in their seats.
These were youth in the back, on the side, silently observing, but passionately believing.
These were older men, older women, with aching backs, tired legs, wise minds.

They knew Jesus. They followed Jesus. They learned from Jesus. They believed in Jesus.
But Jesus, he took off. Literally.
Now what?
“Wait”, that’s what Jesus said. Wait here, wait to be clothed with power from on high.

And so they waited. Now, they didn’t wait idly. They prayed. Constantly. And they held a
business meeting.

Their bylaws said that they needed twelve apostles and they only had eleven. So they had a
gifts discernment process, they drew lots, and Matthias was called to fill the position.

They gathered together. They prayed. They waited. They went home.

As the days turned into weeks, they must have asked the question that maybe you have asked
about the church.

Is this “it?” Is this all there is?

Their fear, of course, had to have been that they would miss “it” –
The “it” that Jesus talked about.
The “it” that they were waiting for.
That power from on high, whatever “it” was.
Would “it” be like a shooting star, a sudden flash, able to be missed in the blink of an
eye?
Or would “it” be more subtle, easily overlooked if you didn’t concentrate, meditate?

When the day of Pentecost came,
they were all together in one place.
Sitting. And waiting. Waiting For “it”.

(Pause)

Sometimes, “It” happens.
Unannounced. Unexpected. Uncontrollable. Uncontainable. Unstoppable.
“It” sounded like the blowing of a violent wind.
“It” came from heaven and filled the whole house.

“It” fanned into flame what seemed like tongues of fire resting on each one of them.

This wild wind Spirit of God
swirled around them,
blowing open the doors,
from the inside out,
toppling over their understandings of
 who was in, who was not,
 who could speak, who could not,
 who can lead, who cannot.

And that sound of a violent wind,
became the sound of their own voices
speaking in different languages
praising the name of the Lord
 to Parthians, Medes, and Elamites,
 to residents of Mesopotamia,
 Judea and Cappadocia,
 to those from Pontus and Asia,
 Phrygia and Pamphylia,
 to people from Egypt and parts of Libya,
 to visitors from Rome
 to Cretans and Arabs.

A crowd surrounded these sounds of God.
The crowd was bewildered.
The crowd was amazed.
The crowd was perplexed.
The crowd searched for an explanation.
“It must be the spirits,” some said, “the alcoholic ones, these men have had too much wine.”

But this wild wind Spirit of God
would not to be contained within the confines of small questions and petty accusations. The Spirit would not be caught in the quagmire of purity codes, social graces, and empty traditions.

No, the wild wind Spirit of God blows down those doors of defense and topples over those discriminating gates. That roaring howl of the Spirit blew open the scriptures to the prophet Joel:

In the last days, God says, I will pour out my spirit on all people.
Sons and daughters— they will prophesy.

Men and women – just like you – they will prophesy.
The old will not live out the rest of their lives quietly longing for the way things used to be; no, they will dream dreams, dreams of the future, for the ways things could be.
And the young, they will not spend their time trying to fit in with those around them; no, they will be captivated by fitting their lives into God’s vision, into God’s life.
The young, the old, the men, the women, the slaves, the free –
like Tabitha, and Cornelius, and Lydia, and the slave girl, like you and me --
everyone, everyone, who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.

The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with those who are born of the Spirit.

The Unannounced, Unexpected, Uncontrollable, Uncontainable, Unstoppable, Holy Spirit of God is God’s Force of Disruption, disrupting the hell out of the world and replacing it with signs of God’s kingdom.

In the name of Jesus Christ, three thousand repented and were baptized from their sins that day.

Pentecost is God’s Big Bang,
for the Spirit blew into being the First Church of Wind and Fire.
And these are the marks of those believers:
they devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching
they committed themselves to fellowship,
they dedicated themselves to prayer,
they gave themselves to the breaking of the bread,
they were awed by signs and wonders
they practiced economic redistribution, giving to anyone as they had need.
they praised God, worshipping in the temple courts
and they enjoyed the favor of all people.

And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

How different they looked. You do remember, don’t you? That when the day of Pentecost came,
they were all together in one place.
Sitting. Waiting.
Waiting for it to happen.

Jesus said, ***The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with people born of the Spirit.***

The Spirit was poured out on the church that day, and there was a radical reorientation of community life, radically transformed lives.

They will not be contained.
They will not be controlled.
and they will not be silent.

That's what the Holy Spirit does.

That's holy disruption.

This is the disruption that saves us from chaotic, quixotic pursuits
and leads us to unity, to life, to truth in Jesus.

It's the disruption that the world so desperately needs -- that we so desperately need --
yet we so desperately . . . avoid.

Thank you, God, for your gifts,
but we'd prefer not to be disrupted.

We already have too much.

Too much to do.

Too much stuff.

Too many things.

Too comfortable.

Too efficient.

Too sophisticated, too impressed with my own knowledge.

Too ready to fill my empty places with empty promises.

Too quick to move for order and decorum when I feel unsettled,

Too enmeshed, too busy, too settled

Too content to be disrupted.

This is the poverty of too much.

The poverty of too much quenches the spirit, choking the life that God put into us.

The poverty of too much causes us to go looking for something more, more, more
when things are not as they should be.

The answer is always more. More time. More commitment. More focus. More vision.

More money. More people. More mission. More hymns. More praise songs. More discipline.

More . . .

And we become unfilled balloons, full of potential and possibility, but empty of God's breath,
unable to be moved by God's wind.

We forget that when the day of Pentecost came,

God gave that first church all it needed to turn the world upside down.

It was not money.

It was not just the right location.

It was not a dynamic leader.

It was not market research, a strategy for reaching out, a new style of worship, video screens, a purpose statement, a dynamic youth program, or a seeker-sensitive service.

Don't get me wrong, all of those things may be used effectively in God's service, but this is not what God poured out on the first Pentecost.

No, when that day of Pentecost came,
God gave that first church all it needed:
God's own breath, God's own Spirit.

This is the Spirit that hovered over the waters in Genesis, breathing creation out of chaos.

This is the Spirit that descended upon Jesus in the Jordan.

This is the Spirit that powered Jesus' ministry, teaching, healing, miracle-working.

This is the Spirit that went with Jesus in the world's darkest place and raised him from the dead.

And this is the Spirit that lives in those who call on the name of the LORD and believe.

The Spirit was never meant to be put on a shelf and looked at as our possession.

No, God gives us the Spirit so that we can be known as God's possession,
filled with the fruit of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,
gentleness, and self-control

In the tenth century,
when they built the medieval sanctuaries,
they would leave holes in the roof,
just in case,
just in case,
The Spirit needed the space.
Holy Spirit holes, they called them, built into their floor plans.

Holy Spirit holes. Have you left room for the Spirit. Have we?
The sounds that were unleashed on Pentecost resound to this day.
Can you hear them?

They reverberate in the mouths and the actions of people like you and me,
people who are ready for Holy Disruptions,
people filled with the passion and the power to disrupt the world in the name of Jesus.

Disrupting an economy that pits neighbor against neighbor in the pursuit of more.
Disrupting a justice system infected with the poison of privilege and racism.
Disrupting an immigration system that separates children from their parents and
then incarcerates them both.

Disrupting the march to war against enemies we don't know
for causes we can't identify.

Disrupting the hell out of the world and replacing it with signs of God's kingdom.

Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.

Let us keep meeting together.

Let us pray together.

Let us devote ourselves to study the Bible together.

Let us eat together, share with each other, welcome one another.

Let us proclaim the name of Jesus together.

Let us be willing to be disrupted, to open up our windows, just a crack,
and watch as the Spirit blows down our doors from the inside out.

The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with those who are born of the Spirit. Amen.