



Community of Christ *Plymouth*

Here I Am; Send Me!

Trinity Sunday

Isaiah 6:1-8

*I saw the Lord, high and exalted, seated on a throne; and the train of his robe filled the temple.
Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?"
And I said, "Here am I. Send me!"*

May 31, 2015

Thought for the Week

Scriptures: Acts 2: 1-11 • 1 Corinthians 12:3b-7, 12,13 • John 20: 19-23

Be prepared, the Holy Spirit has descended upon us once again! We celebrated the feast of Pentecost, the fiftieth day after Easter last Sunday. So let's talk about that for a moment and say that God in Christ has not delayed sending the Holy Spirit until this very day. If the Holy Spirit has not been coming upon everyone on this planet from the dawn of creation, upon every person belonging to any church, any community of faith...if that has not been the case, then we need to go back and relearn the theology of the Holy Spirit.

What we celebrated last Sunday was a reality experience that has been going on since the dawn of creation. In short, God would not create the human family without guidance. It is the Holy Spirit that guides the human family.

What we are celebrating and remembering here is simply a remembrance, one instance in human history that occurred in the lives of a small group of people called "learners," disciples of one named Jesus of Nazareth, called the Christ, the anointed of God. The point is that this group of disciples were at a critical juncture in their lives: Jesus, the Christ, the anointed of God, had given them specific instructions to carry on the work he had begun, namely, the proclamation of the good news of the kingdom of God and to welcome new believers into that group, who would later be called Christians.

Let us insist once again, however, that the biblical description of the coming of the Holy Spirit upon the apostles and disciples was not an isolated experience in human history. It is simply one such instance where a unique group of people, remembered and retold for posterity their unique experience of the Holy Spirit, God's divine presence. In short, the story of Pentecost is an example of the manner in which the Holy Spirit, has worked and continues to work in the lives of faithful, people throughout history.

Once again, however, let me ask how can anyone even imagine that God has been restraining the Holy Spirit until that memorable occurrence in the upper room of which we read in the scriptures on this day of festivity.

It should be added, that the Spirit's outpouring was not simply God's gift, but the Spirit's challenge to bring life in innumerable ways into the human community.

In other words, if we have been spirit-gifted we have also been spirit-challenged, challenged as those first disciples were in their day. No gift is totally free; there are always attachments affixed to it. So it was at Pentecost!

The more relevant question however is this: We already know from scriptural sources how those early disciples responded to the Spirit's unrestrained outpouring of grace and power. They abruptly went out and preached the good news of Jesus to all who would listen. Believers, who learned of God's power, were healed, consoled and then sent forth on their own. Here we sit today, recipients of that same Spirit's power, in our personal lives, our communities and especially in our church.

We members of the Community of Christ cannot speak for everyone, of course, but there are certain public issues that do

affect the lives of us all no matter what our religious affiliation happens to be. What might those issues be? Let me offer some obvious examples: the issue of capital punishment, for instance; the issue of world poverty versus immense riches; the issue of discrimination against people of color, race or sexual orientation; the issue of freedom of conscience.

In other words the work of the Spirit is not limited to our personal life, the life of faith or even the spiritual work of the church or churches. The divine presence will be noted mainly in issues concerning the world in which we live, issues concerned with human dignity: justice, peace and equal rights for all.

Granted that the Spirit's outpouring in its initial moment had to do with the spread of the work of Jesus and the Christian faith. Today, however the concerns of the world also involve the concerns and interrelationship of the church and state. God's power and concern, of course, is not limited to ecclesial matters; the world and its people are larger and more inclusive than those of the church or churches. It would seem incumbent upon church communities, therefore, that they discover where the Spirit is moving, where the world and the church are intersecting in our times. Once we discover where that intersection of values is occurring, we will know for sure that this is the very point where the Spirit is moving with its gentle winds of truth and love. It will not be difficult to discern: no cyclone, no violent rush of wind or heat of fire. The clearest sign will be evidence that the times and circumstances life are changing. It is at that point that the Spirit invites us to get aboard or risk the possibility of being left behind at a rich and significant point in our human history, just when we could have made a difference.



Prayer Thought for the Week

Be a Prayer Warrior – Pray Without Ceasing

Loving God, from whom all blessing flow, we come to you this day, with gratitude for our lives and for this beautiful Earth that you have surely created for us, your children. We come asking, pleading for understanding of your will and for your guidance as we journey through life.

We recognize that as we have lived on this planet we have turned away from your purpose. We look around us and see violence, hatred, and conflict in every direction. We ask you to help us be peacemakers.

Lord we recognize our longing for you. Guide us as we strive to be open to your use. Transform our human nature into a cause of your divine vision. Hold us, lift us as we yearn to be your instruments of peace on this planet.

We ask a special blessing on the people of Israel. End their turmoil, ease their strife, make in them a new peace—a peace that shines with the hope and everlasting love of your shalom.

We ask all this in the name of the One that is the eternal peacemaker, even Jesus Christ, amen.

Stewardship Thought

Stewardship is something that we hear a lot of talk about, but perhaps we do not understand as deeply as we could. If we truly understand what Stewardship is and how it applies to our lives, it will change the way we make decisions each day. If we really understand what it means to be good stewards we will begin to not only see our lives change, but also the world around us.

Karen Ryan makes a return to God for her gifts serving Community of Christ in Plymouth as the Director for Prayer & Praise Ministry. Karen provides our members, their families and friends with a forum for prayer ministry. Karen is extremely devoted to this ministry and dedicates a large portion of her time reaching out to the infirm and aged people contained within our listing. Her name is well known and blessed by the many, many people she has touched with this caring ministry. God Bless you all.