



“Fear Less”

BY PASTOR JOHN HILLMER

There are so many ways to try and understand the day of Pentecost, and how God works in the world by the power of the Spirit. That day in the house where they were all gathered 2000 years ago and how God works today in this house, in your house and in the world around. The “Spirit of God” is active, and present and working still! It’s always kind of a “mystery” that God shows up in the most unexpected of ways: of ‘wind’ and ‘noise’ like a violent storm (here in Florida like a hurricane) and in light, and fire and NOISE! God is also present in the still, small voice – the “Sound of Silence”. God is present in the NOISE! God is present in the SILENCE! God works through both.

But this day, this Pentecost, this “Great Festival of the Spirit”, it all has something to do with “COURAGE”, because our ‘fears’ get in the way.

“Do not let your hearts be troubled; and ***do not let them be afraid***” John 14:25-27 – remember the Gospel and the ‘upper room’ – that same room where the disciples gathered behind locked doors, that 1st Easter evening.

‘God didn’t give you a spirit of timidity/slavery – to fall back into fear; but God gave you the spirit of adoption! All who are led by the Spirit, are Children of God!’ Romans 8:14-17

The Spirit is about courage! Giving people the courage, the boldness, to “move out” and do what needs to be done.

Built into the agenda at the Synod Assembly these past 3 days were 3 slots of “Holy Humor” where this “stand-up comic” got us laughing at ourselves - real belly-laughter, where we were dropping our defenses and seeing our silly selves, and our worries, and our fears. It was here that I was introduced via Facebook to a pastor who does “Dollar Tree Sermons” for children. He goes into Dollar Tree stores and he looks for “this” and

for "that" to give evidence of God. He sees God **everywhere!** - again in the Gospel of John 14:19 – "in a little while, the world will not see me, but **you will see** me; because I live!" In John 14, Jesus calls the "Spirit" the Advocate. He calls him many things: the Spirit of Truth, the "Teacher", the "Helper".

In the novel by Kurt Vonnegut, "**Slaughterhouse-Five**", he paints an interesting picture of a world quite different from that of World War II. In his new world, planes fly backward, magically quelling flames as they draw fragmented bombs into steel containers and suck them back up into their bellies. Guns on the ground suck metal fragments from the pilots, crew, and planes. Weapons are shipped backed to factories, where they are carefully disassembled and broken down into their constituent minerals. The minerals are shipped to specialists all over the world who "hide them cleverly" in the ground, "so they never hurt anybody ever." What an imagination! He sees the world differently!

Walter Brueggemann is one of the world's great teachers about the Hebrew prophets. He describes the prophets and poets of ancient times as being without pedigree, uncredentialed, but rooted in the covenants of God. Through the gift of their insight (another word for prophets is "Seer") they saw the world differently from the harsh realities of daily living. Brueggemann translates their "vision" from the chaos of ancient times to our own.

From the prophet Joel: *In those days it shall be says the Lord, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh. Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy; your young men shall see visions; your old men shall dream dreams! Even upon my slaves – both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit. And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord, shall be saved!*

"Everyone"! And "all" means "all"! In his book, **Prophetic Imagination**, Walter Brueggemann challenges us to "reframe" our vision - with the dreams of God - so we too can experience the Grace of God, within the realities that are before our very eyes.

Dear People, Pentecost is not spooky day of sensational supernatural effects. It is the "Spirit of God" moving in and among the people: both the disciples, and the people in the streets, for they heard the "good news of God's great deeds of power" **in their own language!**

*Amazed and astonished, they asked, "Are not all these, Galileans? So how is it that we hear, each of us, **in our own native language?**" Parthians, Medes, Elamites, residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia,*

Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, even visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabs—in our own languages we hear them speaking about God’s deeds of power.” Acts 2:7-11

God uses words, language, and the tool of creation to proclaim the wonders of God’s love. “The Spirit of God” hovered over the face of the deep and God said “Let there be Light!” God takes away our fears; melts our fears, by the Spirit, and replaces it with “courage”. The work of the Spirit. Do you know the most repeated phrase in all of Scripture? “Be not afraid”. “Have no fear”. “O ye of little faith, why were you afraid?” God makes us **fear-less**. May we be bold and courageous to proclaim the love of God to all.

This week, may the Holy Spirit embolden you to “go”! Go into the world, into God’s World, and proclaim the mighty deeds and wonders of what God has done and is doing for you and all the world.

Amen.