

## SERMON DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

June 5, 2022

### **I Will Pour Out My Spirit “Uniting of the Holy Spirit” Acts 2:1-13 Rev. Mike Fordham**

Did you know that I grew up in a bilingual home? My mother is from Germany where her first language is German, and my dad is from rural Georgia where his first and only language was southern all the way. Both of my parents took the English language and put their own twist on it. My German grandmother lived with our family from early on in my childhood and Grandma barely spoke English and my dad, brother, and I spoke limited German, but we all had no problem understanding each other. When my brother and I were in high school, our family went to Germany to visit our German side of the family. It was a wonderful time of meeting as many relatives as possible. My mother's family speaks what I would call a kind of southern German dialect called, Schwabish. It is not as fancy, fast, and as guttural as most of the High German that most Germans speak. On one occasion while we were visiting our German relatives, I remember us meeting some cousins about my age. I tried to speak with them in German and they immediately couldn't help themselves as they started laughing at me. I was taken aback and wondered what was wrong. At that moment, my dad leaned over to me and said, "Now you know why I don't speak German." Evidently, my brother and I's German came out like little toddlers trying to speak because we were never forced to learn to speak German grammatically correct. It was pretty embarrassing. We live today in a multicultural world that is getting even smaller with technology and that can offer many challenges for us to somehow appreciate our differences while also finding things around which we can find common ground. Thankfully, as followers of Jesus, we have the Holy Spirit living within us, through whom with all our diversity, God is able to miraculously bring about unity through the infilling presence of the Holy Spirit. We see this beautifully illustrated on the day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit came and filled a diverse group of followers of Jesus with the Holy Spirit and brought them together into the family of God.

### **Acts 2:1-13**

*On the day of Pentecost all the believers were meeting together in one place. <sup>2</sup> Suddenly, there was a sound from heaven like the roaring of a mighty windstorm, and it filled the house where they were sitting. <sup>3</sup> Then, what looked like flames or tongues of fire appeared and settled on each of them. <sup>4</sup> And everyone present was filled with the Holy Spirit and began speaking in other languages, as the Holy Spirit gave them this ability.*

<sup>5</sup> At that time there were devout Jews from every nation living in Jerusalem. <sup>6</sup> When they heard the loud noise, everyone came running, and they were bewildered to hear their own languages being spoken by the believers.

<sup>7</sup> They were completely amazed. “How can this be?” they exclaimed. “These people are all from Galilee, <sup>8</sup> and yet we hear them speaking in our own native languages! <sup>9</sup> Here we are—Parthians, Medes, Elamites, people from Mesopotamia, Judea, Cappadocia, Pontus, the province of Asia, <sup>10</sup> Phrygia, Pamphylia, Egypt, and the areas of Libya around Cyrene, visitors from Rome <sup>11</sup> (both Jews and converts to Judaism), Cretans, and Arabs. And we all hear these people speaking in our own languages about the wonderful things God has done!” <sup>12</sup> They stood there amazed and perplexed. “What can this mean?” they asked each other.

<sup>13</sup> But others in the crowd ridiculed them, saying, “They’re just drunk, that’s all!”

### **THE HOLY SPIRIT IS Poured OUT ONTO ALL PEOPLE**

When the Holy Spirit came into the upper room in Jerusalem where the disciples were seeking God in worship and prayer, the Holy Spirit came in three distinct ways. First, Luke tells us here in Acts 2, when the Holy Spirit entered the room where Jesus’ followers were they heard what sounded like a mighty windstorm. They also saw what looked like tongues of fire descending from the ceiling to then rest upon the people. Lastly, something I would consider even more amazing, all the people in the room started praising God and telling of God’s wonderful deeds in languages they did not know. We may ask, how do we know they spoke in known languages and not just some unintelligible gibberish? The Jewish people celebrated three major pilgrimage feasts every year: Passover, Tabernacles, and Pentecost. Obviously, in these pilgrimages God’s people would travel to Jerusalem to celebrate the festival together. This means there would be faithful Jews and Gentile converts to Judaism in town from all over the known world. Therefore, on the day of Pentecost, God’s people from the four points of the compass (from what we today call Iran and Iraq, Turkey, Northern Africa, and Europe) were crammed into Jerusalem and the surrounding areas. Imagine the sights and sounds, as these different cultures and languages from all these countries were mixed in together in Jerusalem. God had a special, strategic plan for the day of Pentecost.

Evidently, the noise of the Holy Spirit coming as a mighty windstorm was so loud that it got the attention of people on the streets outside of the house of the upper room and they came running to the house to find out what was going on. It seems then, as they came running to the house to hear what was going on, at the same time the disciples exited the upper room while they were still praising God in these unknown languages. The people from all these different languages are in shock as they hear these Galilean people praising God in their languages. Peter then steps up and preaches his first sermon. He says that it is only 9 in the morning and therefore they were not drunk. Instead, in Acts 2:17-18,21, Peter says what is happening was predicted by the Prophet

Joel through whom God said, *“In the last days,’ God says, ‘I will pour out my Spirit upon all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy. Your young men will see visions, and your old men will dream dreams. <sup>18</sup> In those days I will pour out my Spirit even on my servants—men and women alike—and they will prophesy. But everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved.”* Peter is saying on this day the Holy Spirit has come upon all people and anyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. Peter didn’t realize at the time that meant both Jews and Gentiles. After Peter finished preaching, 3,000 people decided to follow Jesus. After Pentecost was over, 3,000 went back home to their countries where they took the Good News of Jesus to the world. The church was born on Pentecost, and the good news of Jesus was already going out to all the world. God was very strategic to pour out the Holy Spirit on Pentecost when all these nations were represented in Jerusalem.

With the pouring out of the Holy Spirit God, wants to fill people from all walks of life with His presence and welcome them into the family of God. God wants people of all cultures, nations, skin colors, languages, genders, educational statuses, ages, financial statuses, abilities, callings, roles, temperaments, personalities, church and unchurched, of all political parties, rich and poor, Jew and Gentile, Arabs and Americans, Europeans and Latinos, Africans and Asians, sick and healthy, strong and weak, and saints and sinners alike. The Gospel, the good news of Jesus, is for the world, and it is the calling of the church to bring the message of Jesus to the world and the Holy Spirit’s role is to empower us and send us out into the world to do just that. John Wesley, the founder of our denomination once said, *“I look upon all the world as my parish; thus far I mean, that, in whatever part of it I am, I judge it meet, right, and my bounden duty to declare unto all that are willing to hear, the glad tidings of salvation. This is the work which I know God has called me to; and sure I am that His blessing attends it.”* Jesus told the disciples in *Matthew 28:19*, *“Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.”* Jesus also told the disciples in *Acts 1:8* just before He left this world to go back to heaven, *“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you will be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhere—in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”* Our mission at Killearn is to do just that, *“to present Christ, encourage growth and holiness, and send out to present Christ.”*

The Holy Spirit is the one who equips, empowers, and sends us out to this world to do just that. The primary calling of the church is to spread the good news of Jesus to the world. The work is not yet complete still today. There are countless people who still need to hear about Jesus. Do you know who is called to bring Jesus to this world? The great evangelist of many years ago, D.L. Moody said, *“If this world is going to be reached, I am convinced that it must be done by men and women of average talent. After all, there are comparatively few people in the world who have great talents.”* Those 120 people in the upper room and the 3,000 who turned their lives over to following Jesus, were every-day, common people like us who were filled with the power of the Holy Spirit to go out into this world to tell people about Jesus and make more disciples. The natural consequence of being full of the Holy Spirit is we will have a great passion

for pointing people to Jesus. As we do, the same thing will happen today that happened on Pentecost: everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. Not just a few chosen individuals... everyone who calls on the Lord.

### ***THE HOLY SPIRIT UNIFIES GOD'S PEOPLE***

What is also very interesting about this story is not only did God reach such a diverse group of people on Pentecost, but also, through the Holy Spirit, God unified these diverse people into the family of God. The word "together" is found five times in *Acts 1-2*. When people say "yes" to following Jesus, they are then added to the family of God together with all of God's people and a local church is one expression of that worldwide family of God. On the day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit came, God turned this very diverse group of people into the one family of God. What is it that unified them? The Holy Spirit unified them as they followed Jesus and Jesus only. As these diverse individuals from all different walks of life decided to follow Jesus, the Holy Spirit then joined them all together into the family of God. *Acts 2:41* says, "*Those who believed what Peter said were baptized and added to the church that day—about 3,000 in all.*" They were baptized into the family of God and joined the church. Obviously, they were not all members of the same local church, but they did become members of the worldwide family of God of all times. Each individual still maintained their diverse cultures and languages while they all followed Jesus together with the same God dwelling within them through the Holy Spirit.

The New York Times reported that on December 4, 2017, 400 musicians gathered in the 23rd Street Armory of Philadelphia to perform "[Symphony for a Broken Orchestra](#)" by David Lang. The orchestra included amateurs, professionals, and even members of the storied Philadelphia Orchestra. The youngest performer was a nine-year-old cellist; the oldest, an 82-year-old oboist. It might have been the most diverse orchestra in America. The 400 brought with them broken instruments: a trumpet held together with blue painter's tape, a violin with no A string, a bow which had lost most of its hair, a cello carried in multiple pieces. You see, the government had cut funding for music programs in public schools, and many school instruments fell into disrepair. But Lang made something beautiful of them. As the musical piece opened many of the instruments were silent, but gradually they found their voices—while a trumpet might not be capable of a sound, the keys could tap a rhythm; the scraping of a bow over the silhouette of a violin body could add an unusual element. At one point, a cellist made noise by turning a stringless peg. As the 40-minute symphony progressed, the instruments roared to life. Some musicians struggled, like a clarinetist who could get out only short spurts of sound and a French horn player who kept losing his mouthpiece. But together, the orchestra produced rich harmony. The music was playful and joyous. As the performance wound down, each section bowed out one-by-one, until all that remained was the humble squeal of a broken clarinet. In the church, each broken instrument adds its own voice to the symphony. The best that some can do is simply tap or squeak, but with each other, the orchestra produces a joyful song of praise under the hand of the Director. God receives us just as we are, repairs us, then joins us together with others in the family of

God, and uses us together to make God-honoring beautiful music. This is the miraculous work of the Holy Spirit.

Our call now from God, as the family of God filled with the Holy Spirit to follow what *Ephesians 4:1-7* says, “*Therefore I, a prisoner for serving the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of your calling, for you have been called by God. <sup>2</sup> Always be humble and gentle. Be patient with each other, making allowance for each other’s faults because of your love. <sup>3</sup> Make every effort to keep yourselves united in the Spirit, binding yourselves together with peace. <sup>4</sup> For there is one body and one Spirit, just as you have been called to one glorious hope for the future. <sup>5</sup> There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism, <sup>6</sup> one God and Father of all, who is over all, in all, and living through all. <sup>7</sup> However, he has given each one of us a special gift through the generosity of Christ.*” We are to do everything we can to maintain unity, binding ourselves together with peace found through the Holy Spirit as we all have the same Holy Spirit making its home in us. We are now one church, worldwide, of all different shapes and sizes, denominations and non-denominations, all imperfectly together making up the worldwide family of God with the mission of bringing Jesus to the world.

Icebreaker I – Have you ever tried communicating to someone in their native language, even though you were not fluent? How did that go?

Icebreaker II – Do you play an instrument, or do you have a favorite instrument you like to hear played?

1. What is the point Peter wants the people to understand when he says it is only 9 in the morning and therefore they were not drunk?
2. “...everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved.” Consider this prophecy. What does it mean to you?
3. Jesus also told the disciples in *Acts 1:8* just before He left this world to go back to heaven, “*But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you will be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhere—in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.*” How are you doing your part to share The Gospel?
4. *Ephesians 4:1-2* says, “*Therefore I, a prisoner for serving the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of your calling, for you have been called by God. <sup>2</sup> Always be humble and gentle. Be patient with each other, making allowance for each other’s faults because of your love*”. Do you find yourself able to practice humility, gentleness, and patience with one another – even when you disagree? What prevents you from doing so?
5. What is Killlearn UMC’s Mission Statement? Do you believe we are fulfilling our mission statement? Why or why not?
6. How is it with your soul?
7. What are your struggles and successes?
8. How might the Holy Spirit and Scriptures be speaking in your life?
9. How can this group pray for you this week?