



BIBLE STUDIES THAT WORK

Day of Pentecost (C) June 5, 2022

RCL: Acts 2:1-21; Psalm 104:25-35, 37; Romans 8:14-17; John 14:8-17 (25-27)

Acts 2:1-21

Pentecost has finally come. Personally, I consider this the birthday of the church. And why not? Upon each disciple, a tongue of fire, like the tongue of fire upon each birthday candle. But no one is here to blow the flame out because no one can extinguish the flame of the Holy Spirit. It's like a surprise birthday party, as well. The rush of a violent wind was sudden and intense, and the ecstatic nature of the Holy Spirit made them speak in the languages of the world, or at least the languages common to the Jewish diaspora visiting Jerusalem. The church received the gift it needs the most. The *world* received Jesus, but along with Jesus, the church receives the power of the Holy Spirit to do its mission in the world, which is to proclaim Jesus to all.

- What is the language you are hearing from the world?
- How can we speak this language to proclaim the Gospel?

Psalm 104:25-35, 37

The Psalmist is in awe of God's creation. I can just envision them wandering throughout the Garden of Eden, marveling at the intricacies of creation. They even poke fun at God's skill and say that the "Leviathan" was created through God's humor! Have we not come across unique creatures and plants that make us amused? Yet they too have their place among God's creation and a unique purpose that is their own. God's creation also knows his presence, for they are terrified when he looks away and they die just the same.

- Where have you delighted in God's creation recently?

Romans 8:14-17

A colleague of mine posited to me recently the belief that the opposite of suffering is glory. Suffering is temporal and temporary, but glory is eternal. Paul is guiding us toward the glory of God found in his adoption of us. We will suffer along the way, both for his sake and simply because we are humans. Not all suffering seems redeemable, does it? We cannot say to those conflicted with war or famine to simply suffer because it may get better – and while it may get better on the other side, we cannot simply resign ourselves to the next life because God wants us to live here and now. In Christ, however, is the spirit of adoption of

a new life, full of love and hope. When we cry, “Abba, Father,” we allow ourselves to be placed in the embrace of God’s comforting arms.

- What hints of glory have you seen in your life and the world?

John 14:8-17 (25-27)

I can only hope every church includes verses 26 and 27 because they underscore the beginning of the passage. The Advocate is the Holy Spirit, as we know. God gives his peace through the Holy Spirit, who will be among God’s people. The world does not know this Spirit and it does not give this Spirit because it cannot. The world only gives what the world knows, which is sin - not just false desires and hatred, but also apathy and indifference, all of which can lead to fear and division. But we are given God’s peace, in which fear and apathy are turned into peace and truth. We are then, turning more broadly, called out into the world to preach the Gospel through word and action. We are to be a sign of peace to the world because the Spirit is with us, defending us against the powers of death.

- When do you feel most at peace?
- How can we cultivate a presence of peace while in the world?

*This Bible study was written by **Zachary Baker**, a seminarian at Virginia Theological Seminary.*