

# The Search

Wayne Waibel – 05/19/2024

Jesus promises that the Holy Spirit will guide us into all truth. That's quite a promise. All truth? It's no wonder He tells His disciples that they cannot bear to hear the things He has yet to say. The magnitude of "all truth" certainly lies beyond their - or anyone's capacity to discern in any meaningful way without some form of guidance.

Pentecost Sunday marks the arrival of the Holy Spirit as Paraclete in the lives of ordinary folks. In the case of the disciples, it converts them from a frightened little band of followers that denied and abandoned Christ in His most desperate hour – to an emboldened group of Apostles that proclaim the good news of the gospel, and speak truth to power without regard for the personal toll it will exact on their respective lives.

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To search for change seems counter-intuitive. But for the disciples, who are about to lose their leader, it is a search that is thrust upon them for their own good.

In order for the redemption of creation in its entirety to be accomplished – these newly appointed apostles are going to have to operate in a hostile world that will now focus on them in the absence of Jesus – as enemies of the established social order – both politically and within the Jewish culture.

They will become the tip of the spear in a global effort to test whether or not humanity can strive for unity without erasing difference. That is probably why the very first move made by the Holy Spirit was to enable each of them to proclaim the good news in a different language, thus informing the resident faithful that each culture holds equal standing in the kingdom of God.

One mark of the Holy Spirit’s gifting is that it empowers us to connect to others. The true miracle of the scene outlined in our first reading from Acts resides not with the speaking of the disciples, but in the hearing of the crowd.

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What we are surrounded with in this age are countless examples of how not knowing the Father or the Son leads to profoundly mistaken behavior. The prevailing sentiment is that our societal shortcomings are a result of institutional failures, when the harsh reality is that when you synthesize it down to a root cause – you’ll be left with personal behavior as the culprit.

Ours is a consumer-driven and technologically saturated world that has been drained of all mystery. We live in a culture that offers us little assistance in the art of seeking truth and grace in life. Further devolved by the fact that even an expectation of adequacy is too high a standard. What used to be considered mediocre is now a lofty goal. Our expectation of a new creation in God's good time does not negate the importance of the creation we currently have.

And the search for change is not going to be applauded. Precisely because we believe in Christ and abide in the love of God, the world will hate us – because we no longer love what the world loves, and thus no longer belong to the world. But Jesus reminds us not to be afraid – for He has overcome the world.

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“Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved,” is a proclamation spoken not in judgement, but in love to all. The Spirit works in and for the world as history moves toward the future fullness of God's reign.

The apostles had little choice once the Spirit descended upon them – it was their time. The Spirit built into them the Glory of God and the memory of Jesus. That alone was sufficient to sustain their search for change. They learned almost immediately that Christ is present and alive in the midst of change.

That knowledge did not make their mission any easier, but they weren't looking for an easy way out. Theirs was a pretty straight forward directive. Preach the good news of the gospel to the ends of the earth. And with the gathered assembly on that day of celebration in first century Jerusalem – they were off to a good start. That day perfectly illustrated the truth that at the end of our possibilities – God creates new beginnings.

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Hope insists that suffering does not have the final word. There may be catastrophic losses, but in our search for change there will be some things that we'll retain, such as the eternal truth that Jesus Christ offers salvation to all, and the church – our church – exists to proclaim that truth.

It is the Spirit of truth who teaches us to find God in the midst of life. And that search needs to be embarked upon regularly, and with full application. We can easily see the brokenness of our world. In that awareness lies the responsibility to engage. The Spirit still speaks through the church and people of faith.

That puts us on the front line of the restoration of creation. It falls to us as believers to share the good news of the kingdom of God. Not just because it is a noble cause, or it is our charge, or even that the world is sorely in need of the righteous view. It falls to us because we have the capacity to illuminate what the Spirit does for us today, which is to bring our concerns and the will of God into perfect harmony. Amen.