



Columbia, Missouri
The Worship of God • June 5, 2022
Pentecost Sunday



THE SCRIPTURE
Acts 2:1-4; 12-21

When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability. All were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, “What does this mean?” But others sneered and said, “They are filled with new wine.”

But Peter, standing with the eleven, raised his voice and addressed them, “Men of Judea and all who live in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and listen to what I say. Indeed, these are not drunk, as you suppose, for it is only nine o’clock in the morning. No, this is what was spoken through the prophet Joel: ‘In the last days it will be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams. Even upon my slaves, both men and women, in those days I will pour out my Spirit; and they shall prophesy. And I will show portents in the heaven above and signs on the earth below, blood, and fire, and smoky mist. The sun shall be

turned to darkness and the moon to blood, before the coming of the Lord's great and glorious day. Then everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.'

THE MESSAGE
"Not as You Suppose"
Mark Briley

Commitments. We make them every day. Sometimes we're better at honoring them than others. But at our best, we are a people who honor commitments. It's Pentecost today – what is known as the birthday of the universal Church. And Stevie Wonder would sing, "*Happy Birthday to you!*"

It's a joyous day, and don't we need to be grounded in joy now more than ever? There was another shooting this week. It sucks all the joy out of the soul, doesn't it? This one was in Tulsa, Oklahoma, where my family lived for the decade ahead of joining you here at Broadway. I found myself pacing around my desk most of the day on Thursday. I was just unsettled. I was checking in on friends and friends were checking in on me. The Natalie Building, part of the St. Francis Hospital system and where the shooting occurred, was a block from the church where we served all those years. I'd been in the Natalie building many times. One of the doctor's killed served many of our church folks through the years. Our youngest son, Hayes, was born at that hospital. Anyway – just the numbness, you know?

And it's our *birthday*, Church? So, I don't mean to steal the joy of the day – but this is the tension we live in right now. I actually texted some friends amidst the heartache and said, "*Quick, send a cute picture of Alistair!*" It's his birthday, too; his first! Here comes the joy. Life is full of these highs and lows and as people of faith, we don't get to escape the lows... but we get to live into what it means to be committed to joy. If not us, then who?

So, on this our birthday, Church, and on this day of commitment for six more of our newest beloved members of Broadway, allow me a word today about this commitment you make, friends, and the commitment the rest of us reaffirm today. You just made a commitment, did you know? You just professed your faith. Do you know what you're truly committing to? You affirmed this question, "*Do you believe Jesus is the Christ, and in honor of that profession, commit yourselves to ministry here, in our city, and even to the ends of the earth.*" That's a commitment. Let's break it down in three parts. The first, Jesus.



In my 43 years, I don't think I've ever needed Jesus more than now. We've been in relationship for a long while now, but you know, things get thick, and you get older, and you lean into that relationship in different ways. I was your age when I took the baptism plunge myself... just up the road from here at First Christian Church in Macon, Missouri. And it's a commitment... just like any other relationship. I stood up there proud and confident: *"I believe Jesus is the Christ!"* and I had it. I was on it. And confidence was high that day. But when it comes to relationships – even with Jesus – there's always hard moments or moments where the mystery seems too much.

I had a friend who shared a conversation she had with her son after picking him up from school one day. She said, *"Hey buddy, you need to run back into the school and get your folder. You'll have to go in the side door."* *"What side door?"* he asked. She said, *"You know, the one across from the library."* *"Oh yeah, okay,"* he says. A few seconds of quiet pass and then her boy asks, *"Mom, I still don't know which door... that was just confidence."*

This happens in our walk with Jesus, too. When you commit to letting Jesus lead and direct your life, you're here to say, *"Yep. Okay. I'll follow."* And even still, sometimes you'll say, *"I still don't know what to do... that was just confidence."* Getting baptized doesn't take away every pain or ensure every right decision or make your life instantly easier. But it is a commitment that will hold you when you are in pain, when you're unsure what to do or life is harder than you thought it would be.

Peter might say, *"It's not fully as you suppose."* We think we know. We're confident we know how it all works. But assuming can get us in trouble. That first Pentecost, the bystanders thought of the Christians – *"They actin' crazy. Probably day-drinkin'."* And Peter sees it all happening and he speaks up. *"No, no. You think these folks are drunk? It's not as you suppose – it's too early for tailgating after all. No. They are finding their way in the Spirit... and today, their new life begins. And yours can too!"*

When you say, *"I believe Jesus is the Christ,"* you are saying, *"I trust in who Jesus says **he** is. I trust in who Jesus says I am. And I'm up for anything life brings my way because I know the one who saves me from myself, saves me for a purpose, loves me into my best self."* So, Jesus. Yes. Part one. Leader of your life. Period.

Part two. Honor your profession. Let Jesus lead! The Spirit will come alive in you. Peter says... *"It'll come. Your daughters will prophesy."* Do you hear that, young women? You will be prophets of the Church. Your voice – no matter who tries to silence you – will rise in the Spirit, and you will lead us forward. Honor your profession and trust the gifts that are in you already. *"Young men – you'll have visions."* You'll have visions that are Spirit-driven as you honor your profession and trust in Jesus.

We don't know exactly how all of this will come out of you, friends. That's part of the ride you commit to today. To stay the course. To grow in faith. To honor your profession by not giving into the despair and hatred of this world but being a light as only you were made to shine. Broadway family – we've got to recommit to this effort too. If you've felt a little stagnant in honoring your profession of late, let's up our game. Let's rise with these newly baptized as partners in the efforts to be the Church for real. Your life bears witness to these students today. Show them what redemption looks like. Show them what faith can do. Show them how to heal through the hurt and come out the other side still knowing in whom you have *believed*. That was very King Jamesy – just live the faith. Are you up for it? It's not about our best intentions.

I'm preaching to myself now but listen in if this might help you, too. Five words:

Direction determines destination, not intention.

What *direction* are you moving in? How are you moving in this world? Not how you intend to move. How are you actually moving through your days? That will determine where you land and how you grow.

Okay... and before I get too long, let's hit part three of this profession you've just made. You claim Jesus as leader of your life. You commit to honor your profession and actually live into that commitment and finally – *You commit to the ministry.*

You don't have to do it like I do it... or Terry does it, or John does it, or the pope does it, or your Sunday School teacher does it – **though**, you *might*. But you commit to making a difference in this world, in Christ's name, for his sake, and through the unique gifts you have to offer the world.

We often look at the problems of this world, throw up our hands and say, "*Can't do a thing about it.*" I've been there.



I was on a podcast last week talking about the theological implications of the movie Wayne's World¹ – which came out 30 years ago now. Let that sink in, friends. At one point, Garth Algar says, "*Sometimes I wish I could go where no man has gone before but I'll probably just stay in Aurora.*"

I think that sometimes. I want to change the world. I want to move us forward. I want the Church to rise and conquer. I want Jesus to lead us where no society has been

¹ <https://www.twoononeproject.com/podcast>

before! And then sometimes, it all seems like too much and I just want to curl up on the couch in my basement.

Ah... but we **must** rise. That's what we do. Jesus didn't stay down when things looked grim... he rose. And our commitment today says, "*I rise, too.*" [*early in the morning... when I rise!*] You've got your part to play in this grand story and today you commit to it. And what is that part exactly? Sometimes it just starts with joining in the right thing happening right in front of you. Do the next right thing and see what that opens you to next.

Greg got on the subway in Manhattan recently and found a swastika on every advertisement and every window of the subway. The train was silent as everyone stared at each other, uncomfortable and unsure what to do. On one of the images there was included a scrawled slogan, "*Jews belong in the oven.*" *One guy got up and said, "Hand sanitizer gets rid of Sharpie. We need alcohol."* He found some tissues and got to work. Greg said, "*I've never seen so many people simultaneously reach into their bags and pockets looking for tissues and Purel. Within about two minutes, all the Nazi symbolism was gone.*"²

Baptism isn't the end of this trip of life you're on. It's just the beginning. It all won't be as you suppose. Ask anyone sitting behind you in this church if life all panned out just like they thought it would. But you know what? They're still here. They're still fighting to believe in the hard seasons. They're still showing up to honor their professions of love and trust. And they will rise to do their part... to meet the need in front of them; to erase the hate in front of them; to love the hurting standing in front of them... and just maybe... you will inspire them, and me... us... to get after it again and again.

Are you ready?

SONG OF FOCUS
"The Day of Pentecost
(Our Lives Have Changed)"
WORDS AND MUSIC BY ED VARNUM

1. What are these words they are shouting?
What are these strange new songs
they've sung?
It all sounds like the Towers of Babel!
Yet we hear it all in our own tongues
of mighty works that God has done.

² From a Facebook post by Gregory Locke, February 6, 2017.

Refrain:

A mighty wind, the Holy Spirit
descending like great fiery flames!
Touching, filling, God's outpouring.
The bonds of sin have been unchained.
Not one of us remains the same.
See for yourselves: our lives have changed.
2. Yes, there's something new about them.
What is it? It is all so strange!
Their joy and faith and hope and purpose,
all this and so much more has changed:
new life, perspectives rearranged.

Refrain:

A mighty wind, the Holy Spirit
Descending like great fiery flames!
Touching, filling, God's outpouring.
The bonds of sin have been unchained.
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BROAD HEARTS BROAD MINDS BROAD REACH