

When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place.² 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.³ Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them.⁴ All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability. Acts 2:1-4 NRSV

One of the limitations we have sometimes is when we see something that is well received today, we assume it always was "well-received". For example our Declaration of Independence, considered one of our founding documents, and quoted as such in political debates today, was not necessarily seen as such when it was first published. In fact a British general dismissed it as "the last gasp of a dying insurgency", with the added observation that with the naval blockade of New York City, it would be all over soon. Thomas Edison as boy was dismissed by his teacher as "addled" in the brain, implying Tom would amount to much. When I took a computer course in 1975, it all seemed a bit exotic to me, and I thought "this will never catch on". Boy was I wrong!

Pentecost can be thought of in that same light. If one really knew the "personal history" of Jesus' followers they were far from an impressive lot. They also came from very different occupations and points of view. When Jesus needed them most, at his crucifixion, they all fled, Judas was the betrayer, and Peter denied him.

Even when Jesus rose from the dead they still seemed fearful, and anxious. The first thing Jesus' ascension causes them to do is to look up at the sky. To their credit however they do pray, and the results of this time of prayer is the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on what we called Pentecost. The results are pretty amazing; however there are skeptics who dismiss them all as drunk.

The results, by God's Holy Spirit, though, are nothing short of amazing. Three thousand new believers added in one day. Today's estimate says there are 2.1 billion Christians on this earth.

Nobody is saying that we should not deal with the reality of situations around us. But as people of faith, we need to remember that God is in charge, and to do God's work on the earth God's promised Holy Spirit is available to us.

There is a funny story about a float in the "Tournament of Roses" parade which took place a few years back. Apparently right in the middle of parade route this particular float ran out of gas. While surely these things are bound to happen, it was particularly embarrassing and funny because the float belonged to the Standard Oil company !

Pentecost tells us we as believers do not have to 'fatalistic' about what we observe around us ,even when we especially discouraged about our own lack of spiritual progress. Instead we should pray "Come Holy Spirit".

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