

Pastor Roy's Sermon from May 15, 2016 (Day Of Pentecost)

Children's sermon. Mercury passing in front of the sun. The dimming of the stars. Other planets. Other life.

What can we learn from Acts chapter 2? A passage chosen by the church over and over again to remind us that the Spirit is freely with us. When amazing, unexpected, even un hoped for things happen, it is the Spirit at work. When our minds change for the sake of love, it is the Spirit. When we choose the path of mercy, it is the Spirit. When we act together faithfully as a community, the Spirit is acting before us, through us, and after us.

At Christmas we celebrate Christ's birth. At Easter we celebrate Christ's resurrection—that life always, always, has the final say. After death has dealt it's hand of loss, sorrow, and despair, the life of God, the hope of creation comes yet again, and all of life is sown together with the thread of the Spirit. The Spirit links us to all of life. To Christ. To our brothers and sisters in the faith. And to all who know life and love. Pentecost is our celebration of the Spirit at work in the world yesterday, today, and tomorrow. What does Acts 2 remind us about the Spirit?

Before Peter speaks, these followers of Jesus speak in languages they do not know. It happens to *all* of them—not just certain ones. They didn't learn the languages, they just spoke them. It was a gift from the Spirit. The Spirit is the connection which brings understanding between people and all the living.

None of the followers is chosen because she is smart, or cool, or friendly, or kind, or polite, or good looking, or talented, or comfortable speaking a language which she doesn't know. Each is chosen because he is willing to follow, willing to take a chance or do something outside his comfort zone. The Spirit called, Jesus' disciples followed.

So what does this mean for us? How does the Spirit work among us?

You might think that *you* aren't special enough for the Spirit to lead *you*--to be the hands and feet of Jesus/God--to make a difference—a big difference--in someone life. We think we are too common, this moment is too common, that we don't know what God is doing right now in this moment, at this time. Maybe we are waiting for some kind of tingly sensation.

Acts 2 reminds us that we are *not* responsible to make it all happen. It's *not* up to us.

The message of Acts 2 is to relax. The Spirit is working, the Spirit is moving—whether we know it or not—whether we feel it or not, whether we like the Spirit's choices or not. But if we are open, listening, and praying, the Spirit will do amazing things through us and around us. The Spirit is Grace. Grace that we *do* have a hand in the workings of God in this time.

Grace begins when we look up into the night sky and see how small we are. Grace continues when we consider what a small period of time our lives take up in the history of the universe. Grace moves along as we remember that we are only one of *countless* beloved species on this planet. This week it was revealed that there are certainly many, many inhabitable planets in this universe. There is likely life elsewhere, not just here! Isn't that mind boggling? And humbling?

It doesn't all depend on us! Now some will take offense, or stumble with the knowledge that we are so finite in vast universe.

Grace is not that I am more special than others. Grace is that I am one with others.

The Spirit is not picky. The Spirit simply moves with all the living, ourselves included, which participate in the wonderful dance of love and mercy and peace at work in our world. Oh, yes, we can refuse to take part, and the Spirit might still work through us without our cooperation, or the Spirit may simply work through other means, other people, other species.

Of course, the Spirit is eager to hear our "Yes!" And we don't have to be qualified. The Spirit takes willing workers and grace happens. There are no tests to pass. If there is a test, it is simply the test of willingness. Willingness to say yes to the challenge of the adventure of following the Spirit into love, and grace, and peace.

Today we celebrate the Spirit working in us, among us, around us. Let us say yes to the work of love in our world. Let us love our families, our neighbors, the strangers among us, and the Spirit is here with us to comfort and guide. Amen.