

Pentecost 2020

Acts 2:1-21

When the day of Pentecost had come, the disciples 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.

Now there were devout Jews from every nation under heaven living in Jerusalem. And at this sound the crowd gathered and was bewildered, because each one heard them speaking in the native language of each. Amazed and astonished, they asked, "Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? And how is it that we hear, each of us, in our own native language? Parthians, Medes, Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabs-- in our own languages we hear them speaking about God's deeds of power." 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 Gospel John 20:19-23

When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you." When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained."

Prayer:

Lord you said,

“Peace I leave with you, my peace I give to you.” We ask that your peace shall rest upon all of your Creation.

Please help us to nurture faith through our good works.

Amen

Sermon:

The Early Christians used to say, a Latin phrase: “*Coram deo*”.

It means: “*In the presence of God*”.

We are called to live in God’s presence.

These days, we hear lots of complaints and fear mongering.

And yet, we still live and work in the presence of God. 1

*Coram deo.*2

Because Pentecost reminds us that we live in God’s presence,

We have to ask:

“What does living in God’s presence really look like?”

Some preacher’s sell a Gospel of Prosperity.

They see God as a pleasure seeking capitalist.

Did Jesus really go the cross so that we could have it all?3

Actually, No.

Instead Jesus said:

“If anyone would come after me, let him ...

and take up his cross and follow me.” 4

That is *Coram deo*. That is living in God’s presence.

What does that look look like?

How do we live *in* the Kingdom?

How do we live *for* the Kingdom?

Jesus told us:

- Deny ourselves
- Follow Jesus
- Take up our cross⁵

That's just the beginning! It gets way better!

St. Peter quoted the prophet Joel⁶:

“Your sons *and* your daughters shall prophesy...
your young men shall see visions, and
your old men shall dream dreams.” ⁷

The ancient world wasn't interested in Godly visions,
and Heavenly dreams.

Our world isn't a big fan either!

Our nutty world is much happier

when our eyes are glued to cell phone screens and television.

Our world is much happier

when we dream of having more and more stuff,
Stacked high in a rental storage space.⁸

Our world is much happier when millions cannot

afford rent or care for their babies,
or get a square meal or hire a dentist.

Our world seeks pleasure first and last.

The Cross is an inconvenience. A metaphor.

But, Jesus didn't go the cross to give us Christianity Lite.

“You shall see visions, and dream dreams.” ⁹

Find a quiet place.

Close your eyes.

What vision will God give you?

What dream will God place on your heart?

Can I tell you my dream?

I dream of a thriving St. Chris's where the pews are filled
with families and children and grandparents
and aunts and uncles,
and laughter and joy and love.

I dream of a dynamic growing preschool where we
serve and nurture Killeen's young families.

I dream of a thriving St. Chris's where young people find peace
from the pressures and the distractions of youth.

I dream of a thriving St. Chris's where
every person knows Christ's love,
and has a place and a role and a purpose.

Listen to the Lord:

"Your sons *and* your daughters shall prophesy...
your young men shall see visions, and
your old men shall dream dreams." 10

Take up your cross. What is God's dream for you?

Where God will take you?

He took Dana and I to Killeen.

At Gethsemane, Jesus saw the cross. Straight ahead.

Calvary wasn't a mere inconvenience.

Through his cross, Jesus showed us how to live¹¹

in the presence of God. *Coram Deo* ... 12

Coram Deo is about all of us working together.

We don't need to be heroes.¹³

We just need to see God's dream.

Take up our cross. And go where God takes us.

Coram Deo

-Amen

1 Around 110 AD, John wrote his Gospel to a church that was suffering from dissent about who Christ was, and what Christ actually did.

2 Today's New Testament readings show us God's presence in the first moments of His Church. *Coram Deo*.

- There's Peter making his famous Pentecost speech.²
- There's Jesus appearing in the Upper Room, where he said:

"Receive the Holy Spirit".

3 I am sure that is just too easy and way too profitable. If it is too easy, we may be missing the point.

4 St. Peter's Pentecost homily. Matthew 16:24-26

5 Living *Coram Deo* isn't easy. It can catch you off guard.

6 Joel - יוֹאֵל - was a prophet in the Southern Kingdom of Judah during the period of the Divided Kingdom (930-722 BC). His writings are apocalyptic, referring to the "Day of the Lord" in the sense of pending Judgment. For example, he wrote of a plague of locusts which ravaged Judah (Chapters 1-2), and of God's mercy (2:13-14), awaiting Divine intervention and Judgment (see Chapter 3). The passage most noted today is Chapter 2:28-32, which is quoted by Peter in Acts 2:17-21.

7 Acts 2:17-21, "I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh."

8 I plead guilty!

9 Acts 2:17-21, "I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh."

10 Ibid.

11 Day after day. Week after week. Season after season.

12 What am I called to do Lord? How can I help? How can I make a difference, today?

13 Jesus did that for us.