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The Holy Spirit Came Acts 2:1-12

A couple of days ago

a woman came to the door of our church.

She rang the door bell and I answered.

When I asked her how I could help;
she began to speak in Mandarin.

She talked and talked and motioned with her arms to
her car and to the church, but

I didn't have a clue what she was talking about or
what she wanted.

Normally what happens in cases like this both of us would
throw up our hands, roll our eyes in frustration;
and we would go back into our own worlds and
never interact again.

We would be aliens to each other. Foreigners.

We would form suspicious feelings toward each other or
consider each other dumb.

Do you remember the tower of Babel in the bible?

Because of the confusion of language and the inability to
understand each other the people stopped building the city,
they stopping building their community and
scattered to their own far corners of the world.

The inability to understand each other
breaks down community, causes feelings of hostility,
and causes a spirit of prejudice and pride.

Getting back to this woman knocking at our church door,
finally after much frustration, and

talking in foreign tongues and gestures, I invited her in. Next to my office is the office
of our Chinese congregation.

Esther, their pastor was in.

Even before I asked her to talk to this woman
a big smile crossed her face,

she greeted the woman in Mandarin,

walked up to her and gave her a hug and

they began to talk and do the work of the church together.

When people hear about the wonders of God in their own
language, it says in this bible passage,
they are astonished and amazed. Bewildered.

They are touched at the core of their being,
deep in their hearts.

And they respond by giving their hearts and
their lives to God. They get involved,
they become part of the family of God.
That's the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen?

The week before last our church hosted the Classis meeting
of the Leaders of the Christian Reformed Churches in LA.

We were pastors and elders from 40 different churches.

Some Spanish, some Korean, some English,
some Filipino, some Vietnamese, Chinese and Indonesian. One of the Spanish pastors
spoke to us about what

it means to be a Hispanic person in LA.

He told us that many Spanish people living in LA are
economic refugees who love their home countries, but
because of devastating poverty had to move to find a
better life here in the USA.

Many Hispanic people are home sick but cannot go back.

He told us that the most powerful experience for a
Spanish person is to go to an English church and
have them sing a song in Spanish.

To hear in your own language,

to sing about the wonders of God in the language of
your heart, touches the soul.

Koreans, Anglos, Chinese people singing a song in
Spanish communicates to them appreciation,
care, love and community.

This sign love, said our Spanish pastor,
makes us cry with joy, makes us feel accepted, and
helps us respond to the gospel with deep commitment. That's the power of the Holy
Spirit. Amen?

On that first Pentecost Sunday,
people from all over the world were in Jerusalem.

And because of the wonders God was doing in the
church these people came ringing the door bell
of the church.

And when they opened the doors these foreigners,
these aliens with turbans, and chopsticks, and kimchi,
and light skin, and blue eyes, Mohawk hair cuts
heard the followers of Jesus speaking in their own language.

O these people from every nation under heaven,
they could speak Hebrew.

They learned it in school.

They didn't have to gesture and motion and
speak in a foreign language.

As a matter of fact they thought religion
could only be expressed in Hebrew.
Yet they heard the gospel in their own language.
In their mother tongue. In the tongue of their culture.
In the language of their emotions, the language of home.
This is what amazed them, this made them perplexed.
Hearing the disciples in their own language opened
them up to hearing about God and his work in Jesus.
And they were perplexed and amazed.

Hearing the gospel in their own language (v.12) made
them ask one another. "What does this mean?"
And that is a good question.

What does this mean for us?
What is the meaning of Pentecost today?
What does it mean for the Spirit of Jesus to be poured
out on us?
What does it mean for us to be filled with the Spirit?

Let me share a couple of things about the speakers,
the audience, the message, and
what happens when you put them all together.

First, the speakers:
The speakers are ordinary church members
ordinary followers of Jesus.
They are you and me.
Ordinary people with ordinary jobs.
Yet when they gathered together and prayed, and
God poured the Spirit of Jesus, the Holy Spirit on
them they were all filled with the Spirit and
they all began to speak.

Peter explains that when God does this,
when God pours his spirit on his people
they begin to prophesy. To speak the word of God.
Men and women, old and young, parent and children,
they begin to speak the word of God.

They see the visions and dream the dreams of God.
They begin to see things the way God sees them,
they begin to plan things the God plans them,
they begin to think the way God thinks. And
to act the way God acts.
And amazing things begin to happen.

Ordinary people begin doing extra ordinary things.
They begin to speak in different language.
They begin to communicate with people who are not
like them in the language of the heart and home.
The language of God and his love.

And this ability to communicate across cultures
is the gift of the Holy Spirit.
Pentecost means being willing and able to communicate
God's love across impossible cultural and language
barriers.

Second, the audience.
The audience is much like LA.
People from every nation under heaven.
Did you know there are people from 140 nations in the
world living in the LA area and
they speak 86 different languages?
Our natural tendency, also in the church,
is to stick to ourselves.
To interact only with those who are like us.
Even the school of church growth says
birds of the same feather should stick together.

Sunday morning is still one of the most segregated
hour of the week.

But in Jerusalem when the Spirit came
it was a multi ethnic audience that the Spirit went after.
People from every direction of the globe.
The first move of the Spirit was
to make an International Church.
That is why the Spirit enabled each of the people who
were filled with the spirit to speak in another language.
In other words the message of the gospel speaks to
very race and nation.
It speaks to every culture and
can be spoken in every language.
Pentecost means good news for all.

Third, the message.
What is this message, this good news that transcends
culture and speaks to every human heart?
It's the message of God's grace in Jesus his son,
according to Peter's Pentecost Sermon.

It's the message that there is forgiveness of sin,
and a renewed relationship with God for everyone
through the cross of Jesus.

Every tribe and nation longs for that promise of God.
That God will be with them.

To have the Spirit of God will live among them and in
them.

And in Jesus that is possible.

Pentecost means if you,
no matter who you are, German or Greek,
Chinese or Dutch,
if you repent and are baptized you will become part of
Jesus, receive the forgiveness of sin and
the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Each of these ingredients by itself does not change world.

To have Spirit filled Christians
without a mission audience is not Pentecost.

To have searching people from all nations looking for
a relationship with God is not Pentecost.

To have a message without it touching the heart and
emotions and minds of real people is not Pentecost.

Pentecost happens only when you put them all together.

When Spirit filled, multi lingual followers of Jesus share
the gospel of Jesus with people from all the nations of
the world, then Pentecost happens.

Then an amazing earth shaking event takes place.

They become God's one people.

They become family.

They experience the love of God and
he love of each other.

These new believers in Jesus from every nation under
heaven together with those old timer disciples,
children and grandparents,
executives of big companies and
volunteers at the local thrift store,
Chinese and Egyptian, Indonesian and Spanish,
rich and poor,
they all join together in community as brothers and sisters.

Paul, in Ephesians 2, sums it up nicely.

On that day, Pentecost day,
the Holy Spirit made the many into one;
destroying the barriers between them and

removing the dividing walls of hostility.
Through the cross the Holy Spirit made them one family
at peace with God and at peace with each other.
They were no longer foreigners and aliens.
They were all fellow citizens of God's people,
brothers and sisters in God's family,
joined together by their common confession that
Jesus is Lord;
and together in their multi cultural multi language
community
they became the temple where God lives
with his Holy Spirit.

So when perplexed and amazed people ask us about
what the holy Spirit is doing and
what Pentecost means
Tell them about "sin she wang gou jee jiao whey"
Hope International Church.
That is what it means. Let's pray.