

Lessons for Day of Pentecost

June 5, 2022

Collect: O God, who on this day taught the hearts of your faithful people by sending to them the light of our Holy Spirit: Grant us by the same Spirit to have a right judgment in all things, and evermore to rejoice in his holy comfort; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

First Reading: Genesis 11:1-9

Now the whole earth had one language and the same words. And as they migrated from the east, they came upon a plain in the land of Shinar and settled there. And they said to one another, "Come, let us make bricks, and burn them thoroughly." And they had brick for stone, and bitumen for mortar. Then they said, "Come, let us build ourselves a city, and a tower with its top in the heavens, and let us make a name for ourselves; otherwise we shall be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth." The Lord came down to see the city and the tower, which mortals had built. And the Lord, said, "Look, they are one people, and they have all one language; and this is only the beginning of what they will do; nothing that they propose to do will now be impossible for them. Come, let us go down, and confuse their language there, so that they will not understand one another's speech." So the Lord scattered them abroad from there over the face of all the earth, and they left off building the city. Therefore it was called Babel, because there the Lord confused the language of all the earth; and from there the Lord scattered them abroad over the face of all the earth.

The Word of the Lord. *Thanks be to God.*

Psalm 104:25-35, 37

O Lord, how manifold are your works!

in wisdom you have made them all; the earth is full of your creatures.

Yonder is the great and wide sea with its living things too many to number,
creatures both small and great.

There move the ships, and there is that Leviathan,
which you have made for the sport of it.

All of them look to you
 to give them their food in due season.
You give it to them; they gather it;
 you open your hand, and they are filled with good things.
You hide your face, and they are terrified;
 you take away their breath, and they die and return to their dust.
You send forth your spirit, and they created;
 and so you renew the face of the earth.
May the glory of the Lord endure for ever;
 may the Lord rejoice in all his works.
He looks at the earth and it trembles;
 he touches the mountains and they smoke.
I will sing to the Lord as long as I live;
 I will praise my God while I have my being.
May these words of mine please, him;
 I will rejoice in the Lord.
Bless the Lord ,O my soul.
 Hallelujah!

Second Reading: Romans 8:14-17

All who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God. For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received a spirit of adoption. When we cry, “Abba! Father!” it is that very Spirit bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ – if, in fact, we suffer with him so that we may also be glorified with him.

The Word of the Lord. *Thanks be to God.*

Gospel: John 14:8-7, 25-27

Philip said to Jesus, "Lord, show us the Father, and we will be satisfied." Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you all this time, Philip, and you still do not know me? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'? Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? the words that I say to you I do not speak on my own; but the Father who dwells in me does his works. Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; but if you do not, then believe me because of the works themselves. Very truly, I tell you, the one who believes in me will also do the works that I do, and, in fact, will do greater works than these, because I am doing to the Father. I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If in my name you ask me for anything, I will do it. If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, to be with you forever. This is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, because he abides with you, and he will be in you." I have said these things to you while I am still with you. But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said to you. Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid.

The Word of the Lord. *Thanks be to God.*

Sermon preached by The Rev. Charles Rowins at St. Christopher-by-the-Sea, Gibson Island, Maryland, Feast of Pentecost, June 5, 2022.

Fifty days since Easter. A time to transition from celebrating the Resurrection to sharing the Resurrection with a world in continual need for hope. It's "Let's get down to work" Sunday.

"Let's get down to work." A great theme. One which we employ all the time. We invoke this theme as parents when we tell our kids to put away their devices and do their homework. We invoke this theme when we get out a piece of paper and make a "to do" list for the day or the month or the year ahead.

So, what Biblical passage do we assign to this "Let's get down to work" Sunday? The Tower of Babel from Genesis (**Genesis 11:1-9**). "Come, let us build ourselves a city, and a tower with its top in the heavens, and let us make a name for ourselves; otherwise we will be scattered abroad upon the face of the earth."

But, look what happened. "So the Lord scattered them abroad from there over the face of all the earth, and they left off building the city."

Is "confusion" the result of "getting down to work"? We're after order, and we get confusion? Which is it, God? Do you want us to get down to work? Or do you want us to back off from work?

Well, maybe it's not an either/or question. Maybe it's the nature of the work we're doing. Maybe it's a reminder that the Lord is pleased with a certain kind of work and not pleased with other kinds of work. And maybe it's a reminder that we reap what we sow, and that sometimes we sow the wrong seeds.

One of the optional readings for today is the description in the Acts of the Apostles (**Acts 2:1-2, 21**) of God the Holy Spirit appearing to the people as a "violent wind" and with "tongues of fire." "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."

Presumably, this result – salvation – is a product of our "getting down to work" in the right way. What the hymn we just sang calls "round right." And what is the "right way"? What is "round right"? It is obedience to the commandments. It is following the Lord's direction. It is building a tower to the Lord's specifications,

not our own. From today's lesson from John: "Very truly, I tell you, the one who believes in me will also do the works that I do and , in fact, will do greater works than these, because I am going to the Father."

St. Paul expresses the same sentiment in his Letter to the early Christians in Rome (**Romans 8:14**). He makes a distinction between slavery and adoption. It's the difference between "have to" and "want to." Between "getting down to work" because we "have to out of fear," and "getting down to work" because we "want to out of thanksgiving."

"Sowing the wrong seeds" is a choice on our part. We have a central role in the outcome. Of yes, there are lots of factors in every outcome, but no factor more important than choosing the path that God has identified.

Is that identification easy? Not at all. In fact, it's a real challenge. It's the challenge described in today's passage from Genesis. It's not just language that's confusing. It's living that is confusing. So many choices. From today's Psalm (**Psalm 104:26**): "Yonder is the great and wide sea with its living things too many to number, creatures both great and small."

Yes, life is confusing at times. Lots of choices. Lots of Babel – language differences – and lots of babble - people and conditions tugging at us, wanting our attention, demanding our allegiance.

But there is also the Lord who is by our side as we make those choices, as we build a city for ourselves and those we love and even those whom we are not crazy about. And, if we pay attention and accept the Lord's guidance, the city that we build, the work that we do, will be pleasing to the Lord as well as to ourselves and lots of others.

We don't assume that we can do all the building. As we are reaching up, God is reaching down. Our effort meets God's grace. It's the win-win outcome that God desires and that we desire.

The last section of our hymnal is "National Songs." There are five:

God bless our native land; firm may she ever stand ...
My country, 'tis of thee, sweet land of liberty

God of our father, whose almighty hand leads forth in beauty
O beautiful for spacious skies, for amber waves of grain
O say can you see by the dawn's early light

What these hymns have in common is the role of the Creator in our every day experience. The country, the State, is not an entity that stands alone. In our case, we are a collection of citizens who “get down to work” and “build a city, a country, a neighborhood, brick by brick,” and always acknowledge from whom this opportunity comes.

And it's not just the opportunity. It is the collaboration. As God reaches, so do we reach. And, lest we forget – which is our message on this Day of Pentecost – failure to recognize God's role as donor of this land will result in confusion and scattering and blaming. It'll be a mess. How much of a mess? A tower's worth.

Does it take hard work to fulfill a God-given opportunity? You bet. Is the hard work worth it? You bet. From Paul's Letter to the Romans (**Romans 8:17**): “.... if, in fact, we suffer with him so that we may also be glorified with him.”

Yes, indeed. Hard work is worth it, not only for ourselves, but for others. Thus it is that our Collect today reminds us “to shed abroad this gift throughout the world by preaching of the Gospel, that it may reach to the ends of the earth.”

“Reaching” is such an important ingredient in Faith. God reaches. We reach. Who reaches first is less important than that we accept God's hand, and join Him in caring for the Creation. Once that grasp takes place, all sorts of good things happen.

For one, we are lifted to the point where we can lift others. We are rescued for the purpose of rescuing. It's a great motto for a nation, for a church, for a congregation. Including this congregation, for whom “Let's get down to work” is the order and privilege of the day.

And the greatest of all privileges of course is the Peace of the Lord: “Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid.” (**John 14:27**)

Amen.

Service of Holy Communion - Pentecost – June 5, 2022

Hymn 343 – Shepherd of souls, refresh and bless

Shepherd of souls, refresh and bless thy chosen pilgrim flock
with manna in the wilderness, with water from the rock.

We would not live by bread alone, but by thy word of grace,
in strength of which we travel on to our abiding place.

Be known to us in breaking bread, and do not then depart;
Savior, abide with us, and spread thy table in our heart.

Lord, sup with us in love divine, thy Body and thy blood,
that living bread, that heavenly wine, be our immortal food.

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Blessed be God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
And blessed be his kingdom, now and for ever.

Almighty God, to you all hearts are open, all desires known, and from you no
secrets are hid: Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy
Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy Name;
through Christ our Lord. Amen.

*Glory to God in the highest, and peace to his people on earth.
Lord God, heavenly King, almighty God and Father,
we worship you, we give you thanks, we praise you for your glory.
Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father, Lord God, Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world: have mercy on us;
you are seated at the right hand of the Father: receive our prayer.
For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord,
you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit,
in the glory of God the Father. Amen.*

The Lord be with you.
And also with you.
Let us pray.

Collect for Pentecost

O God, who on this day taught the hearts of your faithful people by sending to them the light of your Holy Spirit: Grant us by the same Spirit to have a right judgment in all things, and evermore to rejoice in his holy comfort; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

First Reading – Genesis 11:1-9

Psalm 104:25-35, 37

Second Reading – Romans 8:14-17

Hymn 554 – Tis the gift to be simple

'Tis the gift to be simple, 'tis the gift to be free,
'tis the gift to come down where we ought to be,
and when we find ourselves in the place just right,
'twill be in the valley of love and delight.
When true simplicity is gained
to bow and to bend we shan't be ashamed,
To turn, turn, will be our delight
till by turning, turning we come round right.

Gospel – John 14:8-17, 25-27

Sermon

Nicene Creed – page 358

*We believe in one God,
the Father, the almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is seen and unseen.*

*We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made,
of one Being with the Father.
Through him all things were made.
For us and for our salvation
he came down from heaven:
by the power of the Holy Spirit
he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary,
and was made man.
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried.
On the third day he rose again In accordance with the Scriptures;
he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.*

*We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son.
With the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified.
He has spoken through the Prophets.
We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come. Amen.*

Prayers of the People Form IV – page 388

Let us pray for the Church and for the world.

Grant, Almighty God, that all who confess your Name may be united in your truth, live together in your love, and reveal your glory in the world.

Lord, in your mercy. *Hear our prayer.*

Guide the people of this land, and of all the nations, in the ways of justice and peace; that we may honor one another and serve the common good.

Lord, in your mercy. *Hear our prayer.*

Give us all a reverence for the earth as your own creation, that we may use its resources rightly in the service of others and to your honor and glory.

Lord, in your mercy. *Hear our prayer.*

Bless all whose lives are closely linked with ours, and grant that we may serve Christ in them, and love one another as he loves us.

Lord, in your mercy. *Hear our prayer.*

Comfort and heal all those who suffer in body, mind, or spirit; give them courage and hope in their troubles, and bring them the joy of your salvation.

Lord, in your mercy. *Hear our prayer.*

We commend to your mercy all who have died, that your will for them may be fulfilled; and we pray that we may share with all your saints in your eternal kingdom.

Lord, in your mercy. *Hear our prayer.*

Confession and Absolution – page 360

Let us confess our sins against God and our neighbor.

*Most merciful God,
we confess that we have sinned against you
in thought, word, and deed,
by what we have done,
and by what we have left undone.
We have not loved you with our whole heart;
we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves.
We are truly sorry and we humbly repent.
For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ,
have mercy on us and forgive us;
that we may delight in your will,
and walk in your ways,
to the glory of your Name. Amen.*

Almighty God have mercy on you, forgive you all your sins through our Lord Jesus Christ, strengthen you in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep you in eternal life. Amen.

The Peace – page 360

The peace of the Lord be always with you.
And also with you.

Announcements

Eucharistic Prayer – page 361

The Lord be with you.
And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.
We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
It is right to give him thanks and praise.

It is right, and a good and joyful thing, always and everywhere to give thanks to you, Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth. Therefore we praise you, joining our voices with Angels and Archangels and with all the company of heaven, who for ever sing this hymn to proclaim the glory of your Name:

*Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.*

Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest.

Holy and gracious Father: In your infinite love you made us for yourself; and, when we had fallen into sin and become subject to evil and death, you, in your mercy, sent Jesus Christ, your only and eternal Son, to share our human nature, to live and die as one of us, to reconcile us to you, the God and Father of all.

He stretched out his arms upon the cross, and offered himself, in obedience to your will, a perfect sacrifice for the whole world.

On the night he was handed over to suffering and death, our Lord Jesus Christ took bread; and when he had given thanks to you, he broke it, and gave it to his disciples, and said, "Take, eat: this is my Body, which is given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me."

After supper he took the cup of wine; and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, and said, "Drink this, all of you: this is my Blood of the new Covenant, which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Whenever you drink it, do this for the remembrance of me."

Therefore we proclaim the mystery of faith:

Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.

We celebrate the memorial of our redemption, O Father, in this sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving. Recalling his death, resurrection, and ascension, we offer you these gifts.

Sanctify them by your Holy Spirit to be for your people the Body and Blood of your Son, the holy food and drink of new and unending life in him. Sanctify us also that we may faithfully receive this holy Sacrament, and serve you in unity, constancy, and peace; and at the last day bring us with all your saints into the joy of your eternal kingdom.

All this we ask through your Son Jesus Christ. By him, and with him, and in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit all honor and glory is yours, Almighty Father, now and for ever. Amen.

Lord's Prayer

And now, as our Savior Christ has taught us, we are bold to say,

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed by thy Name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

Breaking of the Bread

Alleluia. Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us.
Therefore let us keep the feast. Alleluia.

The Gifts of God for the People of God. Take them in remembrance that Christ died for you, and feed on him in your hearts by faith, with thanksgiving.

Communion

Post Communion Prayer

*Eternal God, heavenly Father, you have graciously accepted us
as living members of your Son our Savior Jesus Christ,
and you have fed us with spiritual food in the Sacrament of his Body and Blood.
Send us now into the world in peace, and grant us strength and courage
to love and serve you with gladness and singleness of heart;
through Christ our Lord. Amen.*

Hymn 302 – Father, we thank thee who hast planted

Father, we thank thee who hast planted thy Holy Spirit in our hearts.
Knowledge and faith and life immortal Jesus thy Son to us imparts.
Thou, Lord, didst make all for thy pleasure, didst give us food for all our days.
Giving in Christ the bread eternal; thine is the power, be thine the praise.

Watch o'er thy Church, O Lord, in mercy, save it from evil, guard it still,
perfect it in thy love, unite it, cleansed and confirmed unto thy will.
As grain, once scattered on the hillsides, was in this broken bread made one,
so from all lands thy Church be gathered into thy kingdom by thy Son.

Dismissal

Alleluia! Alleluia! Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.
Thanks be to God. Alleluia! Alleluia!

