

What Was Spoken

Acts 2:1-21, 37-39

June 4, 2017

First United Methodist Church, Lindstrom

(This is a manuscript prepared for sermon delivery and may not represent actual words spoken.)

No, this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel....”

So today is Pentecost Sunday. Pentecost is observed fifty days after Passover is celebrated. Jesus was crucified and he was buried and he rose. He then appeared to his followers over the course of some forty days. Then Jesus ascended into heaven. We read about this in the first chapter of Acts. Ten days passed. During that ten-day period, the disciples chose Matthias to replace Judas. Then on the tenth day following the ascension of Jesus, many of Jesus’ followers were in one place. There was a sound like the blowing of a violent wind. This was not like the comforting sound of a gentle breeze. This sounded like a violent wind. Tongues that looked like fire rested on each of them. They were all filled with the Holy Spirit.

This was the Day of Pentecost. Pentecost was the celebrating of the giving of the law to Moses on Mount Sinai. It was a big day. Jerusalem was filled with people during the Passover. The Holy City was equally full during Pentecost...maybe more so. People came from all over. There were many languages being spoken in the city that day... a big language barrier.

So on the day people gathered to celebrate the law, God poured out the Holy Spirit. God gave birth to the Church. Peter and the others preached. They were gifted to preach in the languages of all the people gathered there. What did they preach? They preached Jesus.

In our text, Peter addressed the crowd. People had gathered at the sound of the violent wind and all that. People were hearing the wonders of God being expressed in their

native tongues. This both amazed and perplexed them. They asked what the meaning of all that was. Of course, there were skeptics in the crowd. There always are. They thought the disciples had too much of the fermented fruit of the vine. So the first thing Peter did was to tell the people they needed to listen closely to what he had to say. He needed to dispel the notion that they were drunk. He pointed to the fact that it was only nine in the morning. After that, he told them what was really happening. He did that by quoting from what we call the Old Testament.

This put me in mind of what we talked about a few weeks ago. Remember after the resurrection there were those two guys walking back to Emmaus? They were confused by all the things that had happened...Jesus dying and that thing about the empty tomb. Jesus appeared and started walking with them. They did not recognize Jesus at first; they would later. The story says that Jesus began with Moses and all the prophets and explained to them how the Scriptures said that the Messiah would have to suffer and die and then be raised. The cross is central to all of Scripture...Moses, the prophets, the Gospels: the letters.

Okay, so the only inspired Scriptures available to Jesus’ followers on that Day of Pentecost taught all about a suffering and glorified Messiah. But while Jesus—that suffering and glorified Messiah talked about in their Scriptures—was alive and teaching his disciples, it would seem they never did quite grasp that truth. In fact, it was their desire to fight side by side with Jesus for the independence of Israel. They were looking to Jesus to be that hero-type king and Messiah they were expecting. Just ten days before this Pentecost event they asked Jesus if he was