**Acts 2:1-21 May 22, 2021**

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

Our text for this morning comes from our Epistle lesson, Acts chapter 2 here re-reading these words. “And at this sound the multitude came together, and they were bewildered, because each one was hearing them speak in his own language. And they were amazed and astonished, saying, ‘Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? And how is that we hear, each of us in his own native language?” This is our text.

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Have you ever had to take something complex and complicated and explain it to a kindergartener? There is a popular request these days, and I must admit I have said these words myself when meeting new people who work in careers or have studied topics that I have never heard of before, where they ask that you “Explain it to me like I am 5 years old.” Which sounds easy enough in theory, but can you really simplify the most complex things down in such a way to explain them to someone so young? So inexperienced? How would you start? What sort of strategies could you employ for someone who needs so much guidance? This is the challenge to any sort of teaching. Even if you are older, educated, and have a vast knowledge of a particular subject or obtained a very high level of a particular skill, if you are attempting to learn something or do something you’ve never done before, you don’t start at the advanced stage, you start at the level of a 5 year old, of a kindergartner, or a beginner. Which means that you need a guide. Now there are always self-study guides or teaching manuals you can learn on your own, but anyone who has learned something as complex as a language or a trade skill knows that the best way to learn is through the experience of a guide, a teacher, someone who can explain the parts that just don’t make sense and simplify it for you in your instruction. For this reason we remember the really great teachers we had in our education who helped simplify, guide, and teach lasting lessons that have stuck with you your whole life. In your faith, this is somewhat of a complex thing to understand in it’s own way. Because you have a teacher, Jesus Christ, the greatest teacher who ever lived, the teacher of all teachers, regarded as such by those who knew very little about him in his ministry, his reputation was teacher as he traveled around, but his teachings would be meaningless without your guide, and that guide is who we focus on the most on this particular holiday and festival of the church year. The teachings of Jesus Christ wouldn’t be understandable to you without the work of the Holy Spirit.

We need things to be explained, and simple, we need them to be focused and to the point, especially at the beginning of learning. We need to know the basics and the foundation that we build upon to introduce more complex lessons and skills. Well, very simply, in your life as a Christian, the Holy Spirit is given at the very beginning, at your baptism. The Holy Spirit is your guide, without the gift of the Holy Spirit we wouldn’t have faith and therefore we wouldn’t have any means of receiving the gifts of God. We wouldn’t be able to understand what those gifts are or who was giving them either. Any understanding we have when it comes to the Holy Word of God and the contents within it, are through the work of the Holy Spirit in our hearts, feeding and strengthening the faith that was created there by our guide. Which is what makes Pentecost so special and important in the life of the Church because here we see the giving of the Holy Spirit to many different people of many different backgrounds. This is a miraculous festival in the church, because it’s such a miraculous event. Anyone who studies language knows that even though there are some similarities in different languages, to know how to speak 2 or 3 different languages is quite difficult and would take a lot of study. Now imagine if you spoke all the languages that we hear about here in Acts chapter 2! People had come from all of these regions: “There were Parthians, Medes, Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea, and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belong to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome.” It would be impossible for these men to have known and understood all of these languages to be some sort of interpreter between all of these different nations and peoples and interpret the same message so many times into different languages. So instead God used these men through the work of the Holy Spirit, to simplify the message and make their speech be understood in many different languages. It would be the equivalent if every single one of you spoke a different language here today, but were hearing this message in your language even though I was speaking to you in English as I am right now.

The Holy Spirit is the guide, the key to a proper understanding of God’s Word and the simple message of salvation that we hear about at the end of our reading. But we get in the way. What are the biggest obstacles teachers have to explaining their lesson to their students? What gets in the way of teaching? Perhaps the student is absent, you can’t teach a student who won’t come and learn. We find that in our own church in the lives of those we know and love who don’t know the truth of the Gospel or seem to have drifted very far away from it. They aren’t coming to worship, being fed in the Lord’s Supper, they aren’t hearing the Word read and preached on Sunday mornings. They aren’t in the Word of God throughout the week, and being strengthened by it and so the teacher isn’t able to work on their hearts, feed and strengthen their faith. But what about for those of us gathered here today? What gets in the way of teaching? What do guides and teachers struggle with in the attitudes or actions of their students? Smugness. How can you teach a student who believes they know it all? And certainly doesn’t need the help of a teacher? We see this as well in our own church and in our own lives. It’s the attitude for confirmands who finish confirmation. It’s the attitude of those who don’t attend Bible Class. I know it all. I don’t need to learn anything else. I don’t need a guide to teach me, and if I don’t know it, it’s probably not that important. What an insult to the Holy Spirit! The guide of your heart who waits to teach and yet you won’t listen. Your heart is hardened to the truth. You won’t read the Scriptures outside of worship, you won’t do daily devotions, you won’t dive into the study of the doctrine and teachings of your own church. And all the while the Holy Spirit yearns to teach you, but you won’t listen and you won’t learn. There are always those who think they know everything, we find them even here in our Epistle lesson today. “And all were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, “What does this mean?” But others mocking said, “they are filled with new wine.” The know it alls. The mockers. The ones who don’t seek to better themselves but only want to tear others down. The world is filled with them, the evidence of sin in our midst, but can we say we don’t do the same? Can we say we aren’t part of the problem? No. We are faced with the same sin in our own hearts.

The lesson is complex, to fully understand God is hard and takes a lot of study and work, I won’t pretend to understand everything even being your pastor and studying theology at a seminary. It’s easier to just sit back and mock, make fun, not try to learn and just be satisfied with how far we are in our faith. But the message is clear and we have a teacher, a guide, who explains even the most hard to understand, complex parts of God and our faith to us, just as was done at Pentecost. Here is the message, in every language of that time, and that we can explain in any language to those in our own communities, here it is, the message of salvation, the truth of the Gospel, from Acts chapter 2:21, “And it shall come to pass that everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.” And how does this happen? How can we call upon the name of the Lord if we don’t know the Lord and sin is the barrier between us and the knowledge of Jesus and God our Father? The answer is found in the guide, the comforter, the one who reveals to us the work of Jesus for us, the one who caused these men to share this good news with so many and that news transformed their lives leading to Baptism, and sharing this good news with those around them. The Holy Spirit is the key. The guide. The teacher. The one who explains it all to us as if we were children, kindergartners, 5 years old. It’s simple. You sin, do wrong things, were born into sin and can’t possibly pay back the debt of sin because it’s your own death. But Jesus loves you, the perfect Son of God came to this world, took your sin upon himself, gave you his perfection and died to pay for your sin. He rose again to give you life. Whoever believes in him shall not die but be saved. It’s simple, and yet complex. There is more to learn, but the basics are clear. You don’t have to fear death because your guide shows you that everything that needed to happen for you to be saved has been accomplished and attributed to you through the work of the entire Holy Trinity. You have nothing to fear. You are taught that, and it’s true.

The Holy Spirit guides you, even when you don’t realize it, even when you don’t necessarily feel it or the message seems….mundane, repetitive, or stale. If it seems like we talk about Jesus even on days when we focus on the Holy Spirit it’s because that’s the core teaching of our guide, to point to the teacher and to make sense of his Word for us. Easter’s culmination is the work of the Holy Spirit and how he makes sense of all that Jesus accomplished for us so that we see our salvation as coming from Him and the work of God in our lives. So in the flames of Pentecost, see the one working behind the scenes, the one working in your heart, to make sense of all that you hear so that you may fully understand his work, even if he explains it in such a simple way that a 5 year old would understand.

Amen.

The peace of God which surpasses all human understanding keep our hearts and minds through faith in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Amen.