

All of Them Were Filled With the Holy Spirit

Romans 8:14-17; Acts 2:1-13
Lewinsville Presbyterian Church
June 5, 2022

I feel like I am beginning to sound like a broken record in saying this at Lewinsville, but WHAT A DAY. First of all, we've just completed the first annual 5K Lewinsville Road Race – for which we want to give Scott Schlegel a big shout out. Second of all, we are about to confirm 4 of our youth into full, active, and adult membership in the Presbyterian Church. And thirdly, the thing which holds all of those together, today is the day of Pentecost, the birthday of the church, the day when we remember God's pouring out of the Holy Spirit upon – the text says – ALL OF THEM.

All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit. Not just the ones who had been to seminary. Not just the ones with the polished resumes.

"All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit."

This is good news, and this is bad news. It's good news because it means that the Holy Spirit does not leave anyone untouched. It's bad news because when the Holy Spirit comes into your life, or your family, or your church, or your community, or your world, things begin to change. And if we are too invested in keeping things the way they are, we are in for a Holy Spirit-inspired awakening.

Because God's Spirit does not just *fill* people, God's Spirit gives people *power to act* in the world for healing, justice, truth, mercy, and dignity. "All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit, and they began to speak in other languages, *as the Spirit gave them ability.*"

We talk about the Spirit bringing us comfort, we talk about the Spirit bringing us inspiration and courage. But Acts 2 tells us that the Spirit also *gives people ability*. The Spirit makes people capable of acting in the world for God's purposes.

Confirmands, this is happening to you. Eimi, Andrew, Lars, and Grant, God's Spirit is pouring out upon you. *Do not miss this*. God's Spirit is being poured on you, and God's Spirit is giving you ability. Some of that will be how God uses and employs the remarkable talents and gifts that you already have. The Statements of Faith that you have written and that you have painted are vivid testimony to your talents and gifts. But the Spirit does more than use what you've already got. The Spirit also gives you what you do not yet have, and what the world needs. So in the days to come, in the months to come, in the years to come, we need you to open your hearts and open your minds to receive God's Spirit, God's leading, God's empowerment of you, and then we need you to stand up and act on the basis of that. And if you find that adults

– in the world or in the church – try to tell you to hush up, we need you to refuse to do so. For God is giving you gifts for the healing of the world.

But the Spirit is not just being poured out on the confirmands. “*All* of them were filled with the Holy Spirit.” God’s Spirit is pouring out on all of the church, everywhere, giving the church what we did not have before, leading us into territory we have not gone before. And goodness knows, the world needs a Holy Spirit-empowered church. Because there is so much pain in the world, and the world thinks that no one cares. There is so much loneliness and isolation, especially coming out of the pandemic. So many people feel like no one really knows them or cares about them. Addiction and substance-abuse levels have been rising during the pandemic. There is so much hostility and division towards those who see things differently than we do, and there are principalities and powers that benefit from our being divided, that do not want us to work together to find meaningful, common-sense solutions to the challenges of our day - challenges like gun violence and the proliferation of, and easy access to, high-capacity assault rifles like the ones used in Buffalo and Uvalde; these common-sense solutions may not be able to stop these shootings completely, but they can reduce them. So much pain. The Spirit of the Living God is poured out on us, not to wave a magic wand that will fix all of our problems the way we want, but to impart strength and perseverance and patience and love and courage and resilience and mercy and commitment to the well-being of your neighbor, especially your neighbor who is different from you. The Spirit of the Living God does not protect us from the pain of the world, any more than it protected Jesus from the pain of the world, but the Spirit sends us forth to be present with the pain of the world, to embrace the grief of the world, in the knowledge that God is bringing forth God’s new creation, as we speak.

To the triune God – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit – be all glory, honor, and power, now and forever. Amen.