



St. Michael's Church

CHARLESTON, SC

SUNDAY, MARCH 31, 2020

ACTS 2:1-4, JOHN 20:19-23

PREACHER: THE REV. AL ZADIG, JR.

HELP US LORD TO BE SO CONNECTED TO YOU THAT WE MIGHT BECOME YOUR
DISCIPLES AND THE SERVANTS OF OTHERS.

TAKE OUR LIPS AND SPEAK THROUGH THEM,
OUR MINDS AND THINK THROUGH THEM,
AND TAKE OUR HEARTS, AND SET THEM ON FIRE.

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Do you realize how much our vocabulary has changed through this pandemic?

I mean think about it...names and words unknown to us just 3 months ago...now standard!!!

Words and names like:

- Social distancing
- Lockdown
- Self-quarantine
- N95
- Covid
- Zoom
- Pivot
- Live Stream?
- Wuhan
- Fauci
- Birx
- Virtual happy hour

The latter being the crowd favorite. But my Pandemic Favorite is Pivot.

A word that simply means a sudden shift, evidenced by us coming to you by video today!

Last week in the context of Luke 5 we talked about the three major pivots that Jesus made that are great lessons for us in the pandemic.

- Jesus pivoting by taking his ministry outside the Synagogue to the Sea of Galilee to reach people where they were.
- Peter humbly pivoting by fishing further from the shore and out into the deep.
- Peter's Purpose pivoting from fishing for tilapia to fishing for people.

Three major pivots that remind us in this pandemic that the church has to pivot to:

- Reach the people where they are,
- That we too are to go into the deep fishing for souls,
- That there in the deep we rediscover our true purpose which is Evangelism...

To that end, shameless plug here, tomorrow pivot with us as we go on a prayer walk and invite our neighbors to church for June 7! More on that a bit later.

If last week was the great pivot to Evangelism, today is the great pivot to discipleship-through the Pentecost Pivot. And it comes in 2 waves, John 20 and Acts 2.

John 20: On the night of that first Easter where Jesus is resurrected, the Disciples are locked in that upper room where the last Supper had been held. They are terrified that they are next to be crucified. That's when Jesus for the first time since they literally see him die, supernaturally appears and says:

"Peace be with you...and shows them His hands, and Side!"

Can you imagine their joy! Jesus we saw you die, and here you are...totally alive! Jesus then PIVOTS BY INVITING THEM INTO A LIFE OF DISCIPLESHIP SAYING:

I'm now sending you as I was sent...

IT'S WHAT HE SAYS, THEN WHAT HE DOES..

..Jesus breathes on them and says: Receive the Holy Spirit...

Pivot of Pivots!

Jesus in that moment in breathing the Holy Spirit into them is breathing his:

- Very life
- Strength
- Being
- And essence into them!

Like Genesis 2...God breathing into Adam's nostrils the breath of life!

1 Samuel 10...The Holy Spirit coming on Saul, making Him a new person!

Ezekiel 37...God breathing into the valley of the dead bones, bringing all the dead to life!

In literature, C.S. Lewis' Aslan the Lion breathing over the petrified and restoring them to life!

Jesus breathes on them to give them his very life AND immediately follows it up with:

- If you forgive the sins of others, they are forgiven,
- if you do not forgive, they are not forgiven..

IN THAT PIVOTAL MOMENT, JESUS IS GIVING THE DISCIPLES THE AUTHORITY TO DISCIPLE OTHERS.

Jesus is giving the Disciples the power to Disciple others on a spirit driven mission.

Jesus saying:

- I'm not just telling you about me,
- I'm giving you ME...that...
- You would help make others into my image by telling others what I have done for you...
- That in me, there can be forgiveness, there can be new life!

This astonishing anointing of the Holy Spirit serves as a foretaste of something that would happen 7 weeks later.

7 Weeks later...

The Disciples are once again in that upper room, it happens to be the Jewish festival of Pentecost. Pente meaning 50. The Jewish Pentecost was a celebration on the 50th day after Passover, giving thanks to God for delivering them from the Egyptians.

The Jews Celebrated by tithing their first fruits of the wheat harvest. Amazingly, for the Christians it was on this very day of that Jewish Pentecost, which was exactly 50 days after the Resurrection of Jesus...

The Disciples are having coffee watching the Pentecost crowds down below when all of a sudden GALE FORCE WINDS BLOW FROM HEAVEN AND FILLS EVERY NOOK AND CRANNY OF THE HOUSE! Those of you who stayed in your house during a hurricane, that's the wind and sound I'm talking about. This is no gentle breeze, BUT A howling wind! THEN...from that wind comes fire... tongues of fire that separate then rests on each of them...And they all begin to speak in different languages! New tongues to speak the purity and the power of God in other languages! AND It's not just the disciples in that room, but over 120 people.

A Strategic Pivot...

Because now the Holy Spirit is given for all..to be our collective fuel to make disciples all over the world!

Let's just stop here and realize what's happened!

- Old Testament Pentecost
 - 50 days after
 - God rescues the Jews from Pharaoh in the Passover..
 - And Celebration through the Harvest Tithe
- New Testament Pentecost
 - 50 days after the day
 - God rescues Humanity from Sin through the Resurrection of His Son Jesus...
 - Celebration through The Holy Spirit Pivoting...coming on the people!!

Doesn't this help us love Jesus even more?

After the resurrection Jesus could have just gone and left us on our own. But personally, and supernaturally he Pivots and breathes His life into us to equip us. You see, without the Holy Spirit, there is no power in our ministry, no strength no passion!

As Dwight Moody famously said:

- You might as well try to hear without ears
- or breathe without lungs
- as to try to live a Christian life
- without the Holy Spirit in your heart.”

The power of the Pentecost Pivot is that it signifies God desiring to come along side you and me to pour into us that we would pour into others. The great Pentecost Pivot!

Let's go deeper...How does this happen? Three images of How the Pentecost Pivot Happens, How the Holy Spirit pours into us:

First image: The story of Ignace Jan Paderewski (1860-1941). Not only Prime Minister of Poland in the previous century, but a pianist and composer, giving concerts mesmerizing audiences from Europe to America. During one such concert, as he's preparing to come out and play. Little does he know that in the audience is a mother bringing her son in hopes of renewing his interest in playing the piano. The mother gets involved in a conversation with another adult, not noticing her son disappears. Then, in horror, she sees her young boy walking onto the stage, sitting at the piano and starting to play: "Twinkle Twinkle, Little Star". The audience gasps. Then Paderewski appears. What does he do? Paderewski places his arms around the child and – to the audience's surprise—begins to play "Twinkle Twinkle, Little Star" ALONG-SIDE HIM. Together, they make a beautiful arrangement of

- Melodies
- Counter melodies
- And harmonies.

All the while, the great composer whispers in the boy's ears, "Don't quit—Keep going!"

The audience bursts into applause. This IS the First Pentecost Pivot. The Holy Spirit coming alongside us to disciple us.

- John 14:16..The Holy Spirit is our advocate-our ALONG-SIDER....to help us look and live more like Jesus!
- equipping us to disciple others...!
- The Holy Spirit also comes alongside us to bring intimacy with Jesus by opening our minds and hearts to understand and respond to Scripture!
- As the Holy Spirit opens our minds, He then begins to shape us from the inside out,
- He gets in here and brings conviction of our own sin, by helping us see our lives the way Jesus sees our lives, in a way that leads us to repentance...!

So, the first image of the Pentecost Pivot is Holy Spirit as Pianist, coming alongside us.

The second image of the Pentecost Pivot: The Holy Spirit as a welders flame..that fire!

- Bending our iron wills to help us desire what Jesus desires
- Titus 2...that we would be pure as Jesus is pure..
- The Holy Spirit Bending our wills leading us to repentance!

Now I know that often when we talk about being changed, we think of it externally,

- using guilt
- and obligation

Like...

- I ought to attend that Bible Study
- I ought to go to church...
- but there's no heart change.

The Holy Spirit doesn't operate that way..NO HE changes our desires, so it isn't about EXTERNAL guilt, NO-the things of the Lord become our highest passion!

The Holy Spirit, Pivots...

- As pianist alongside us
- A welders flame bending our iron wills..

Which leads to the third image of the Pentecost Pivot..

Acts 1: You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you!

It's the power of the Holy Spirit as Dynamite!

The Holy Spirit as dynamite inserted into the heart that changes us from within!

I'll never forget watching the implosion of a sky scraper in Boston when I was young.

My brother and I sat on the roof of his car safely distanced and watched it implode. It came from the inside because that's where the dynamite was.

Things happen to us when the Holy Spirit is let loose WITHIN in us..

- With the implosion of the Holy Spirit within us, our hearts yearn to read Scripture!
- Our hearts yearn for more worship!
- Our hearts yearn to forgive and be forgiven!
- Our hearts yearn to help form another

BUT, at the same time, as our hearts hunger for the things of Christ, through the Holy Spirit, we also run FROM those things which are not of Jesus.

- We develop a putrid hatred for Pornography,
- Obscenity
- Addictions...

Again, the Pentecost Pivot is so deep because it means you stop the addiction not because you're guilted into it externally, but because your driven away from it-from your insides. Kind of like that moment when the potatoes go bad in your pantry. One day they look great. The next day you walk by the pantry, and the sudden putrid smell just repels you, get it out of there! That's the Holy Spirit Pentecost Pivot!

But one more thing happens that gets us right back to John 20 and Acts 2. From our insides, we yearn to help others look more like Jesus. We yearn to be the Paderski on the piano bench coming alongside another----to teach what true forgiveness looks like and how that gift is from Jesus.

The Pentecost Pivot

The Holy Spirit as:

- Pianist alongside
- Welder
- Dynamite..

Without that pivot of the Holy Spirit two things happen:

1. We get dry rot of the heart
2. And we have no appetite to disciple another.

Like any good pivot, there are metrics.

Paul in Galatians 5 writes: Live by the Spirit, and when you do, you will receive the fruits, the by-product of the fruit...which is:

- Love
- Joy
- Peace
- Patience
- Kindness
- Goodness
- Faithfulness
- Gentleness
- and self control.

Now today at 1pm is our annual meeting Festival of Faith. A day where we look at the metrics of what we accomplished through the Holy Spirit last year. But also a day where we look down the road at the next 12 months. The best word to describe the next twelve months is this Pentecost Pivot! ...into deep Discipleship...Discipleship for the long haul. Through the Holy Spirit, disciples making disciples.

One of the great Pentecost Pivots from this last year has been seeing this kind of Holy Spirit driven discipleship happen in our moms and dads groups. Through the Holy Spirit:

- 62 moms and dads being poured into—
- to pour into others!

Then there is George and Pam Klein. George and Pam just have this relentless desire to disciple the youngers of this church.. they are relentless. I literally don't know how else to say it! Pivoting through the Holy Spirit to invite others to Christ and into a life of Discipleship, both here in the church and their ministry at the Citadel—With our collective dream of building a fellows program to disciple the next generation of young adults!

It's the Pentecost Pivot on display!

But you might say:

- I'm not there
- I'm not growing
- I'm not changing from within
- I don't have a desire to tell another..

My friends, if that's you, thank you for being honest!

You see, whenever we pour into another, the Holy Spirit leaks out of us. Which is why Peter was filled with the Holy Spirit three times in 3 chapters of Acts.

Receive the Pentecost Pivot..

ALL OF US NEED MORE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

BY INVITING THE HOLY SPIRIT TO RECEIVE MORE OF US!

Which means praying: Come Holy Spirit, I need more of you!

- Come alongside
- Come in, like a welders flame, bend my will
- Like 100 dynamite sticks, change me from within!

My friends, let's make this real by placing ourselves in that upper room with the Disciples, and together on this Pentecost 2020. Let's invite the Holy Spirit to come into us again or for the first time. By praying this prayer...written by Keith Getty, Then...singing it.

Please kneel and with your whole heart, pray this with me.

- Holy Spirit, living Breath of God,
- Breathe new life into my willing soul.
- Bring the presence of the risen Lord
- To renew my heart and make me whole.
- Cause Your Word to come alive in me;
- Give me faith for what I cannot see;
- Give me passion for Your purity.
- Holy Spirit breathe new life in me..
- Love me deeply to cover ev'ry sin
- And As you come along side and within me, give me the power to come along side and be a discipler of others.

Standing, Let's sing that prayer..