

Sunday, May 28, 2023 - 8:30am worship
Pentecost Sunday - Memorial Day Weekend

Welcome/Announcements

- Bulletins / Connection cards for prayer requests / Offering

Prelude

Call to Worship

Leader: Come, sing a new song of worship.

People: Come, sing a new song of praise.

Leader: Today is a day of a promise fulfilled.

People: With joy we celebrate Pentecost.

Leader: Pentecost – a day when power and comfort flowed.

People: Pentecost – a day of hope and inspiration.

Leader: A day when the Holy Spirit was revealed in flaming glory

People: and the glory was given to the people.

Leader: The fire of the Holy Spirit lives on in us.

People: Sing praises!

All: We sing praises, indeed!

Hymn No. 298 - Come, Holy Spirit, Heavenly Dove (familiar tune)

New Testament Reading: Acts 2:1-13 (NIV)

When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. 2 Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. 3 They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. 4 All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them. 5 Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven. 6 When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard their own language being spoken. 7 Utterly amazed, they asked: "Aren't all these who are speaking Galileans? 8 Then how is it that each of us hears them in our native language? 9 Parthians, Medes and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, 10 Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome 11 (both Jews and converts to Judaism); Cretans and Arabs—we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues!" 12 Amazed and perplexed, they asked one another, "What does this mean?" 13 Some, however, made fun of them and said, "They have had too much wine."

Congregational Prayer time concluding with the Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be 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 sins as we forgive those who sin against us; lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

NEW sermon series: "Set Free", Week 1

Sermon Title: "Wild Goose Chase" (#445)

Lectionary Scripture texts, Year A

Psalms 104:24–35; John 20:19–23; Acts 2:1–21; 1 Corinthians 12:3–13

Me...

- Wild goose chase... Definition: a foolish and hopeless pursuit of something unattainable.
- The Wrightsville bridge; youth

You...

- Pursuit of something difficult to find can feel like a "wild goose chase".
- We do it for our kids for the last minute homework project; for loved ones that our need; for advancement in our careers to impress the boss.
- Adventure, time consuming, unknown, risk???
- Depends on our upbringing; our wiring / DNA; our personality type.
- Our journey of faith; pursuit of God's will; keeping in step with the Spirit... can feel like a "wild goose chase".
- For many, the older we get, the less adventurous and curious we become.
- We become more skeptical, critical and cautious.
- Dare I say... imprisoned by our own misguided ideas, our failing health, misconceptions of people, our religious practices and fear.
- Sermon series entitled, "Set Free" for the season of Pentecost; will focus a lot on the Holy Spirit (characteristics and traits), who He is in our lives as disciples of Jesus and what He accomplishes in our lives when we live by His power.

Sermon prayer

God's Word to us...

2 Corinthians 6:11-13 (The Message by Eugene H. Peterson)... Dear, dear Corinthians, I can't tell you how much I long for you to enter this wide-open, spacious life. We didn't fence you in. The smallness you feel comes from within you. Your lives aren't small, but you're living them in a small way. I'm speaking as plainly as I can and with great affection. Open up your lives. Live openly and expansively!

- I'm convinced that the church (you and I) live lives too quiet, safe, isolated, afraid, SMALL... we are imprisoned by our lack of faith and our unwillingness to obey!
- We are bound up by our limited understanding of the Holy Spirit, and because we can't understand or make sense of the 3rd person of the Trinity, we dismiss Him or overemphasize Him as the missing piece to our spiritual maturity.
- Humanity... all or nothing and rarely do we live in the mystery and magnificence of who God really is. We like to lean on our own "understanding"!

Galatians 5:24-26 (NIV)... 24 Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. 25 Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. 26 Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other.

Symbolism in the church...

- Artwork (stained glass windows), symbols, pictures have always helped us make sense of our pursuit and understanding of who God is, and they have also distorted our understanding as well.
- Right or wrong, symbols and images have defined God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit for generations of people.
- Those images and symbols are based on cultural, geographical, relating to our language, theological and biblical interpretations.
- **Holy Spirit... Spirit of God, the third person of the triune God, the Holy Spirit, coequal, coeternal with the Father and the Son**
 - **Defined linguistically...**
 - The Hebrew ruach means "wind," "breath," or "spirit."
 - The corresponding Greek word is pneuma. Both words are commonly used in passages referring to the Holy Spirit.
 - The word's first use in the Bible appears in the second verse: "The Spirit of God [Ruach Elohim] was hovering over the waters" (Genesis 1:2).

- **Defined biblically...**
- Matthew 3:16... “dove” descending
- Acts 2:3... “tongues of fire”
- John 4:10... “living water”
- **Defined symbolically (with some cultural elements)...**
- Fire - Oil - Water - Smoke/vapor/cloud - Wind - Dove (descending)
- Wild goose??

5th century... Christianity came to Brittany, Scotland and Ireland.

- Celtic Christians symbolized the Holy Spirit with this name... An Geadh-Glas (an god glas) or “the wild goose”.
- Mysterious nature to the Holy Spirit.
- Can not be tracked or tamed; element of danger and unpredictability!
- Feed the ducks and geese at Long’s park with our girls... never quite sure if they would appreciate the food or turn on you and chase you.

Mark Batterson, Wild Goose Chase: Reclaiming the Adventure of Pursuing God

- “Intellectual analysis leads to spiritual paralysis.”
- “We want God to do something new while we keep doing the same old thing.”
- “If you want God to do something new, you have to do something different. The Spirit of God will never lead you to do something outside the guardrails of God’s good, pleasing and perfect will as revealed in scripture. But He will call you to do something daring.”
- “Not matter what it is, it will take faith. And faith is taking the first step before God reveals the second step.”
- Not going to get into the theological debates over “baptism by the Holy Spirit”, gifts of the Holy Spirit (aka speaking in tongues which is only ONE gift among many) or being “filled with the Holy Spirit”.
- We are divided enough over many things which weakens us as God’s church. We must work out our salvation in “fear and trembling” but be committed to living in unity with one another.

- The first century church had great power and great influence under great persecution and God blessed them and multiplied them and the gospel of Jesus spread like wildfire!

What did they have that we often lack?

- **Reliance on and faith in the fulfillment of the promised “help” Jesus would provide through the Holy Spirit.**
- **John 14:26 (NIV)**... But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.
- **Acts 1:8 (NIV)**... But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

For later...

- **Lived to serve and not be served.**
- **Matthew 20:26b-28 (NIV)**... whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, 27 and whoever wants to be first must be your slave— 28 just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.
- **Always unity in community.**
- **Acts 2:44 (NIV)**... All the believers were together and had everything in common.

It is my prayer that we would have a proper biblical perspective on the Holy Spirit, yet allow for differences in points of view when it comes to non-critical areas.

- **John 4:24 (NIV)**... God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in the Spirit and in truth.
- **2 Corinthians 3:17, 18 (NIV)**... Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. 18 And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord’s glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.

Application - You...

Romans 5:1-5 (NIV)... Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, 2 through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we boast in the hope of the glory of God. 3 Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; 4 perseverance, character; and character, hope. **5 And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.**

the Holy Spirit is living in you!

- Personal counselor (ever-present guide, helper and comforter)
- Heart healer
- Truth revealer
- Gift giver
- Fruit producer

“Deep down inside, all of us long for more.” M.B., Wild Goose Chase

• IS THIS TRUE?

- “We live as though our purpose is to arrive safely at death.”
- There is more to the Christian life than what you're experiencing or living out today!

Application - We, the church...

- Have we made the Holy Spirit too tame? Too predictable? Too intellectual? Too divisive to discuss or discern?
- Do we follow the Holy Spirit or do we ignore the Spirit?
- Do we follow the Spirit or do we think the Spirit will follow us?
- Do we serve the Spirit's purpose for our lives (aka God's will) or do we expect God to serve our purposes and bless our pursuits?
- “We have a primal longing to be uncaged. And the cage opens when we recognize that Jesus didn't die on a the cross to keep us safe. Jesus died to make us dangerous.”

Last Thought...

Chase the “wild goose” and life with Jesus will become a Spirit-lead adventure into finding and pursuing God's will and purpose for your life.

Closing Prayer

Hymn No. 295 - Breathe on Me, Breath of God

Benediction...

Postlude