

"DO NOT BE AFRAID – THIS IS THE PENTECOST"

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ACTS 2:1-13; PSL.67

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INTRODUCTION: (BIBLE IN BASIC ENGLISH)

ACTS 2:1-13:

1- *And when the day of Pentecost was come, they were all together in one place.*

2- *And suddenly there came from heaven a sound like the rushing of a violent wind, and all the house where they were was full of it.*

3- *And they saw tongues, like flames of fire, coming to rest on every one of them.*

4- *And they were all full of the Holy Spirit, and were talking in different languages, as the Spirit gave them power.*

5- *Now there were living at Jerusalem, Jews, God-fearing men, from every nation under heaven.*

6- *And when this sound came to their ears, they all came together, and were greatly surprised because every man was hearing the words of the disciples in his special language.*

7- *And they were full of wonder and said, Are not all these men Galilaeans?*

8- *And how is it that every one of us is hearing their words in the language which was ours from our birth?*

9- Men of Parthia, Media, and Elam, and those living in Mesopotamia, in Judaea and Cappadocia, in Pontus and Asia,
 10- In Phrygia and Pamphylia, in Egypt and the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and those who have come from Rome, Jews by birth and others who have become Jews,
 11- Men of Crete and Arabia, to all of us they are talking in our different languages, of the great works of God.
 12- And they were all surprised and in doubt saying to one another, What is the reason of this?
 13- But others, making sport of them, said, they are full of new wine.

- ? Pentecost: also called "Feast of Weeks"; "Feast of Harvest"; "Feast of the First Fruits"; it was a feast that happened fifty days after the Passover, which represented the deliverance of the Jewish people from Egypt.
- ? The deliverance was something that only God could do, and again only God, by his grace, could give the salvation to his people. Only God could do something so powerful to his people, now at the Pentecost Day God showed again his power and mercy.
- ? They celebrated the results of the deliverance, and now they celebrated again because of the harvest, meaning the great joy of celebrating the results, the fruits of being free, by God's grace and mercy.
- ? In other words, Pentecost was a feast of testimonies, one big celebration to tell everybody the mighty work of God, one celebration to tell how God had been so

merciful to them. After being captive for almost 400 years, now they were free and they could celebrate with the fruits of God's blessings in their lives.

- ? Trying to make a parallel with what we are called to remember in the Day of Pentecost, certainly we could recognize in our lives that everything started with our salvation, something that happened by God's grace through His Son Jesus Christ - Passover - Deliverance.
- ? And... We can recognize the celebration of Pentecost as our call to proclaim the good news of salvation to all humankind. To proclaim to all nations, tribes and peoples, to all families of the earth, the precious name of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior. Amen?
- ? But, we know that we can only make this job through the Holy Spirit. There is no other way to do our job and mission except by the power of the Holy Spirit, which was a promise from God.
- ? Acts 1:8, *"but you will have power, when the Holy Spirit has come on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and all Judaea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."*
- ? And now, at the Pentecost, the promised Holy Spirit invaded that place and changed the destiny of the entire humankind. The people there started to understand the gospel in their own languages, and a new language - a language of love, God's love, now was understandable to everyone: The language of salvation through Jesus Christ.

- ? But, one important thing to remind us is that: the power that they received was not to make them a powerful people, but a power to proclaim the good news of salvation.
- ? Now, the feast of the blessings of God had a new meaning, a new understanding. The freedom, the deliverance of God's people now was through Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit should do the harvest.
- ? In that day, we know that the miraculous Church of God had begun. The church, empowered by the Holy Spirit was commissioned to tell all the families of the earth, the good news of the deliverance, and the good news of salvation. The good news of God's grace and mercy.
- ? We already know that the real miracle that day was the miracle of understanding the Word of God in their languages. They did not need to speak the same Hebrew, or Greek to understand what God was speaking to them.
- ? "Do not be afraid - this is the Pentecost" which means: The miracle of God is not for everybody to be the same people, or to speak the same language - for example English or Portuguese, but the miracle of God is to be together, sharing our diversity, our differences, sharing our traditions and at the same time being capable, through the Holy Spirit of God, to understand our call to proclaim God's salvation through His Son Jesus Christ.
- ? At this point, you could think that I am in the wrong day to tell you again the history of the Pentecost, or

maybe these Brazilian folks have a different day to celebrate the Pentecost or maybe this Brazilian pastor is a little bit crazy; but let me tell you something more appropriate or clear: we are here, together, as a result of Pentecost.

- ? Now, let me share with you two short stories showing some very practical results of this miracle of not being afraid of mixing, as a practical result of Pentecost:
- ? One day, one man, challenged by the Holy Spirit, decided to share the Pentecost news in a foreign land, Brazil. Of course being in a different country represents that we are exposed to a new culture and probably we will be weaker or lose something, but... let me tell the story...
- ? Ashbel Green Simonton, a former student of Princeton Theological Seminary, 26 years old, married to Helen Murdock, after been ordained by the Presbyterian Church, arrived in the city of Rio de Janeiro - Brazil, August 12th, 1859.
- ? He began his ministry, teaching English as a strategy to be in touch with people. In addition, he began to learn Portuguese.
- ? In April of 1860, Simonton preached his first sermon in the Portuguese language.
- ? In 1862 he received his first two Christians believers, occasion in which he did the inauguration of the First Presbyterian Church in Brazil, Rio de Janeiro city.
- ? Four years later, in 1863, his wife Helen Murdock died.

- ? In 1864, he founded the first evangelical newspaper in Brazil called Imprensa Evangelica. Also, he established the First Presbytery of Brazil.
- ? In 1865, the first ordained minister converted to the Reformed faith was a Catholic priest called Jose Manoel da Conceicao (1822 - 1873), who helped him so much to implant a lot of churches in the state of Sao Paulo.
- ? During the year of 1867, he established the first Reformed Theological School in Brazil.
- ? When he was 34 years old, almost 8 years after he arrived in Brazil, the Reverend Ashbel Green Simonton died (1867), victim of a disease called yellow fever.
- ? This is a "resume" of a "normal" man, who was empowered by the Holy Spirit, and decided to tell the salvation story in a different context and changed the history of one nation - Brazil.
- ? In reality, we have no idea what could happen when we are not afraid to attend God's call of being together in a different context - This is the Pentecost.
- ? When Simonton preached in Sao Paulo city it had 20,000 people, and nowadays Sao Paulo has more than 20 million people. The Presbyterian Church gave the foundation of the Reformed faith in Brazil, and nowadays, Brazil is the number one country to send-out missionaries to the world. By the way; we are here today as a fruit of your (Presbyterian Church) mission work - as a result of the Pentecost.

- ? Some years later, during the World War II, the entire world was suffering a lot with all that tragedy. But, one family in special was suffering with the effects of the war as well as with its own tragedy.
- ? My grandmother, from my mom's side, in those days had four children, and she became infected with the terrible disease of leprosy. That time in Brazil, and for the entire world, that disease represented a "curse", nobody could be in touch with them, it was very dangerous, and she needed to be sent to a specialized hospital.
- ? In her family, nobody could or wanted to take care of her four children. Her husband needed to work to pay all the family and hospital bills, and probably the children should go to an orphanage.
- ? But God decided to intervene in that situation. Her neighbor, a Presbyterian woman, decided to take care of her four children. Naturally, my mother was one of those four children.
- ? And for almost four years she took care of her family. That Presbyterian woman fed, dressed, gave her love, care, and the most important every Sunday she brought the four children to the church.
- ? After four years without seeing her children, and after being healed, my grandmother came back to her home and saw her children happy, well treated, healthy, and my grandmother said to her neighbor: I want to know your God!

- ? My grandmother was impacted by the testimony of her neighbor, and changed completely the perspective of her life. A new hope and joy bear her new life and she started sharing that good news of Pentecost, as she traveled selling clothes, she preached the gospel, she helped to start new churches, and one of them was the church in which I was born - the Presbyterian Church of Itatinga - Sao Paulo state.
- ? That neighbor, empowered by the Holy Spirit, decided to get involved, she decided to mix with someone who was considered a "cursed one - a cursed family", but God changed their lives completely. Only eternity could tell us the fruits of her practice - a result of Pentecost.
- ? In conclusion, dear people of God...
- ? Being together, being exposed to the diversity is the best way to understand about us. And I believe that we are stronger when we know better about ourselves.
- ? Keeping our cultural identity and discovering the richest experience of learning about other cultures and decide to work together for the same purpose of the Kingdom and Glory of God - this is Pentecost.
- ? Do not be afraid of mixing, do not be afraid of new cultures, do not be afraid of being together, do not be afraid to get involved with people - "probably a cursed people", because being together you will be opening the door to see God's miracles. Being together, with all of our differences, is the door to the out-pouring of the Holy Spirit. Do not be afraid - this is the Pentecost.

? Psalms 67: (Portuguese)

- 1- Que Deus tenha misericórdia de nós e nos abençoe, e faça resplandecer o seu rosto sobre nós,
 - 2- para que sejam conhecidos na terra os teus caminhos, a tua salvação entre todas as nações.
 - 3- "Louvem-te os povos, ó Deus; louvem-te todos os povos."
 - 4- Exultem e cantem de alegria as nações, pois governas os povos com justiça e guias as nações na terra.
 - 5- "Louvem-te os povos, ó Deus; louvem-te todos os povos."
 - 6- Que a terra dê a sua colheita, e Deus, o nosso Deus, nos abençoe!
 - 7- Que Deus nos abençoe, e o tenham todos os confins da terra. AMEM!!!
- 1- May God gives us mercy and blessing, and let the light of his face be shining on us;
 - 2- So that men may see your way on the earth, and your salvation among all nations.
 - 3- Let the peoples give you praise, O God; let all the peoples give you praise.
 - 4- O let the nations be glad, and make song of joy; for you will be the judge of the peoples in righteousness, guiding the nations of the earth.
 - 5- Let the peoples give you praise, O God; let all the peoples give you praise.
 - 6- The earth has given her increase; and God, even our God, will give us his blessing.
 - 7- God will give us his blessing; so let all the ends of the earth be in fear of him. AMEM!!!