

Last week we left the disciples, gathered together in an upper room in Jerusalem... waiting...

While they waited, my guess is that they wondered

What were they waiting for? How would they know when it happened?

What were they supposed to do while they waited? How long would they wait?

While they waited, they did the practical thing of replacing Judas with Matthias

When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. Acts 2:1 NRSV

We generally associate Pentecost with what happened next

But Pentecost was a thing before Pentecost

Pentecost was the 50th day after Passover—when they left Egypt

And the angel of death passed-over doors marked with blood of a lamb

Pentecost is an agricultural festival celebrating the first fruits of the crop in thankfulness

50 days after the first Passover, they came to Mt Sinai where Moses received the law

This is the big deal about Pentecost

It is when God gave his redeemed people the way of life they are to follow

God made them a people

Pentecost was a pilgrim festival when those who were able, returned to Jerusalem

Local people and those whose families had immigrated to other countries

It was on this day of Pentecost that the Holy Spirit came in fullness to dwell among the people

When God comes to live among the people—but not just among the Israelites

God has come to dwell among all people, everywhere, all the time

Acts 2:1-18, 21

That day, as they waited—gathered together in community—the power of the Holy Spirit swept through

They don't have words to describe the power and energy they felt

It is like the wind and fire

The power of the Presence of God is overwhelming and all consuming

The power of God has come to earth to transform earth with the power of heaven

Heaven has spilled over into earth with the Spirit's Presence made evident and real

In the physical leaving of the one man Jesus who went into the heavenly God realm

It released the Spirit manifestation of God into the human realm

Spirit that is no longer limited by earthly limitations of time and space is fully on earth

Spirit is present to everyone

The power of the Spirit's Presence was evident to everyone around

As people were gathered from all over the known world, speaking many languages

Common language used was Greek—everyone had at least limited Greek

But they heard what was being said in their native tongue—without translation

No one was left out from hearing the message directly

Everyone saw and heard the evidence of the Spirit's Presence

Whether they understood or not

Like seeing the evidence of wind when you can't see the wind

It was so confusing that some thought the followers of Jesus were drunk

Peter stood with the other 11 disciples and addressed the crowd—saying it is the Spirit!

He quoted a passage from the Old Testament—Joel 2:28-32—this is now!

This is a time of new creation when God's Spirit is poured out on everyone

It is new and amazing

A couple of significant things

First, the inclusive nature of the Spirit's Presence

All flesh—sons, daughters, young men, old men, male slaves, female slaves

The Spirit will speak through any and all people, no one is left out!

The work of the Spirit isn't left to a few—the disciples/apostles, chosen leaders

Everyone has direct access to the Spirit—and in their own language

Everyone can hear directly and personally

In my language, yes—but also in ways that speak to my heart

It is uniquely personal

It doesn't come through the religious institutions of the day

It comes to those followers of Jesus gathered, waiting in prayer

It comes to those who are Listening and willing to follow

To me this is the hallmark of Quakerism—the essence

Gathered to Listen and Follow God

It isn't just a wild energy that comes over everyone, creating euphoria

But we are all given the work of prophecy... to know and see God's heart

Instead of studying about God or learning with your head

We are given direct communication from God

God will reveal God's Self directly to us

It will come direct, as well as through visions and dreams

We can know God's Leading

In that we will receive God's message for ourselves and the community

This marks the beginning of a new day on earth when the Spirit is loosed among us

And because of it everything changed!

The apostles go from confused and off balance to powerful leaders of the early church

Huge crowds gathered and recognized the work of God among them

This is the beginning of the church—the power of God is loosed among God's people

This is our day to remember

The Holy Spirit came that day and stayed...

Resulted in... **Anointed courage and boldness**

Empowered speech

Magnetic community

The Holy Spirit is still with us, just as in the 2nd chapter of Acts...

transforms us

changes us inside, but also gives us words to say

source of power

empowers us

always with us

makes up for our weaknesses