**Pentecost Sermon**

**Acts 2:1-21**

**Theme: Burned Out?**

The fire was burning bright. You could feel the heat on the cool evening. It was a pleasing sight. Hard to look away as the flames danced in the firepit. The last log was put on the fire. It was late in the evening. Soon it will be time for bed. The fire begins to fade. The flames no longer dance. Soon they are gone. Only embers with the red glow. By the time for bed the fire had almost burned out.

The next morning it is time to make breakfast. The firepit seems only to be ashes. What to do now? Need to get the fire going again. Throw some kindling on the ashes. Bend down close to the fire and blow. First there is a bit of smoke. Then a small flame. Within minutes, fire is ready! Fanned back into flame!

Burned out? Do you feel that way? – Setbacks, disappointments, economic struggles, the lockdown, fear, anxiety, especially today, can cause us to lose heart and wonder, “What’s the point?” We can lose heart because of all the clutter that surrounds us.  We hear so many conflicting views. We don’t know who or what to believe. There is someone who is enjoying all this. He is using it to his advantage. It is the Devil! Yes, he will use his schemes, tricks and temptations to get us to turn away, from the Fear, Love and Trust we need to have in God. He wants us burned out! Yes, he wants to snuff out our faith! “God is not here for you now”, he says! “Just look around, where is he?” Paul reminds us in his second letter to the Corinthians that; “We should not unaware of his schemes.”

So, when God seems distant and far away. When you find it hard to pray. When temptation comes. When you feel **Burned out.**  What can you do to get back on track? Our text for today can help us.  **Fan into flame the gift of God, which is in us.**

Let’s start by refreshing our memory.  What, exactly, happened on the day of Pentecost?  According to Luke, “…**they were all together in one place.**”

Earlier, Luke told us the disciples had gone back “into the upper room, where they were staying.”, and he named the eleven remaining disciples.  He also mentioned Jesus’ mother and other women there. All in all, there were a hundred and twenty believers gathered there.  It must have been a big room, and it was crowded.  You can imagine the feelings of the followers of Jesus. They had just seen Jesus taken up into heaven. He said something is coming. They were filled with urgency. Let’s get going. "Wait? Surely you don't want us to lose our momentum, Lord." "You heard me," said Jesus. "Go and wait."  
Why? Jesus said, "**So you can receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you and you will be my witnesses to the ends of the earth."**

Then Luke says, **Suddenly a sound like the rushing of a violent wind came from heaven, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. 3They saw divided tongues that were like fire resting on each one of them. 4They were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, since the Spirit was giving them the ability to speak fluently.**

**5Now there were godly Jewish men from every nation under heaven living in Jerusalem. 6When this sound was heard, a crowd came together and was confused, because each one heard them speaking in his own language. 7They were completely baffled and said to each other, “Look, are not all these men who are speaking Galileans? 8Then how is it that each of us hears them speaking in his own native language? 9Parthians, Medes, and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, and of Judea, Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, 10Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt, and the parts of Libya around Cyrene; visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes; 11Cretans and Arabs—we hear them declaring in our own languages the wonderful works of God.” 12They were all amazed and perplexed. They kept saying to one another, “What does this mean?” 13But others mocked them and said, “They are full of new wine.”**

A commentary written by Richard Donovan put it this way.

* Christians were in hiding!
* Waiting for God to act.
* Now the time has come!
* The heavens roar
* Fire burns!
* The Spirit of God fills!
* Disciples preach!
* Crowds wonder!”

Waiting for power — unseen, intangible divine power. Did they need it. Yes! — and do we? Yes!, because, we will burn out on our own. Yes! I have even seen it during this pandemic. I do not have a personal Facebook page. I never understood what people were talking about with number of likes or views on things. But when we started the Church Facebook page I was introduced to it. Likes and views. I was amazed at the number of views for the Services on line. Some having over 1,000 views. But as of late what have I noticed something. Fewer and fewer views. What is happening? **Burn out?** Perhaps. This is the Devil’s scheme. He whispers….. “It is not necessary. You can look at it later. No need to look at it now. You have better things to do.” And the flame gets weaker and weaker. There is a danger. It may go out!

So, we need the power. The Spirit’s power. Yes, because being burned out means a dead ember. No life. **As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. (Ephesians 2:1-2)**

The story is told of a man who dropped out of church. The pastor came to visit.  It was a cold and blustery day.  They sat in the living room by the fireplace and made small talk.  Then the pastor took the fire tongs, picked up a glowing ember and placed it to one side of the hearth. He then opened the Bible to a passage and set it near ember on the hearth.   The two men watched without saying a word. In no time, the ember began to cool.  A few minutes later, the pastor picked up the dead ember with his fingers. He then read the passage from 1 Timothy . **For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands. For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline.**

He pitched it back into fire.  Immediately, it sparked back to life.  Without a word, the pastor put on his coat and started to leave.  The man looked at him and said, “That was one of your best sermons.  I’ll see you in church this Sunday.”

The promise of the Holy Spirit is ours. He brings faith, and life. We can open our hearts to God, we don’t have to wait long. He is right here. Right now. In his word and the sacrament! And he is fanning the flames. I see it. Right now. Right here. The flames in your eyes!

Amen