

Acts 2: 1:11

**When the day of Pentecost had come,
they were all together in one place.**

**And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind,
and it filled the entire house where they were sitting.**

**Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them,
and a tongue rested on each of them.**

**All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit
and began to speak in other languages,
as the Spirit gave them ability.**

**Now there were devout Jews from every nation
under heaven living in Jerusalem.**

**And at this sound the crowd gathered and was bewildered,
because each one heard them speaking in the native language of each.**

Amazed and astonished, they asked:

“Are not all these who are speaking Galileans?

And how is it that we hear, each of us, in our own native language?

Parthians, Medes, Elamites

**and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia,
Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene,
and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes.**

**Cretans and Arabs in our own languages
we hear them speaking about God’s deeds of power.**

All were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another,

“What does this mean?”

But others sneered and said, “They are filled with new wine”

Meditation

Have you all heard about the Laurel/Yanni challenge?

I just found out about it on Thursday but it has been going viral for about a week before that.

here: listen for yourself: What word do you hear?

Could you please raise your hand: who heard Yanni... and who heard Laurel:

The story behind this recording is that a high school student was researching the word 'laurel' and went on the website "Vocabulary.com"

She listened to the definition instead of reading it and found that others did not hear what she heard...

**Then, as things go things go these days,
she posted the recording on her instagram page...
someone else picked up and posted it on Reddit...
and, as they say, the rest is history.**

Now, mayors, police departments and news stations, radio stations,

websites...everyone is weighing in!

Experts, audiologists, those involved in the tech industry are all offering explanations why some people hear Yanni and some hear Laurel:

Some say it is the way our ear canal is formed...

it depends where the sound is perceived inside our unique ear...

Others say it depends upon the device we are listening to: our computer or our phone, with headphones or without...and what kind of head phones we are using...

Still others say Yanni has higher pitched sounds: so if you are beginning to have hearing loss you are more likely to hear Laurel

As it turns out our perceptions: what we we hear, what we we see, what we notice and pay attention to is actually very dependent upon, the device that we are listening to, and/or the health of our eyes and our ears.

And on top of all that our perceptions are also very dependent upon who we are: our gender, our race, our nationality, our religion..

what economic and educational level we have,

what we do for a living, and on and on...

And this matters. It matters how we perceive and interpret life.

It matters because of the current state of our nation and our world.

It matters because so many of us are convinced that we know, we are absolutely certain we know what he said or she said...

we know what we saw...she saw...he saw...

and we are right!

Now, I know this is all getting very complicated....

So what are we to do?

Get frustrated, give up and it's every man/woman/child for herself? himself?

How are we to function in a world where each of us in our many varied colors and ways of being know and understand life so differently?

I would suggest that we return to Scripture to help us come to our answer...

Today is the day that the Church celebrates Pentecost as the coming of the Spirit.

Gathered together after Jesus' Ascension, as the story goes, the Holy Spirit descended upon the followers of Christ and empowered them to proclaim the Good news to the many Jewish pilgrims who have come to Jerusalem for the Feast of Weeks. The Feast of Weeks, by the way occurred 7 weeks...50 days... after the feast of the Unleavened Bread: the Passover.

So Jews have come from all over the world that had been known at the time. They were Parthians, Medes, Elamites and the rest of that very long, hard to pronounce list!

It's a very diverse group...men, women and children of different cultures and countries..

Upon hearing the followers of Christ, Some of these many varied pilgrims were amazed, astonished, yet perplexed at what they heard... others sneered and accused them of being drunk. But over indulging does not allow you to speak a foreign language. So what is going on here?

Let's start with this question:

Did Spirit really enable the followers of Christ to suddenly speak another language?

Well...God is quite powerful.

Miracles do happen...

It doesn't make intellectual sense to me...

but then...who am I to say that God didn't, or couldn't or wouldn't...

What I am more curious about,

other than trying to second guess God

is why some of those who heard the disciples preaching

were amazed, astonished yet perplexed...

and why some sneered and accused them of being drunk?

Why were some of those who were listening seem more open to what was happening

and why were some closed to anything that seemed impossible..?

ok...so let's go a little further back into Scripture...

Remember the miracle of the loaves and fishes?

Some folks believe the miracle was due to a rather unnatural

multiplication of bread and fish.

But others interpret that story to say that the real miracle was in the opening of the human

heart so that those with some food would share with those who had none....

I would like to suggest miracles are many things...but mostly miracles of the heart.

The real miracle of Pentecost is the Power of the Spirit to open the human heart.

All those different Jewish pilgrims who heard the followers of Christ preach that day

heard them preaching about the Power of the Love of God...

Some folks....like those who sneered and thought the others were drunk

refused to open their hearts to the Good news of God's unconditional Love...

I can imagine those who accused Christ's followers of being drunk
thinking something like this:

"Oh sure, love your enemies! Ha! They have to be drunk...that makes no sense!"

"Oh sure, feed the hungry! Ha! They have to be drunk...don't they know we don't have
enough food for ourselves???"

You get the picture...

Those who thought Christ followers were drunk and sneered at them,
were not able to hear the Good News because
their hearts and their minds were closed to
any thing other than what they already believed.
They knew what was possible, what was reasonable...
and rubbish to everything and everyone else...

God couldn't love them...God couldn't love me and that's how it is. Period.
When our hearts and minds are closed to the Mystery of God's Love,
we hear only drunkards babbling...
only liars scheming...
and only opportunists taking advantage of us...

Others, those who were amazed, rejoiced in the Good News
They were open to God's unconditional love and unboundaried compassion...
"Love my enemy? Perhaps I could try it...
it would certainly allow us to be better neighbors....
Feed the hungry...Perhaps I could try it...
at least I wouldn't hear her children crying all the time."

Those who rejoice in such amazing Good News,
both in ancient times, and even still today, are often perplexed:

God loves me??? with all my stuff?

God loves them???...with all their 'stuff'

Can I really love that large?

Can I really be that generous?

While we might be perplexed with God's graciousness....

we are always amazed with God's love!

When we are amazed with God's Love,

we find ourselves willing to be open to the Divine Mystery.

we find ourselves willing to hold lightly what we believe to be absolutely true.

we find ourselves willing to allow our hearts to be open to the Mystery of Love.

When we are amazed with God's Love,

we find ourselves willing to be humble enough to accept

the graciousness of eternal forgiveness.

When we are amazed with God's love we find compassion and generosity

and we see kindness and beauty ...

When we are amazed with God's love

we will have the power of Love that helps live as he has invited us to live...

and that will grow the kingdom of Heaven on Earth...

Oh yes, we human beings can and will often disagree with what we see and what hear.

Some of us will hear Yanni and others of us will hear Laurel...

But all of us have the opportunity to live this life,

our life with the power of the Spirit with Love, for Love...

And for that we should always remember to say, "Thank you!" amen.