

**Sons and Daughters**  
**May 23, 2010**  
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Sometimes it can feel like the days of the Apostles are really far away. They had everything didn't they? They got to walk with Jesus. They got to hear him in person and see miracles firsthand. They got to be thrilled by the event of the resurrection *when it actually occurred*.

And then there is *today*...it's a big day in the life of the church—the day when the church started. And today is a day when all the stops get pulled out. There is a fierce wind from heaven. Tongues of flame descend and danced on the foreheads of the Apostles. And then they were completely transformed. Because today is the day when the Holy Spirit was poured out on the Disciples and they finally got their act together and started acting like Jesus.

Somehow, all at once, everything fell into place and the Disciples began walking the walk of Jesus. Peter started to preach, they all bore witness, some of them healing others, some of them spreading the word in other ways. All of them acting as if they, too, were children of God, just like Jesus.

It is easy to sneer that this passage has something to do with new wine. It is easy to keep the days of the Apostles far away because they seem so different from our own sometimes. But what if we opened our selves up to another possibility? What if we invited the times of the Apostles into our times? What would that be like?

I am a big fan of Peter Mulvey, who plays all sorts of great music—bringing together folks and jazz and rock'n'roll into something new and different. He wrote one of my all time favorite songs, called *Wings of the Ragman*. In it, he paints a vision of something beyond our everyday reality, which is vivid and rich, and quite near at hand. Here's a bit of his poetry:

The street that you live on is brush strokes on canvas  
You'd see it if you turned around  
The sky fell last wednesday and broke into pieces  
And every shard made a sound

But it's nothing new, happens each day  
And everyone turns away...  
And it's all around you now  
It's all around you now  
It's all around you now

Still you don't see

I believe increasingly that God is *just like that*: a luminous and amazing presence which is all around us, if we will just open our eyes. And the Pentecost story is another reminder of that. Look around us *right now*. All the elements are here—we have fire and water—both ancient symbols of the presence of the Holy Spirit. We have a gathered community, made up of people from a variety of places. Some of us are transplants from other towns, or states, or churches, or snowbirds—all of us gathered here for sacred work like the pilgrims that gathered in Jerusalem on *that* day. And, I am pretty sure if I can say Spirit often enough that we can get a big wind going with those streamers, too! (Spirit, Spirit, Spirit!)

There's more: look around. There are sons and daughters here—every one of us is one of those, right? There are young and old here—we run the gamut from toddlers to Confirmants to fifty year members—all of us fit to dream dreams or see visions. And the Pentecost story reminds us that it is these types of folks—namely, “all flesh,” who will receive the Spirit, and that “everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.”<sup>1</sup>

Everything is in place. What is to keep us from inviting the Apostle's times into our own, and receiving the Holy Spirit among us in *this* day? I say nothing. In fact, I think that we repeat the story of Pentecost every year to remind us to do just that. We repeat this story to remind ourselves how to live into our role as Christians by opening ourselves up to the Holy Spirit that gathers among us. It is yet another encouragement to live into being children of God, just like Jesus.

May we each take inspiration from this story to open ourselves further to the possibility of being sons and daughters of God fully and truly.

Amen?

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<sup>1</sup> Acts 2:17, 21.

## **Acts 2:1-21**

When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. 2And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. 3Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. 4All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability.

5Now there were devout Jews from every nation under heaven living in Jerusalem. 6And at this sound the crowd gathered and was bewildered, because each one heard them speaking in the native language of each. 7Amazed and astonished, they asked, “Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? 8And how is it that we hear, each of us, in our own native language? 9Parthians, Medes, Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, 10Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, 11Cretans and Arabs—in our own languages we hear them speaking about God’s deeds of power.” 12All were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, “What does this mean?” 13But others sneered and said, “They are filled with new wine.”

14But Peter, standing with the eleven, raised his voice and addressed them, “Men of Judea and all who live in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and listen to what I say. 15Indeed, these are not drunk, as you suppose, for it is only nine o’clock in the morning. 16No, this is what was spoken through the prophet Joel: 17‘In the last days it will be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams. 18Even upon my slaves, both men and women, in those days I will pour out my Spirit; and they shall prophesy. 19And I will show portents in the heaven above and signs on the earth below, blood, and fire, and smoky mist. 20The sun shall be turned to darkness and the moon to blood, before the coming of the Lord’s great and glorious day. 21Then everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.’