

Sermon- May 20th 2018- Pentecost

It's Not About Us

Grace and Peace to you and from our Lord Jesus Christ. Pentecost Sunday. The Ascension of Jesus has taken place - Jesus is in heaven. The disciples remain and are gathered together. The text tells us that a Holy Spirit blows over them and fills them. A church is born, a new direction is established. Each disciple comes to the realization that it's not about them anymore. It's now about the ministry and the church. A church that shared money, goods, and a host of other things. Each disciple would no longer be the center of attention.

We understand this business about being the center of attention. About it being all about us. Especially as we enter what I like to call - the wedding season. I will officiate at a number of wedding celebrations and you no doubt will attend many.

In my 48 years of ministry I have officiated at hundreds of weddings and most of the time they are all the same. Stress in planning, and wanting it to be perfect. You know. Perfect announcement cards, perfect flowers, perfect dresses, perfect cake, perfect music, perfect ceremony, perfect preacher. Even the mother of the bride gets into the stress of the day.

A story:

The wedding day was fast approaching. Everything was ready, and nothing could dampen Jennifer's excitement, not even her parents' nasty divorce. Her mother, Carol, had found the perfect dress to wear and would be the best dressed mother of the bride ever! A week later, Jennifer was horrified to learn her new young stepmother had purchased the same dress. She asked Barbie, her stepmother, to exchange the dress, but Barbie refused. "Absolutely not! I'm going to wear this dress; I'll look like a million bucks in it!"

Jennifer told her mother, who graciously replied, "Never mind, dear, after all it's your special day, not hers." Two weeks later, another dress was finally found for Jennifer's mom. When they stopped for lunch, Jennifer asked her mother, "What are you going to do with the first dress? You don't have any place to wear it." Her Mom grinned and replied, "Of course, I do, dear! I'm wearing it to the rehearsal dinner!"

And so yes the wedding comes and goes. The bride and groom is the center of attention. Every thing that happens, it's all about them.

But after. Days after, life happens. Mann tracht and Gott lacht. Man plans and God laughs. Or as John Lennon wrote - Life is what's happening when you are making other plans. Life happens and it's not about them anymore. It's about paying bills, and mowing lawns and occasionally they even realize that's it about serving others. Family and friends in need. Using God's gifts to serve others.

So we return to the Gospel. Those disciples who were so proud. Look at me. I'm one of the 12 big guys. Jesus said, wait in Jerusalem. A Holy Spirit will come and guide you. Were they expecting a guy with a briefcase and a clipboard? Whatever they were expecting, they never expected this. A mighty wind blew and they began to speak in strange tongues, strange languages that they had never spoken before. All were gathered, Greeks, Jews, Romans, Norwegians, Swedes, Hispanics, Canadians and Wisconsinites. They realized that it was not about them but about God reaching all people. They began to get it. A church was born.

Which of course leads me to us. Here at Our Savior's. This Holy Spirit has a way of interrupting our plans. It's as if God is saying, "my plans are not your plans. Do it my way." But we always resist. More comfortable with the present rather than the future. The seven last words of the church are - "We've never done it that way before." But when the Spirit comes, what happens next is life changing. We come to realize that this church, this ministry, is not about us. It's about others.

It's about serving in soup kitchens and food banks. It's about going on mission trips to bring the love of Jesus to other people. It's about letting the people in our community know that they have a welcoming place here at this church. You know - tell someone about Our Savior's - even if that is out of our comfort zone. The Spirit will help us. It's about volunteering here at church. You know - Here I Am Lord.

Young men will see visions and older men will dream dreams.
Yes. It's not about us - it's about others. Can you feel the Spirit?
Because it comes all the time. Filling us. Enabling us.

Amen- Let it be so.