

To Hoist a Sail Acts 2:1-13 Sermon

Yes today is Pentecost the Birthday of the Church, so Happy Birthday Church. Pentecost is the day one which Almighty God sent His Holy Spirit to those gathered to fill them with faith, love and joy. That same Spirit is the filling the hearts of people even today.

On Pentecost, nearly 2,000 years ago, the Holy Spirit descended with the sound of mighty rushing wind. **Those 120 souls, gathered for prayer, were engulfed by a stupendous life-surge. There was neither time nor inclination to question or speculate.** All they could really do was respond to the miracle of God's inspiration. **That they did, by hoisting the sails of the soul, surrendering their lives to an overpowering influence and setting out to transform the world.**

The church was born at would be considered wake as they were mourning the loose of their leader, Jesus Christ. But in the midst of these mourning individuals the powerful wind of God stirred new beginnings. A miracle took place in that Upper Room. Something new breathed on their lives and they were never quite the same again. And that Spirit is alive and well right here in the 21st Century.

To hoist the spiritual sail means trust the guidance of God. The Holy Spirit gives the Church the power, meaning and purpose, as we the Church fan flame and wind of the power God. It is fitting, then, **that the traditional symbol of the church has been a ship, plowing through the seas of time, sails unfurled, driven by an Almighty force.**

The Spirit can be considered **"the truth of the invisible God in action."**

A Pastor was speaking on this very subject of the wind of God and the power behind it. And this was asked **"But how do I know the power is real?"** asks the skeptic. **"By what happens before your eyes" said the Pastor!"**

A little boy asked his grandfather, **"What is the wind?"**

"I don't know, my boy, but I can hoist a sail."

Evidence of the unprovable fact is at least for the seaman is the wind in the sails.

For the Christian it is life in the soul.

On that first Pentecost a divine inspiration, filled the people gathered, a mighty wind came and brought the greatest power the world had ever seen.

That force created the church.

That force creates new lives.

And that force nurtures the saints.

The same life-force which created man out of nothing

- the living church of a group of disorganized disciples

- effects fantastic changes in individuals.

No less divine than the miracle of birth is the miracle of rebirth, the new life in Christ.

It is the supreme work of the Holy Spirit to convince people - to convict them, to cleanse, to renew, and to make them over in the likeness of Christ. Pauls lists what he calls the **"Fruits of the Spirit," "... love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control ..."**

At times this whole discussion on the Holy Spirit sounds too mystical and unreal, and so we shy away from the supernatural. We raise our credibility guard against what we do not understand spiritually. But we don't with the physical.

"What is the wind, grandfather?" "I don't know, my lad, but I know how to hoist a sail."

Pentecost is not simply the anniversary of an ancient event. It was a vital experience touching individuals. **But the same quickening, kindling, glowing, nerving power is as present in 21st as it was in the first century church.**

Fair-weather friends have departed the church for their own solutions when they are offended or irritated by something or someone. They soon realize that all churches are made up of sinners inspired by the Holy Spirit. And where there are sinners, and all one has to do is look in the mirror. There will be sickness, sorrow and struggles.

Pentecost comes each year to remind us that a handful of people once utterly transformed a sick society and gave it new life. **What they did then, is equally as possible today. The church has not failed, nor has God.**

We are the church, individually and corporately. And God lets himself be known to us and through us.

To pray earnestly,
to serve despite the cost,
to worship as an act of faith,
to give as an expression of sacrificial love,
to serve through involvement,
to study the Word as discipline for the soul,
to let the mystery of the sacraments speak,
to know the genuine fellowship of honest relationship –

that is what it means to hoist a sail and leave the rest to the providence of almighty God.

"What is the wind, grandfather?" "I don't know, my boy. But I can hoist a sail."

Safe Sailings my friends. Amen