

A New Wine

Acts 2:12-13, Ephesians 5:18 & 1 Timothy 4:12

Pentecost Sunday & Graduate Recognition

June 4, 2016

Acts 2:12 – 13 *12 All were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, "What does this mean?" 13 But others sneered and said, "They are filled with new wine."*

Ephesians 5:18 *Do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery; but be filled with the Spirit*

1 Timothy 4:12 *Let no one despise your youth, but set the believers an example in speech and conduct, in love, in faith, in purity.*

This morning we have two special events that merge in an interesting way. Today we recognize our graduates. Our High School Graduates are: Jordan Atwater, Brock Horton, Jentry Pabers, Leigh Tyler, Jamie O'Brient and Brian Grady from Elon, and Cheryl Rowley Master's Degree from UNCG. Today is also Pentecost Sunday. This is a celebration of the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. It is found in Acts 2 and is considered by some as the founding of the church.

I want to begin this morning by saying congratulations to our graduates. You have completed your high school career. You are ready to move on to the next phase of your life.

1) Reflect - Reflect upon your life to this point. Some of us who are a little older than you, really like to look back on our high school years. Some like to relive those high school days as much as possible. Others of us are ready to forget them completely.

I hope that your years in high school were positive. I hope that it was a time for you to learn not only in getting your education, but to learn about yourself and grow more into the person that God has created you to be. It can be good to reflect on what you have accomplished.

2) Look ahead. – the next few years of your life are even more important. As you go off to college, you will gain an education, as well as some independence. You will make some significant relationships and you will be differentiating yourself from your parents. Differentiating is a one of those words I like. What I mean by that is that you will be discovering who you are separate from your parents. You will be making your decisions and some times your mistakes. It is also an important time for you to grow in your faith.

There are lots of temptations that you face as you move into greater independence. There is this idea that, now you can do what you want to do. Your parents are no longer

there to boss you around. You can sleep in on Sundays. You can stay out late any night of the week. You will be experiencing freedom.

I encourage you to remember the lessons that you have learned from your family and from your church. Remember how much God loves you and love God. St. Augustine once said, "Love God and do what you will." I encourage you to follow that advise. Love God and do what you will. Enjoy your freedom. Live life to the fullest, but the focus of that statement, "Love God & do what you will" is to love God. Love God with all your heart, soul & mind and then the things that you want to do, will be things that are pleasing to God, things that will bring meaning & purpose to your life.

1 Timothy 4:12 *Let no one despise your youth, but set the believers an example in speech and conduct, in love, in faith, in purity.*

Another important part of having the power to make the right choices & to live a life of meaning is to allow the Holy Spirit to live & work in your life. We cannot control the Holy Spirit, but we can be open to the Holy Spirit. As I mentioned earlier, today, is also Pentecost Sunday.

Pentecost was originally an agricultural festival. It later became also a celebration of the giving of the Law through Moses. It took place 50 days after Passover. It was at the Passover celebration that Jesus was crucified, so for us it is 50 days after Easter or 7 weeks after Easter. It was the next major events when the Jews would gather together. About 10 days before this, some of Jesus' followers had been with Jesus and he had told them that they would receive power from the Holy Spirit & they would be His witnesses. They were to wait in Jerusalem until the Holy Spirit came.

They were there in Jerusalem at Pentecost & they were praying for the Holy Spirit to come & empower them and then it happened.

Acts 2:1-13 *1 When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. 2 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. 3 Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. 4 All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability. 5 Now there were devout Jews from every nation under heaven living in Jerusalem. 6 And at this sound the crowd gathered and was bewildered, because each one heard them speaking in the native language of each. 7 Amazed and astonished, they asked, "Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? 8 And how is it that we hear, each of us, in our own native language? 9 Parthians, Medes, Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, 10 Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, 11 Cretans and Arabs—in our own languages we hear them speaking about God's deeds of power." 12 All were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, "What does this mean?" 13 But others sneered and said, "They are filled with new wine."*

The Holy Spirit came upon them in power. The Holy Spirit came as a rushing mighty wind. It filled the house. It looked like fire coming on to their tongues & then they started to preach. There were people there from all different regions. They could all understand Greek. That was the common language, but as the disciples spoke they could understand them in their native language. To hear something in their native language made it more personal. This was Good News that was for all people and it was personal.

There was a lot of confusion and some people mocked them saying they are filled with a new kind of wine.

Acts 2:14-15 *14 But 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. 15 Indeed, these are not drunk, as you suppose, for it is only nine o'clock in the morning*

It is an interesting response. We are not drunk. It is only 9:00 a.m. We know that people can be drunk at 9:00 am, but it is less likely.

Ephesians 5:18 *Do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery; but be filled with the Spirit* Debauchery is not a word I am really familiar with. It means extreme indulgence, leading astray morally.

I like the way Phillips Modern English translates this. *"Don't get your stimulus from wine (for there is always a danger of excessive drinking), but let the Spirit stimulate your soul."*

Those who mocked the disciples may have had something right. The Holy Spirit is to be a New Wine, a new stimulus, a form of power that controls us, but in a good way.

Acts 2:16-17 *16 No, 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.*

Peter gets to preaching. His text is from Joel & he tells about how the coming of the Holy Spirit had been prophesied about. The Holy Spirit was to come on all people – all believers. Men and women will prophesy or proclaim a word from God. It goes on that this is for slave & free.

Peter tells about how the Holy Spirit was to come, and then he goes on to tell about how Jesus had already come. How they had crucified Him and then God raised him from the dead.

The people asked what should they do? **Acts 2:38-41**. *38 Peter said to them, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 For the promise is for you, for your children, and for all who are far away, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to him." 40 And he testified with many other arguments and exhorted them, saying, "Save yourselves from this corrupt generation." 41 So those who welcomed his message were baptized, and that day about three thousand persons were added.*

Pentecost was a huge point for the early believers. I consider it to be the beginning of the church. The word ekklesia or church is used only 2 times in the Gospels and 23 times in the book of Acts, beginning at Pentecost. The Pentecost phenomena gave power to a community of believers who were destined to break through social, racial, and religious barriers with a message of light and life for all mankind. As the power of the Holy Spirit came upon this group of believers the church was founded.

Before Pentecost - the Holy Spirit would come to certain people for certain task or for a certain event. After Pentecost, the Spirit abides in the life of all Christians. John the Baptist had proclaimed that Jesus would baptize with the Holy Spirit & with fire - at Pentecost there came the baptism by fire.

The fire came. They drank some new wine – the power of the Holy Spirit came into their lives. To put this movement into perspective let's think about this. At that time there were about 4 million Jews in Palestine. Many had heard of Jesus, but few had committed themselves to Jesus. There were 120 who had gathered to pray. We could say that 120 were really committed to Jesus. 120 - 4 million. That means fewer than 1 in 30,000 were committed to Christians, but through that group and the power of the Holy Spirit the world was changed!!

So what is our message from Pentecost? The message I want you to hear today is that before Pentecost some really good things had happened. I think we would all agree to that. We have the Old Testament & how God had worked in people's lives. We have the Gospels and how Jesus was born, lived, died & was resurrected. This all happened before Pentecost, but the early believers believed that something even greater was about to happen. After Jesus' resurrection they were anticipating that something more was about to happen!! It seems like you couldn't top that. Why would they be anticipating something more? Well Jesus had promised it.

To the graduates I would say – congratulations, you have made a milestone in your life, but God has even more for you.

To the rest of you & to our church I want to say, I am so proud to be your pastor. I am so proud of how God is working in our lives and within our church. Yesterday I met with some of the VBS workers and I am so proud of the planning that is going into this year's VBS. We have 80 people who have agreed to work in VBS. Rachel Dossett has been

doing some serious recruiting. I am proud of how we do mission work. Marie Collins is now in Hawaii on a mission trip. Carol Rigsbee will soon be going. Things aren't coming together for a mission trip to Belize this summer, but I am really proud of the support that we have for the work in Belize and in Haiti. I am really proud of the how we have become a host congregation for the Interfaith Hospitality Network. I am glad that we are church that works to minister with and to people of all ages. I am excited about how you have voted to expand our music ministry to include a full time minister of music and worship and I am excited about how Brenda is leading us in the interim and how Joi has lead us in the past. I am so thankful for the group of people that spent hours after hours on the strategic planning & how we have already started some implementation of this even before it has been officially approved. I am proud of our children, our youth, our graduates, our keenagers. There is so much that we can say we have done, but **the good news that I truly believe is that there is even more that God has in store for us.**

It is not to be about us. It is to be all about God. Today is Pentecost Sunday and we need the power of the Holy Spirit in our lives and within our church. When I was in college I had a friend who said that one of the reasons there are so many different denominations is that God is so big that we have to focus on one part of God. Different denominations have different focuses. Similarly I was recently reading a book by Brain McLaren in which he describes "The Seven Jesus' I have Known." What he is describing is different emphasis on Jesus. We need as much of it as we can get and it is not enough to focus on Jesus, we are to focus also on the Father and the Holy Spirit. It can be difficult to understand the Trinity. We can look think of it this way. In the Old Testament the focus was the Father. In the Gospels, the focus was on Jesus. Ever since Pentecost, the presence of God in our world is the Holy Spirit. It is the Holy Spirit that lives within us and empowers us. We need to grasps as much of God as we can

We can't control the Holy Spirit, but we can open our self up to allow the Holy Spirit to control us. Pray. God I need you. I need your power in my life. Fill me. Empower me. Lead me. Pray a prayer like that on a regular basis & then follow the leadership of God. Great things will happen: in your life and greater things will also happen within our church.

Those early believers celebrated what had happened & anticipated even greater things were about to come. Then they were filled with some New Wine and God worked in their lives in mighty ways. Are you open to God filling you with New Wine & working in and through you to empower you, to lead you and to use you?