

The Holy Spirit: Our Heart Language

King of Glory Lutheran Church
Pentecost and ReNew VBS Sunday!

Acts 2:1-21

Pastor Ruth Ann Loughry

At Pentecost, God comes to God's people again by using the language they understand the best; their heart language. This time it is the person of the Holy Spirit instead of Jesus. (God gives them what they need to be in union with God through the gift of Language.)

A blessed Pentecost to you all! I'm inviting you to turn to a neighbor and share a sign of fire and wind by bumping fists and then wave your hands up! As you do it, say, "Holy Spirit Heart Language!"

Indeed we know the story about the day the wind blew through the house where the disciples were, but I want us to see it. Take a look!

(Bible TV miniseries clip – Pentecost

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R_4QoGZJBg)

Stephen said, "How can we speak in those other languages?" And Peter answered, "It's the Holy Spirit!"

They had prayed. They had waited for God's power to come to them, staying in Jerusalem, just as Jesus had asked them too. Now was the moment.

The video shows the disciples up in the room. But Acts tells us that peoples from many other nations heard their own languages being spoken, by Jesus' disciples who would have spoken Aramaic. The Holy Spirit gave Jesus' disciples ability to speak the heart language – the mother tongue – of 15 other languages. Mesopotamia and Cappadocia, and others as well!

Imagine that! Imagine being an outsider, not from Jerusalem, but in town as a visitor or for the Festival of Weeks, and all of a sudden, you can hear your own language being spoken, even though all around you, you are certain, no one knows your own language! Incredible!

Perhaps you've visited a foreign country and had this experience. For Amy Oden, visiting professor at St. Paul Seminary, "It happened on the subway

platform in Moscow.” She writes, “I’d been there for a week and I don’t speak Russian or understand it. For several days, my ears had been in a sea of gibberish, random sounds that I couldn’t understand. Then, in an instant of clarity, I heard English from the other end of the platform. It was like a beam of light, piercing through all other sounds, straight to my ear. American English, no less. My native language. It was a homing beacon, sharpening my senses to its signal. I felt every molecule in my body relax as I focused on the voice and understood the words. It felt like coming home.”

Did you notice how the disciples’ bodies relaxed as the Spirit blew all around them? They were brought into their hearts....speaking and understanding a language which was not native to them. It was their heart language.

Oh that Holy Spirit is a wise one, She is! This third person of the Trinity moves when and where it chooses. We cannot force the Spirit any more than we can create an ocean wave. Yet, God in God’s infinite wisdom, understands what we need and when we need to experience the Holy Spirit. That first Pentecost, now in Jesus’ absence God as the Spirit came in words!

In the Lutheran Church, centuries ago people from Norway, Sweden, Germany and Denmark arrived in this New World, America. They worshipped in their own native tongue because it felt comfortable. It was what they knew and understood. When everything around them was different, to say the Lord’s Prayer in Danish was to worship in a heart language.

Language is God’s gift. Language is how we explore our world. And when we speak we utilize God’s very breath within us. Say hot – feel the ‘H’ being produced by air and esophagus. Say ‘why’ and feel the same thing. Language is what we speak and write with, what we dream in and how we express ourselves. We are fascinated when children that are only a year and a half, can understand many words parents are saying, despite the fact their own spoken vocabulary is yet limited. God gives us this gift.

What languages did you grow up with that were or became your heart languages? Was it English or Spanish? Pr Carlos, you likely are the only one who speaks Portuguese! But possibly, a heart language was cuddling with your mom. So that now today, when you are held, it takes you back to a place deep within.

Is your heart language food? A particular kind of music? For younger generations, they speak in tweet, Instagram and emoji!

During vacation Bible school, we had one song the kids went wild over. The video showed kids jumping off bouncy mats. We clapped really fast, we sang, did the twist, and stomped our feet. They loved it! Yet a young girl came to me and said, "Pastor what does this song have to do with God??"

How is it that we could possibly have party, fun music with clapping and dancing within a church? The language of music and the language of God go together! Yet those two languages were not making sense to this young girl from Generation Z.

If Pentecost showed us anything, we see the boundaries that get burst open when the Holy Spirit shows up!

It is a language of renewal. Some of the disciples were weary of waiting for God's power to come upon them. Yet afterwards, they look energized. The Holy Spirit speaks renewal. When we come to worship and leave feeling energized the Spirit has been talking to our hearts. When we need comforting or are confused, as it says in Romans, "When we don't know what to pray, the Spirit intercedes for us on behalf of God." (Rom 8:28) The Spirit's language always talks to our hearts. God knows what we need. As we listen, as we pray, as we love, as we speak, the beloved Holy Spirit whispers and shouts.

Peter taking the words of the prophet, Joel, tells everyone gathered on Pentecost day that every, man, woman, and child will use new language to tell the glories of God. We all get to praise God with our voices and tell what God is doing in our midst. This is renewal language. When our hearts can speak to other's hearts, about God.

Tonight we have the holy opportunity to do just this very thing. On this Pentecost weekend, we believe the Holy Spirit is calling a new pastor into our midst to tell the glories of God. Pastor Deb will renew us with her own voice – together in the midst of ours – to speak God's heart language; a text of faith and grace.

The call committee, prayed diligently, we conversed, we challenged each other and we feel convinced that after interviewing multiple candidates, God desires Pastor Deb to be here at King of Glory.

How do we know that? How do you know when God is speaking to you? It feels, looks, and sounds like the English being spoken on that subway platform in Russia. It's a homing beacon that sharpens our senses and calls us back to our heart language once again.

Will you pray with me?

We praise and thank you God for the gift of language that the Holy Spirit speaks. Help us to listen and follow so that we might be renewed in your words of grace and faith. Bless our congregation as we meet Pastor Deb tonight. May your Pentecost power imbibe us and enliven us with joy in your presence! Amen.