

April 30, 2017

Sermon Series: Feast - The Path to Pentecost

Today's Message: The Feast of Peace

Introduction:

As a professional coach, I am learning to ask discovery questions,

Here is a question.

How is a crossword puzzle like an argument?

One word leads to another.

Today's passage falls on the heels of last week's passage as we walk through the bible's account of the day of Jesus resurrection. The story of the resurrection is a little like a crossword puzzle, one story leads to another and it will eventually lead us to the Day of Pentecost.

Steven Covey says, to begin with the end in mind.

Today's end of the sermon will be Acts 2:4. ⁴All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues

This path to Pentecost will lead us to Acts. 2:4 and my expectation is that all of us will be filled with the Holy Spirit and begin to speak in other tongues.

Last week, we looked at the day of Jesus resurrection, that he spent it walking along in a low to no drama way with Cleopas and a companion on the road to Emmaus.

That feast was the feast of God's presence.

Once the two recognized Jesus, Jesus then vanished and disappeared, and the two returned to Jerusalem, seven miles away. This passage takes us from there. What did Jesus do and where did Jesus go once he disappeared from the two. This is where we begin today.

The two had walked back to Jerusalem and when they were present this passage takes place.

Please stand and stretch physically and mentally to receive God's Word.

Luke 24:

36 While they were still talking about this, Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you."

37 They were startled and frightened, thinking they saw a ghost. 38 He said to them, "Why are you troubled, and why do doubts rise in your minds? 39 Look at my hands and my feet. It is I myself! Touch me and see; a ghost does not have flesh and bones, as you see I have."

40 When he had said this, he showed them his hands and feet. 41 And while they still did not believe it because of joy and amazement, he asked them, "Do you have anything here to eat?" 42 They gave him a piece of broiled fish, 43 and he took it and ate it in their presence.

44 He said to them, "This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms."

45 Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. 46 He told them, "This is what is written: The Messiah will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, 47 and repentance for the forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. 48 You are witnesses of these things. 49 I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high."

The Word of the Lord,
Thanks be to God.

Prayer

Lord, help unravel the mystery of being filled with the Holy Spirit and speaking in other tongues, so that everyone in this congregation can be open and willing to experience being clothed with the power of God.

In Jesus name.

Let us set a pattern of life, brought to us by the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ, that will keep us in God's Peace.

The resurrection of Jesus was not an act that Jesus initiated. It was an act that he participated in, but he did not initiate the act of his own resurrection.

This is a key to understanding how to remain in God's peace.

On Easter Sunday, this was a key understanding of Jesus' resurrection.

The angels first asked, *Why do you seek the living among the dead?* This startling question gets to the root of the matter immediately. Jesus is not to be thought of as dead: therefore he is not to be sought among the dead.

"he has risen! Is passive, and is better understood as 'has been raised' (*ēgerthē*), points to the truth that the Father raised him.

The key to God's peace is to understand and apply this.

The Father raised Jesus.

"he has risen" is best understood as "he has been raised".

Romans 10:9 emphasizes how important this is.

"God raised him from the dead"

Let God raise you up, and when God raises you up, you will truly be resurrected.

Our role in God raising us up is being in and remaining in the position and posture of prayer. Only in the sense of praying and praising God when times are difficult can it be said, that a child of God pulls itself up. If pulling yourself up means you are praying and believing, confessing proclaiming, trusting, then, yes,

But if you mean pull yourself up, by meaning to exercise the strength of your determination then no.

In one very real sense all of life is a life of prayer.

Many times of life, just showing up for prayer is the best you can do, and the only thing you can do.

One of the best things you can do in your relationship with God, others and life, is simply showing up.

Sometimes just showing up is the best you can do and be, and sometimes, that is all that is needed.

Other times, you are fresh, energized, exercised, invigorated, on fire in the Lord, and God's presence makes it clear what your next step is, and that is fabulous, and in the other times, just shows up for prayer, for praise for fellowship, etc.

With spring team, house level sports in high gear, the parents, the coaches and the kids who participate are learning many lessons of life.

One great lesson, on a girl's softball team, when Catherine was 13 or 14.

That year, there weren't as many kids who wanted to play, and one issue was having enough players to start the game without having to lose by default. On one such game, with one minute to go, we were about to have to default, and lose, when a player showed up. When she showed up, I yelled, Hallelujah. Something about my response being one of praise to God, the young lady years later now at 17 at an all night light the night walk for cancer research told me, that that day was so stressful, she was in the middle of an argument with her parents, there were issues at school, home, and life was looking pretty dim for this 13 year old girl. She was running late, and was wondering how her coach would respond to her being late. It was as if, my response would determine how she would process the rest of life. She was actually wondering if her life mattered to anybody. There was a strong hint of potential suicide going on. When she just showed up, and my response was a strong, yelling, praise to God that included her name. Hallelujah, so glad you are here.

It reminded her that just showing up, is sometimes the best a person can do, and the best a person can do, though it seems not much, is all that is needed.

Some of my best moments were these unplanned, impulsive responses.

Just showing up, is a huge part of receiving the feast of all a relationship with God offers.

Why? Because so much of life happens to us that are out of our control.

If you are young, it is your parent's interactions with one another. A young person has little control over parental arguments, and often they find themselves in the awkward position of a parental argument.

There is whole weather thing that is out of our control

There are huge multinational companies, and global governments working and doing things, that affect us, but are out of our control.

Thankfully, a Govt. shutdown didn't take place.

Literally, the list is long on things that happen to us, and we are merely

participants,

From my devotional this week, I was reminded of this.

In Greek grammar, these things are expressed in what we call the '*passive voice*'.

The things happening to people, in the bible, or in Jesus resurrection happened to him.

However, we also *make things happen*. When I initiate an action and do something, this is expressed in the '*active voice*'.

But Greek grammar also has a *third voice* – the '*middle voice*'. This is neither wholly active nor wholly passive. When I use the middle voice, I am participating in the results of an action (**I owe all these insights to Eugene Peterson's book, *The Contemplative Pastor***).

Prayer takes place in the middle voice. Prayer cannot be in the active voice because it is not an action I control. That would be a pagan concept of prayer: we make the gods do our bidding with incantations and rituals. Prayer is not in the passive voice either, in which I slump passively into the impersonal and fated will of gods and goddesses. Passive would be whatever happens you just say, I guess it was or is God's will.

In Christian prayer, I enter into an action begun by another – my creating and saving Lord. I then find myself participating in the results of his gracious action. I neither do it, nor have it done to me. I will to participate in what is willed.

In one sense, the whole of the Christian life is prayer. We welcome God's gracious hand in our lives, and we participate in what he is doing in the world. God involves you in his plans. Of course, he could do it all on his own, but he chooses to involve you. He gives you freedom, yet he remains in control.

God's plan is to involve you. God gives you freedom, yet God remains in control.

For God's peace to be what you feast on, consider making a willful choice to make the whole of your life a life of prayer.

Rachel sent me some of her readings this week.

I liked this -

"There he [Augustine] says, in short, that you should not begin to pray for all you want until you realize that in God you have all you need. That is, unless we know that God is the one thing we truly need, our petitions and supplications may become, simply, forms of worry and lust. We can use prayer as just another way to pursue many things that we want too much. Not only will God not hear such prayers (because we ask for things selfishly to spend on our lusts [James 4:2-3]), but the prayers will not reorient our perspective and give us any relief from the melancholy burden of self-absorption. "

To experience God's peace, we are joining with God in prayer - being on the same page with God in the understanding that He has everything and has already given us everything we need.

It is neither active, nor passive, but middle tense, where we join God's action, God's mission, God's prayer life. We literally join with God's prayer life, praying as he prays.

Welcome God's gracious hand into your life, and participate in what he is doing in the world. Jesus was raised by God the Father. God raised Jesus from the dead. Let God raise you up to prayer to experience His peace.

And, when a real miracle is needed, after you have joined with God in praying about it, you can passive tense wait in surrender to God's will, for God to raise it up and you up from the dead.

On Good Friday, I had an emotional/spiritual/natural moment in the Lord, where I acknowledged my sorrow of subjects of prayer that had not been fulfilled, yet. Many dreams, are yet unfulfilled, and it is disappointing, and discouraging to acknowledge those things. Metaphorically, I took that day, to plant my garden. In preparation, I had already, tilled the garden, a few days earlier, following years of preparation, filling the soil with composted material, pulling many rocks out, and every year I pull out more old railroad spikes. (Show the spikes) My garden, sits upon an old railroad debris field. Long before a seed is planted, there is a lot of preparing the ground for the seed. This process is discouraging, of how much stuff, natural like the rocks, and man made like the railroad spikes has accumulated into the little spot on the planet that my garden sits. So, when I say, I planted the garden on Good Friday, it was not a stand-alone event. There were years of soil preparing being done, just for the moment of planting the seed. So, when I say, metaphorically, I buried many of my dreams that day, it is not a stand-alone event. I did so, by faith, with the understanding from Romans 10:9.

God raised Jesus from the dead.

My role and active participating in a miracle is limited to heart preparation, and the willful act to completely give a situation, to the Lord, by letting it die.

It is not just forgotten, when given, and buried.

For the first few days after Good Friday, it was dry, and there was twice a day watering.

Now, after experiencing a time of weeping at the planting of the dreams, something is happening in the garden.

After crying, weeping, similarly to Jesus praying in the garden of Gethsemane, something is happening.

Just as God raised Jesus from the dead, those little seeds are being raised up to produce green beans, cucumbers, sugar snap peas, and 5 types of lettuce.

And, metaphorically, I also by fait believe that those dreams that were totally given over to God, with weeping and crying, are also being raised up. And it is great thing to trust God, that if some things are not raised up, He has something better planned, and I join him in letting some situations die, and join him in raising other situations up.

The feast of peace within a relationship with God is possible.

When Jesus disappeared from the two in Emmaus, and reappeared in Jerusalem, the first words he spoke was vital for them, and to us.

“Peace be with you.”

I am not a Greek Scholar, and I admit to barely master the English. And am thankful for grammar and spell checker in Microsoft Word.

And, of bible study resources, there are ample definitions and explanations of this greeting. At minimum it was a common greeting, of the day. Something to put them at ease. But, today, with a little liberty, I will include a thought that may be meant here, by Jesus.

The word be, in the passage is to

“have in full” and was commonly used on business receipts to mean “paid in full”.¹

Peace, have in full.

They as business owners would have understood this concept, especially if they had a start up loan that was lingering on their businesses they had walked away from to follow Jesus.

Peace, your business debt is paid in full.

¹ (2001). *Greek Dictionary* (electronic ed., p. 2). Escondido, CA: Ephesians Four Group.

Peace, your guilt debt is paid in full.

Peace, your health debt is paid in full.

Peace, whatever you lack has been paid in full.

It is a pretty happy day, when a mortgage is paid in full. Downstairs in the glass covered case is the mortgage on the building marked "paid m debt us cancelled".

What if a person, in relationship with God, could be constantly reminded that one's lack is paid in full, by the presence of Jesus who is constantly making intercession for us?

Our lack, our insufficiency is constantly being prayed over by the one who promised the first disciples and that promise remains.

Peace, your debts are paid in full.

Peace, be unto you.

Peace, be with you.

Peace, peace, God's peace is unto you.

Not the peace the world gives, but the peace of God.

The beginning of this section of the passage was peace be with you.

The end of the passage is equally important.

I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high.

Remember the discussion on active, passive and middle voice of the Greek language?

There were roles assigned to Jesus:

"49I am going to send you what my Father has promised"

There was a role assigned to the Father.

"What my Father has promised"

There was a role assigned to them.

stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high.

They were to stay in the city until they were clothed with power from on high.

Clothed in the NIV

It is **Endued** in the KJV,

It is **given** in others.

It is back to Greek again.

This is neither active nor passive, but the middle voice.

This is neither wholly active nor wholly passive. When I use the middle voice, I am participating in the results of an action

Prayer takes place in the middle voice. Prayer cannot be in the active voice because it is not an action I control

I repeat:

Prayer is not in the passive voice either, in which I slump passively into the impersonal and fated will of gods and goddesses. In Christian prayer, I enter into an action begun by another – my creating and saving Lord. I then find myself participating in the results of his gracious action. I neither do it, nor have it done to me. I will to participate in what is willed.

In one sense, the whole of the Christian life is prayer. We join with the ever-interceding Jesus, and we pray as he prays, we pray with him, and we join his prayer.

The whole of Christian life is prayer, prayer that is endowed, or prayer that given or prayer that is clothed with something.

The great news is we are endowed with something,

We are given something,

We are clothed with something.

What is that something?

Power from on High

Last Saturday on a shopping trip, a piece of very vital clothing was purchased for Brenda. An exercise jacket that also serves as a raincoat. The justification for the purchase was, "if you are going to be serious about exercise you have to exercise in rain or shine." Being clothed with the right exercise clothing is vital for being consistent in exercise.

So, Monday morning in the rain, she was able to go exercise, because she was clothed with exercise rain gear.

She was endowed with rain gear, appropriate rain gear.
She was given rain gear, bought and paid for.

In a relationship with God, through Christ Jesus we have access to something, much better than rain gear.

Power from on high.

To help understand the Greek, a resource is the Strong's concordance, The Greek is Dunamis:

Strength power, ability

- a. Inherent power, power residing in a thing by virtue of its nature, or which a person or thing exerts and puts forth
- b. power for performing miracles
- c. moral power and excellence of soul
- d. the power and influence which belong to riches and wealth
- e. power and resources arising from numbers
- f. power consisting in or resting upon armies, forces, hosts²

We get the English word, dynamite from this word.

Dunamis is translated *power* 77 times, *mighty work* 11 times, *strength* 7 times, *miracle* 7 times, *might* 4 times, *virtue* 3 times³

In Christ, we are clothed with something better than an expensive raincoat specifically designed for rain. We are given something much better than an outer shell that protects us from the nature's precipitation.

We are given, power from on high.

We are given, God's power.

This is the key to peace, the feast of peace.

Jesus peace is promised, and in his own words.

² (2001). *Greek Dictionary* (electronic ed., p. 2). Escondido, CA: Ephesians Four Group.

³ (2001). *Greek Dictionary* (electronic ed., p. 2). Escondido, CA: Ephesians Four Group.

John 16:33 (NIV)

"I have told you these things, so that in me you may have *peace*. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."

We will conclude today, with that passage in mind.

In this world you will have trouble.

If I was with my country friends, they may say,

"heard that!"

Our president is a unique leader, and one thing we must know that for the next four years there will be constant, unpredictable, trouble. How he handles this trouble will be open to much commentary.

North Korea is trouble.

China is trouble.

Russia is trouble.

And...America is in trouble. Not consensus on how to solve America's troubles, much less North Korea, or China, or Russia. Or Syria, or any country.

Then there is the trouble that is self-induced. The trouble we get ourselves into.

There is trouble in marriage.

There is trouble in singlehood.

There is trouble, trouble, trouble.

Let us say this verse together, out loud, from our heart.

"I have told you these things, so that in me you may have *peace*. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."

Take heart, I have overcome the world.

God raised Jesus from the dead, and on the day of his resurrection appeared to the two on the road to Emmaus. He then disappeared and reappears to the disciples in Jerusalem, and said,

I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high."

ON the day of Pentecost this passage was fulfilled.

Jesus has already sent the Holy Spirit.

We no longer have to wait, or tarry in the upper room.

We can be clothed with power from on high, today, right now.

This path to Pentecost is this:

Acts. 2:4 All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.

For a few years now, I have agreed with God, to pray 30 minutes in tongues every day. It is the purest way to pray with God. Just as I expect 100 percent involvement in a faith promise, I expect 100 percent of this congregation to be filled with the Holy Spirit and begin to speak in tongues.

And. FYI: This is one of those seeds I gave to the Lord on Good Friday. I pray it is raised up during this path to Pentecost.

When you show up to join with God in prayer, it will be like hearing a hallelujah from God, similarly to when I yelled ah hallelujah when the young lady showed up for a game.

I am asking for you to come forward, and be clothed with power from on high.

Brenda, please come, but worship team, let Brenda lead us, so you can also come to the altar and be clothed with power from on high.

This is the feast of peace.

Come, and feast, the feast of peace in Jesus name.