

Your Sons and Daughters Shall Prophesy

Acts 2:1-21

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The Rt. Rev. Dr. Bonnie A. Perry

Come Holy Spirit and Enkindle within us the fire of your burning spirit. Amen.
Good Morning!

You have to love a piece of scripture, a prominent, famous passage of scripture that contains a flat-out denial of day-drinking.

No, no, no---we were not into the champagne. This is not about the Bloody Mary's. This is not a Sunday brunch gone wild.

They heard them talking, each in their own language. They said to one another, "How can this be, this uneducated, less than refined, motley crew from Galilee, how is it that they are speaking our native languages? Exquisite accents, proper vocabulary, the language of our hearts and souls, and we understand them..."

"What's going on?"

And others said, "You know what—I'll tell you what's going on. They are drunk—filled with new wine."

And the apostle Peter replies, in his very first sermon, he has to begin by saying, "No. They are not drunk."

"Judeans, and everyone here living now in Jerusalem, these people, my colleagues, whom you hear speaking your own language, they are not drunk as you suspect; after all its only 9:00 in the morning."

I love it—his very first sermon and he has to begin, by saying, "No---this is not about alcohol."

Friends we've come a long way since that day. And we are perhaps, not necessarily these days known for our exuberance. But I wonder if we are at a place and time to begin to change all of that?

On that day that the Holy Spirit ripped through the upper room, blasted through the reserve of the people gathered and propelled them out into the streets, telling the story of Jesus, his love, his care, for each of us, even the most disagreeable of us, the most fragile of us, the most broken, the most shattered, his care for me, for you, for your children and for your grandchildren, for the little ones of our world who need us now more than ever to keep them safe, Jesus' love for us. His death. His showing up again, his resurrection, that makes no sense, but creates a place of hope, in our fractured world. Jesus' love, and death, and resurrection, and then his gift of a Holy Spirit, that ripped through that upper room and started something 2000 years ago that we tentatively hold onto today.

Today we are the ones, who are supposed to know and to throw the good news of God in Christ, throughout the world. That's on us.

Let's speak truth. The tectonic plates of our society, the roots of our democracy, the building blocks of our communities are decomposing all around us. We need help.

We need hope.
We need the Holy Spirit.

It is time friends for us to stop thinking that these passages of scripture are distant stories that tell us a tale, that has little to do with our actual lives. And instead engage with the bible, wrestle with these Holy words, and in the process be who and how God longs for us to be.

In Peter's first sermon, after he assures everyone that they are not drunk, he quotes the prophet Joel. Joel who lived in a time when his people were trying to throw off an oppressor, a time when much was uncertain in the world, a time when people were desperate for a new beginning.

And Joel relays what God says, *"I will pour out my Holy Spirit upon all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young people will see visions and your elders will dream dreams."*

So, I say to all of us who are over the age of 28, what are our young people saying? What truths are they speaking about our environment? How many species of animals will cease to exist before they have children of their own? How might the climate shift so that out-of-control flooding is common, but snow in lower Michigan is rare?

What visions do our young people have for a world where they can go to school without being afraid? We have the same level of mental health issues as other first world countries, yet the children of those countries do not go to school regularly wondering if there is a safe route out—to escape the spraying bullets from a gun legally purchased. Have we asked? Do our young people have a dream of feeling safe?

Today, in the community I am visiting we have a group of young people, a group of teen leaders, who have gathered here this morning to make a mature commitment to be followers of Jesus of Nazareth, Jesus Christ. I have heard a bit of what they long for. It is my deep desire that after today, all of us who say we will happily support these people in their life with Christ, will, in formal and informal settings to take the time to ask these young women and men, what it is that they long for—what changes do they want to see in our world? What fears might they have? What gives them joy and hope? And then it is my profound hope and deep prayer that you work with them to create ways for your community to assist them in making their dreams a reality. I believe that together our communities of faith have the ways and the means to create significant change in Southeast and South-Central Michigan.

And, I think it would be a sin of omission for us not to ask and to not to make those changes.

Then after listening to the young people we know, I invite all of us to start uncovering the hopes and dreams of the young people we do not know who are not in our churches, because, frankly, they find our worship, our rituals, our music and our sermons boring.

What are their dreams, visions, and longings?

And do their dreams, their visions for change, their longings for the holy overlap and intersect with our own hopes and fears? They have a longing for something more, we have the access to power, might we, together, create a faith that matters. Might we all risk being vulnerable with each other? Being real? Might we who are older commit resources and time to make a difference and might we who are younger risk speaking your truth. Friends, I am convinced if we dare to meet each other with the Holy Spirit we will indeed speak and be heard in each other's language. I am also convinced it is the only way forward that truly embodies the hope of Jesus.

Two thousand years ago, the Holy Spirit, came upon those early followers of Jesus upending their lives and altering their souls, 200 centuries later what are we doing to carry this on?

We. Need. Each other to hear prophesies and utter visions and then dare to use our gifts to make them real.

Are they drunk?

No they are filled with the Holy Spirit.

May it be now, as it was then.

Amen.