

Gaines Congregational United Church of Christ

June 5, 2022

First Reading; Acts 2: 1-21

Responsive Reading; Psalm 104: 24-34

Epistle Reading; Romans 8: 14-17

Gospel Reading; John 14: 8-14, 25-27

Sermon Title:

Let Us Be Glorified Together

By Rev. Jim Gardner

Summary; For as many as are led by the spirit, those are the sons and daughters of God.

If I were to ask you, what do you think is the most important event described in the Bible I am sure I would get many different answers. Some would say, the birth of Jesus. Others might say the triumphant entry into Jerusalem and others might say the crucifixion or the empty tomb but I doubt that many, if any, would name Pentecost as the most significant event in the Bible.

Christmas might be the birthday of Jesus but Pentecost is our birthday as sons and daughters of God. That is a pretty big deal.

All through the Bible God lays out His plan for humanity. He creates the world. He creates mankind. He sends prophets like Moses, Isaiah, Daniel, and Elijah and finally His son Jesus to show us how to live and why we should live that way. Jesus introduces us to God as a loving father and introduces us to how we should relate to God and to each other.

All of this time God has been using a select few to teach and spread His gospel of life as it should be lived.

In the farewell address of Jesus to His disciples in John 16, Jesus says, “Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you.” And in our gospel lesson today He says, “Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater works than these he will do, because I go to My Father.”

OK. This is getting pretty heavy so let me, excuse my phrasing, dumb it down a little so we can maybe get a little clearer picture of what is going on.

In the room next to the parlor in the Manor House is a table where residents can put puzzles together. Right now, we have two on the table. One is a completed picture of a gazebo in a

garden and the other is less than half done of a scene of jungle animals in their natural surroundings. In both cases the artist has presented a picture of how the scene should look, but it can only be comprehended if all the pieces are in the puzzle and in their proper places.

In the case of the completed picture of the gazebo scene this is no longer complete. There is a piece missing. I know this because I took it. It is not a very special piece. It is not a bird or a flower or the pinnacle of the gazebo. It is just a piece of the roof. No big deal in and of itself but without it in the puzzle there is a glaring hole in the entire scene.

God is the artist that foresaw a beautiful world picture made up of millions of pieces and each one of us is one of those pieces. If we will but open our hearts to the holy spirit, we can become part of God's plan for a beautiful and complete world.

The Bible says that we are not of the world but are only in the world. This is true but if we will let the Holy Spirit enter our lives the world can OF US. None of us is entitled to think that we are the most important piece or the most beautiful piece or even that we are a pivotal piece that clarifies the whole thing. No, we are just another piece, BUT we are a piece placed in that puzzle by the artist who just happens to be our Lord and Savior.

If we go on to read a little farther in our lesson from Acts, we would see that after that little speech of Peter, Three Thousand new pieces were added to this puzzle that we are all asked to be a part of.

Our Psalm reading tells us of just how unbelievable this picture that God has put forth is, and our gospel lesson shows just how we can fit into the total picture, “For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, “Abba, Father.” The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs-heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.”

Did you get that? We are pieces in the puzzle with Jesus, joint pieces. Joint pieces along with Jesus Himself. This sounds crazy but think about it. God let His son die for us, so God must think that we are worth it even if it seems impossible for us to comprehend.

So, it is settled. I am going to put this little paper product piece back in that gazebo picture and this carbon unit body of mine back into God’s picture of His vision of the world as He foresees it. I am not going to try to tell God where to put me or how I think the picture should look when finished. I am just going to

try to be the piece He wants me to be and I invite you to receive the Holy Spirit and humbly join me and the other millions of pieces and let God do what God does.

Let Us Be Glorified Together!

Blessed Pentecost and Hallelujah and Amen!