

### **Acts 2:1-13**

When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. 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. Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability.

Now there were devout Jews from every nation under heaven living in Jerusalem. And at this sound the crowd gathered and was bewildered, because each one heard them speaking in the native language of each. Amazed and astonished, they asked, 'Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? And how is it that we hear, each of us, in our own native language? Parthians, Medes, Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabs—in our own languages we hear them speaking about God's deeds of power.' All were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, 'What does this mean?' But others sneered and said, 'They are filled with new wine.'

### **“You Look Tired” Rev. Charles Schuster June 12, 2011**

In order to state some kind of theological wisdom, and to promote the fact that our pictorial directories have finally arrived, and you could get one, I suggested last week that most church directory pictures look worse than the people pictured. But it was my observation last week, and looking through our new lineup of photos, that the pictures of our congregation are really better-looking than the people pictured. And some have wondered about that, and have spoken to me specifically. "What did you mean? Do you think we're ugly? Do you think that we're not as good-looking as those people in Boulder? Surely you don't think that the people in Arvada are better-looking than we are. We've seen some of them." Some of them are here.

I have stood in front of you Sunday after Sunday, and I have watched the tension building. Your work, the grind has gotten you down, and so the pictures taken are reflective of what I'm seeing today. I mean, here we are, knee-deep in June, and the summer is slipping away, and most of you have been here every week, and I've been meaning to tell you that the lines across your face are beginning to meet into patterns that spell out map-like worry. If you have no plans, I suggest you make them. Get some time. Find a way. Go somewhere, get a life, you need a vacation. You look tired. You are aging before my eyes. I am concerned about you. You need to get away. Pack your bags. Get out your suitcase. Go somewhere, go now. Have a good time this summer. Forget the church while you're gone. Forget the church. Just forget the church. We'll be here when you come back. You need a vacation. I want you to go. Have a good time.

This morning, Pentecost Sunday, summer, holy spirit, summer vacation, you look tired. We think about time. Time to see who we are, to add things up. To take things away. To be alone. Time, the tick and the tock and the clock and the minute-to-minute. What time

is it? There are three kinds of time I want us to look at, because you'll find them, even if you leave, you'll find them. Three kinds of time. There is chaos time, there is chronos time, and there is kairos time. Chaos time - the disciples knew that. Three years of their lives, given over to a Messiah who talked about a wonderful future, a powerful love, the beauty of life, and the kingdom of God. Three years of their lives, gave up promising careers, and then the Messiah gave up. Let himself be arrested, lost it at the temple with the money changers, nailed to a cross, died on it, then he came back, then he left again.

The disciples knew chaos time. All of disciples know it. Summer is a time for chaos, as well. It's a time that awakens out complacency with the stark facts we never thought we'd find. It's when the map will show you the way, but you know the map was made when the interstates were dirt roads, and you really can't, following the map, get there from here. And it's a trip to Albuquerque that took a wrong turn at Raton, and how did the Pacific ocean come to be just outside Phoenix? And the GPS has been screaming at you for two days, turn around, turn around, but you thought it was kidding. And then you stop at a motel. In the middle of the night you get up to get a drink of water, and you drink the water out of the little plastic cup that they provide, only to realize that is where you put your contact lens. And there is a cop behind the Lone Star beer sign in Texas, and you make an unexpected trip and meet the judge in the middle of the day, and that was not on your itinerary. It's a motel that seems a little like the Bates Motel, and where's Anthony Perkins? And you get psyched in the shower, and wasn't there an article recently in the local paper about bedbugs? Chaos time.

The last church I was in, they had the idea of, during Lent, purchasing butterflies for the children. They sent away for the kits. All the children had these butterfly kits, all of them there, you know, the worms, the larva, the cocoons, and then the butterflies flopping around. They named them. And then I think it was Easter, maybe a little after, whenever they all were free, and the butterflies flying around, and we took them outside, all of us, and freed the butterflies. It was a beautiful thing, except for the fact that these big blackbirds came down and got every one of them, and ate them. And there was all this conversation about birds and bugs, and the sequence. It was chaos.

I wish for you a sense of sequence, to know that things follow in order when perhaps you think they don't. Someone asked Jack Nicklaus what was the secret of his golf game. He just seemed so natural, so much at home on the course. "Jack, how do you do it?" someone interviewed him. He looked at the person and said, "Well, it's easy. The holes are numbered." Life as a sequence. I wish for you a way to lift yourself above the chaos so you can stand tall when things are coming apart. Or when there's a hailstorm like, wow, this week. I wish for you religion that is empowerment in the midst of the imprisonment, because religion is not imprisonment, it's empowerment.

Like Father Jenco found out, the hostage in Lebanon. He said, and he said it in Fort Collins, by the way, "Every night our captors would ask us if there was something they could do for us, and we would tell them. Even our simplest requests, they would deny. They rarely filled anything for us. So we devised always to respond with one answer. In unison, we would say, when they asked us, "Is there anything we can get for you?" And

we would say, in unison, "A taxi." "The night I night I was released," he said, "the man who had beaten me, spat upon me, tormented me for months, handed me some money and said softly, "Here is your fare for the taxi. Go home." Father Jenco said, "That man's offer told me even in hell, bridges can be built and adversaries can learn to respect each other.

Gerald Coffee, three months captive in Vietnam, in a rat-infested shower stall, littered with rotten bandages and garbage. "Here I was, in this dismal stinking hole, body breaking, totally uncertain about my future, pressure to do this or that, hostility my daily fare, men dying in adjacent cells, my whole crew possibly dead. Finally I was able to raise myself above just to look out the window, and there, at eye level, on a wall in front of me, scratched indelibly by some other American who had been there before me, were the words, "Smile, you're on candid camera." I could not not smile. I laughed out loud, enjoying not only the pure humor and the incongruity of the situation, but appreciating the beautiful guy who had mustered the moxie to rise above his own dejection and frustration and pain and guilt, to scribe these words of encouragement." In the chaos, a sequence, and in the sequence, there's a source. To see every detour as an opportunity to explore. To understand every setback as a chance to test the character to win. To see every disappointment as a Kodak moment that will be remembered when the snow's flying in November. To enjoy the things that you plan, but also the intrusion that came unplanned.

There's this idea in theology that God is in the flow, that all things lead back and all things go forth to the source, from the source, the source within. I wish for you in the chaos time a sense of sequence, and a sense of the source, knowing that this too will pass. This too will pass, the chaos time. The summer. You need a vacation. You're looking tired. You need some chronos time. You need some time when there are minutes to think about just minutes. Hugh Prather said, "Another word for quiet is now." And Charles Schultz in his logic of Charlie Brown, when Linus said, "I guess it's wrong always to be worrying about tomorrow. Maybe we should think only about today." And Charlie said, "No, that's giving up. I'm still hoping yesterday can get better."

Chronos time is a time of quiet when nothing is happening, or so it seems. It's a time to take out the trash and listen to the birds and wonder what happened to all the years. It's a time for adding up things when things don't add up, and thinking maybe it's time for a new sheet and some new numbers. It's knowing that what was started may be over, but it's time to start something else. Is there a consequence to the chronos? Does out time spent justify the result?

At Pentecost, disciples knew chronos time. They knew it before Pentecost. Fifty days after Passover, 49 days after the crucifixion, 49 days after they fled from the cross. What were they doing in that time, in that chronos time? They went back to Galilee. They marked time. They went back home and thought about things. It was chronos time. The minutes added up. They were doing nothing, or were they? Laura Hillenbrand wrote this book *Seabiscuit*, you know, we did a book review of that several years ago. She's written another book. It's called *Unbroken*. It's about Louie Zamperini, who was a troubled

young person but a gifted athlete, a bomber pilot, and a war hero. An ocean-crash survivor, and in that book he writes about his chronos time. Early in his life, before his life expanded, he thought, "In the back bedroom, I could hear the trains passing, lying beside my sleeping brother, I'd listen for the broad low sound, faint then rising, faint again, then high, the beckoning whistle, then gone. The sound of it brought goosebumps. I imagined myself on that train, rolling into country I couldn't see, moving toward country I did not know, growing smaller and even more distant until I disappeared." Chronos time is passing time, but not wasting time. Chronos time is making time while you're marking time. It's a pause that prepares. It's a moment to step back, so that the momentum will carry you forward. And where does it lead?

Martin Luther, the great German Lutheran reformer, he was right when he said, "This life is not righteous but it's a growth in righteousness. It is not healthy, but it is healing. It is not being, it's becoming. It is not rest, but it's exercise. We are not yet what we shall be, but we are moving toward it. The process is not yet finished, but it's going on. This is not the end, but this is the road. All does not gleam of glory, but all is being purified." This moment is the platform for greatness of what will happen next. The present is prelude, and when nothing is happening, that is preparation for the consequence which may be the most important thing ever to happen.

Steve Goodier tells about an employer who asked his boss for a raise, and the boss said, "I'm already planning to give you a raise," and the employee said, "When will it become effective?" And the boss said, "Whenever you are." We become effective when we realize that chronos is not an idle time, but a time of quiet preparation, and where does it lead? We become effective when we see that chronos time is not standing pat, but looking to the next step, and where it will take us. Where does it lead? We become effective when we realize that there is no wasted moment unless, tragically, we choose somehow to waste it. And time is all we have. And time is brief, but precious. This summer, I hope you have some chronos time to see the consequences of your life, the consequence of what we do and refrain from doing, of what we say and what we hold back. It's more than we imagine. In the quiet moments of the summertime, may we all discover the consequence of our lives, and how much difference we make as we prepare to become effective.

You look tired. Is it the chaos that's got you down, or the chronos that's not moving but drifting? May you see the source behind the chaos, and may you see the consequence that lives in the chronos, to see where it comes from and to see where it leads. And may there be some God time, some sacred time, some time like Pentecost, a Pentecost moment or two, as the disciples gathered the sound came from heaven like the rush of a mighty wind, tongues of fire, filled with the holy spirit, speaking in tongues. The spirit, the kairos time. God's time. Kairos is a Greek word, it means holy, God present.

Did you hear the story of the man who went to his barber for a haircut prior to his vacation? Telling his barber, "I'm going to England, then I'm going to Paris, and then we're going to Rome." And the barber said, "Don't go to Paris. The people are rude. And as for London, forget it. It's dirty and it's noisy. And as for Rome, I mean, the food is

terrible. And whatever you do, skip the Vatican. The lines are too long. You'd be wasting your time." When he got back from his vacation, he went to the barber shop and told the barber about his trip. He said, "London was great, Paris was beautiful, people were friendly. Rome was the highlight, however. Got to the Vatican, had an audience with the Pope. Had me kneel, put his hand on my head, gave me a blessing, leaned forward. In perfect English, he said, 'You are a very handsome man, but I have to tell you, that is the worst haircut I have ever seen in my life.'"

We, like the barber, are inclined to see what is bad and miss what is good, to dwell on what is lesser and overlook what is greater. Holy moments call us to attention. Duane Brown described a kairos moment. It occurred at a banquet in a school in New York City. Children who attended that school had learning disabilities, and a father, one of the parents of one of the kids, was speaking at this banquet to the parents and children. This is what he said. "If they say that God is perfect, where is perfection for my son Shea? My child cannot understand like other kids. My child cannot remember facts and figures like other children. Where is God's perfection here? One day my son and I were walking through the park, and we saw a group of boys playing baseball, and Shea wanted so much to join them. And so they let him come over, they took him over and he sat on the bench. And then in the ninth inning, and the score was tied, to everyone's surprise, the captain of Shea's team allowed him to bat. The pitcher on the other team, seeing his nervousness, stepped forward a few feet and pitched the ball softly, and he swung and missed it. One of Shea's team members stepped behind him and placed his hands over Shea's, and together they hit the ball, and it rolled to the feet of the pitcher. But the pitcher seemed not to notice. "Run to first, Shea, run to first!" they screamed. And he ran with all of his might to first base and the pitcher finally picked up the ball and threw it over the head of the first baseman. "Run to second, Shea, run to second." By this time, he had reached first base. The right fielder had the ball, could have easily thrown the ball to second, could have tagged him out. But the right fielder understood, and he threw the ball high, over the head of the second baseman. Now the whole team is screaming, "Run to third, Shea. Run to third." Now everybody on the field is shouting, "Run home, Shea, run home." And when he made it to home plate, both teams came out, picked him up and carried him around the field like he was a hero." And the father paused. And he looked at his audience, tears, rolling down his face. "That day," he said, "those eighteen boys reached the level of God's perfection." It was kairos time. It was a sacred moment.

Mystics understand the time like this. Abraham Heschel said the days of our lives are representative of eternity. We must live as if the fate of all the world is totally dependent on a single moment that we're in. May you have some kairos time on a Sunday afternoon. During Memorial weekend, a family in our church came into the Columbarium area where a loved one's ashes had been placed into the wall, and they brought their Starbucks coffee and food and they had some time in their sadness and in their grief, they had some time to be thankful. They had some time to be thankful. In a hospital room not far from here this past week a church member, surrounded by family, bypass surgery, wonderful medical care, he looked at me and he said, "Would you pray? Would you pray a prayer of gratitude?" And I closed my eyes and I prayed, and when I opened my eyes again, his eyes were still closed, but there were tears baptizing his face in gratitude. It was a kairos

moment. James Jones in his book, *In the Middle of This Road We Call Life*, writes, "Perhaps one day, when staring into the face of his or her own newborn child, or when engulfed by the fierce beauty of the raging ocean or the soaring stillness of the mountains, or when confronted by the grave into which parents or friends have been placed, or wrestling with the recalcitrant fears and anxieties that leap unbidden from the cavern of the mind, a young man or young woman will discover that he or she has, in the words of William James, prematurely closed the accounts on reality. That there is more to reality than can be dreamt of in any philosophy. And that grown adult may again speak of God, but not as the king in a palace beyond the clouds, or the great policeman in the sky, but as a way of connecting with the sacred mystery that surrounds us." Kairos time, God's time, sacred time, Pentecost. I'm hoping you have a good time this summer, and when there is chaos, look for the sequence and to the source behind it. And when there is chronos, drifting time, seek out the consequence and the sense of order and where it leads. And let there be kairos time, God's time, Pentecost, sacred moments. And just forget the church when you're away from here. But please don't forget, I mean remember, this is a place where we are all reminded to have a good time this summer, and we'll be here when you return.