**The Book of Acts: Promises, God of the Nations, Acts 2:5-13**

* Where have you vacationed that you would *love* to go again?
* Many professions tend to have their own language (doctors, mechanics, IT) that have their own words and terminology. This is called “jargon”. When workers are so used to using their jargon, it can be hard for them to remember that others may not understand them. Is it more frustrating to listen to someone explain something to you with terms you don’t understand or to try to explain something to someone when they don’t know the terms you are using? And why?

Not understanding someone’s jargon can be frustrating. However, there are some who have perfected the skill of explaining something complex in a simple manner. These professionals have learned how to explain the same concept in a variety of different ways so that they can more clearly communicate with the listener.

God does the same thing with humanity, and He wants us to learn that skill as well. He speaks “people” by messages through the gospel that sharing hope, life and love through many different means. The scripture we look at today provides us a glimpse of what God’s language looked like for the early church. We are left with the challenge of what that may mean for us as individuals and as a church to speak the gospel into the lives of our community and world.

* What frustrates you when someone is trying to explain something complex to you?
* What are some words and terms that count as “Christian Jargon” that may be difficult for non-church-goers to understand?
* Which skills are essential to communicate difficult information? (i.e. patience, compassion)

**Teaching:**

This year, the key word for our church is “Promises.” The first chapter of Acts points to promises given to those who were followers of Jesus. These followers were told by Jesus to pray and wait for the Holy Spirit. Chapter 2 begins with the followers receiving the Holy Spirit and speaking in “other tongues as the spirit enabled them”. This can be seen beginning with verse 5:

**Acts 2:5-11 “**5Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven. 6When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard their own language being spoken. 7Utterly amazed, they asked: 'Aren't all these who are speaking Galileans? 8Then how is it that each of us hears them in our native language? 9Parthians, Medes and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, 10Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome 11(both Jews and converts to Judaism); Cretans and Arabs-we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues!’”

Verse 5 provides the context of who Jesus’ followers were speaking with. These are God fearing Jews: pious, religious, faithful people celebrating the festival of weeks (Pentecost). This festival was a celebration of when God gave the 10 commandments to Moses – a celebration of God speaking to His people.

* If you saw something like this take place at an international hub (like an airport), how would you respond? What do you think the response of others might be?

There are times when believers in Christ are faced with a situation where someone is declaring “truths” about God. It is essential that we spend enough time with God that we can discern His voice.

Let’s finish the next two verses:

**Acts 2:12-13 “** 12Amazed and perplexed, they asked one another, "What does this mean?" 13Some, however, made fun of them and said, ‘They have had too much wine.’”

As we look at verses 5-13, we can glean out three responses that the Jews had:

1. **Ridicule** - (verse 13), The description of Jesus’ followers speaking in the languages of many people was disregarded as being drunk. Though the wonders of God were shared, there was an inability on the part of these people to see one of God’s great miracles. They stood in the presence of God, yet they didn’t see God’s promise being fulfilled.
2. **Amazement** – (verse 7), Some stood in awe and wonder. This is the mark of the ministry of Christ, and the mark of the church. If amazement and wonder at the work of God isn’t present, the question must be asked if the individual/group is truly following God.
3. **Confusion** -(verse 12), A third group seemed to be perplexed by this event. They responded with the desire to determine the reason behind this incident of Galileans speaking in the birth tongue of so many nations. Galileans were not known for their culture of education. God was demonstrating the pairing of opposites to emphasize His wonder. Our application is that we must be mindful of the unexpected. When we hear and see others speak of Christ, we must be mindful of how we treat them. God may be using other people in ways that we could never understand. We must choose to accept how God chooses to work His miracles and follow Him as He calls us to do.

We can read scripture and see this event through the eyes of a believer. Yet these Jews from all over the world were gathered and hearing the wonders of God in the language from the country they were born in. Truly, this was a revolution of intimacy. God speaks “people”, revealing His plans and purposes to the human heart. There is no language barrier that stands in the way of us and God.

**Application**: We run the risk of becoming numb to the people around us. Our God is a God of the nations. He loves all people everywhere. God speaks “people” fluidly and wants us to do the same. It is the gift of love that He breathes into our lives that propels us to go and proclaim the wonders of God, without the fears of our language (and jargon) not being understood.

* Where is the Holy Spirit talking to us about our lives?
* Palm Sunday, Good Friday and Easter are almost here. How can you allow conversations about egg hunts and candy to not overshadow the true focus for celebrating?
* How can we pray for you this week to share that hope?
* Who has God placed in your vicinity that needs His hope? Knowing what you know now, what might you do this week that you had not considered before?

**Pray***: Mighty Father, your love for us is so great that you are willing to do whatever was needed for us to hear your voice and live in your truth. Equip us to respond in awe of you. May we not miss the works of God. May we have eyes that see and trust you. Help us to love others just as you do, that we willingly tell of the wonders of God.*