

You Are Holy!
Acts 2:1-21

Grace and Peace to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. May the words of my mouth and the ears of our hearts be open to the word of God this day. AMEN.

Today's sermon is a look back, a flash back to what could have been, maybe was, or how it could've happened, all brought to you live from the streets of Jerusalem during a high holy day in the marketplace.

Care for some nice doves, I only a few pairs of doves left. How about a lamb? Pure unblemished lambs here for sale. Just a few remaining, get them while they still last. Got a special on goats, 2 for 1. Buy one I'll throw in a second for free. Aren't you interested in buying anything or you just a lookie lue?

I have been at this job for years, sales were never so bad as this year. During these high festival days in Jerusalem money is generally flooding the streets, people are shopping and want as many animals as I can supply. But not this year, sales are awful. Do you remember last year at Passover and Pentecost, the streets were filled with crowds and travelers. Devoted pilgrims they travel here from all over, from the East and West, North and South. They come here to be a part of the festivities, to worship at the great temple and to offer sacrifices. They come for the remembrance of Passover, when God saved the Hebrews from slavery and from death, when God ordered them to slaughter the sacrificial lamb and by its blood death was abated.

You remember that story don't you it was just re-told 50 days ago, when we all feasted on the Passover meal and remembered and gave thanks for our freedom. Then generally, most years, people stay in the city until Pentecost, the day we celebrate the coming of the laws of Moses. Fifty days after Passover we hear Moses' words recording for us the coming down of the blessing of God in the great laws of stone, the gift of the ten commandments to Moses and through Moses to all of us. Good laws to teach us how to live in God's way, to abide by God's commands and appease our Lord. We celebrate that this very day, and yet this year my sales are way down. I have sheep left, doves, goats, sacrificial animals all left that were supposed to be sold by now so that people can worship and celebrate rightly.

Last year I even had to go home to Bethany a few times just to get more of my animals to offer for sale. Traveling religious pilgrims are usually so desiring to buy an animal for sacrifice the price doesn't even matter. They have gold and silver, jewels and trinkets filling their wallets while the travel, but once they get here they need what I got, the ritual animals needed for sacrifice. They come to me to buy the animal of their choice to appease God and atone for their sins and seek God's favor.

But like I said this year has been different. There has just been that stir in the air, things just don't seem right. Ever since that Jesus fellow first showed up here in Jerusalem. It was a week before the Passover. And here he comes riding a donkey into town, with crowds of people all stirred up and

cheering him Hosanna, like he is the Son of David, returned to reign. That whole week was rough, he stirred up the crowds, drove us out of the temple area, challenged the priests so much that they had him arrested. They tried to do away with him by killing him, though a false trial. But that even stirred up his followers more.

After he was dead and buried, his disciples began going around town telling people that they had seen him alive. Dead is dead, you can't come back. But yet people were all talking about it. For the last few weeks, you would hear everyone in the market talking about it. Jesus was at the seashore. Jesus talked with his followers. Jesus was seen by your neighbor. Jesus was seen by sister's, friend's, 2nd cousin. Five hundred people even supposedly had seen Jesus all at one time. Then just last week around ten days ago, his followers left the city following behind Jesus and listening to his words. This was the man that had been killed. This was the man who had been buried. The Romans had thought they did away with him. The priests thought they had done away with him. And yet there he supposedly was leading his followers once again outside of the city and preaching to them. Then word was, that as he spoke to them he rose up into the sky beyond the clouds out of sight promising to come back in the same way. His followers then went about telling these stories.

That's why sales are tough this year, because everyone is more interested in all these goings on rather than offering another sacrifice at the temple. People were whispering about the thought that he might be the messiah. The priests and the entire temple was enraged, people weren't coming and going, meeting and talking, challenging and questioning, but they are not buying the goats and doves like they normally do in this season of Pentecost.

And it got even weirder this morning. All the hub-bub really came to a boil this morning, just down the street here. I have never seen anything like it, I tell you. It was amazing even if it was ruins my sales. I was here just like any morning selling my lambs and my goats my doves and my pigeons, minding my own business, I will have you know. When suddenly a loud destructive noise came bellowing down the street, like an earthquake rumbling down or thunder roaring down upon your heard, it was nosier than anything I have ever heard. We all ran down the street, I figured a home or building had collapsed, what other noise could sound so loud as that. But turning the corner, there was no house destroyed or anything showing any signs of quake or storm damage. Looking around we could not find what was making that tremendous whooshing news. But we all knew just by looking it that it all came out of that one house over there. The houses walls were shaking beyond any other building nearby. They roof was bouncing and you could just tell that whatever was making that news was centered on that house. I couldn't even get near the door because so many others had come to see what was going on with all that noise and such, so I grabbed a crate there and leaned it up against the wall to get a look in the window. What I saw when I got up there and peered in, was amazing. The noise was a combination of wind and

fire. Not just a simple wind like trees blowing, but the noisiest, thunderous wind that you can imagine. And right there in the midst of it all was fire, fire burning here and there, crackling and popping, sizzling and boiling. And yet it was not destroying the home, it was not consuming the air or the walls. And the strangest thing was that there were men and women in that house. They stood right there in the midst of the fire and the winds, not afraid but instead almost with a joy or contentment or something like they had almost expected this to take place.

Then as quickly as it started it stopped, no wind, no fire, the people in the room were silent and the crowds at the door, at the windows, through the streets held their breath. You could have heard a pin drop. Then if that wasn't strange enough, something even more amazing happened. Those people in that room started to come out into the streets, pouring out into the crowd that had gathered they started to talk. But not all in Aramaic, but some in Greek, some in Hebrew and many others in languages I have never heard of. People from all over stopped to listen to what these people were saying. I listened to the one I could understand. I heard him tell me about man named Jesus, How he was the Son of God, how he was the fulfillment of the law, the giver of grace, the messiah, the sacrificial lamb who laid down his life and poured out his blood so that death could Passover us.

I don't know yet what it all means. I know I am a man of faith. I know I believe in God. And yet as those words were being spoken I yearned to know more. To be a part of that crowd that were brave enough to ask for repentance and seek baptism. I would say thousands of us were there and saw it all happen, and probably around 3,000 or so were baptized this very morning, vowing to follow this Lord and Savior, Jesus the Christ.

What a sight it was to witness, to see the power of God, first hand, to see the forgiveness of sins and the redemption of a people's soul as they repent and enter into the baptism of God. May you be filled with that same Spirit this day, may you remember your baptisms, the promises made, the vows taken and live in them now and always. May you be living and powerful witnesses of all that you have seen. Amen.

May the peace and Grace of God be with you this day and throughout the week to come. AMEN.

Let us pray for the whole people of God in Christ Jesus, and for all people according to their needs.

Almighty God, you have given us the gift of your Holy Spirit, to fill us with your fire and to make us your witnesses of your glorious Word. Continue to inspire us as your people to bear your word, offer your forgiveness and proclaim the glory of your Son, Jesus Christ.

LORD IN YOUR MERCY, Hear our Prayer..

O Heavenly Father, we ask that you bless us with the mind of Christ so that we may be his partners in welcoming others into your life of grace and forgiveness. In a world of violence and war, we need your blessing of peace. In a world filled with hatred and envy and guilt, we need your forgiveness. In a world filled with disasters both manmade and natural where so many are suffering we need you to tend to us and keep us. Lord Bless us this day with your Love, grace, forgiveness and peace.

LORD IN YOUR MERCY, Hear our Prayer.

God, stretch out your saving hand to those who are sick. With your strong love, comfort the lonely, the oppressed, and all who suffer. Give courage to those facing surgery. Give healing to those who are afflicted. Give hope to those in mourning. Give peace to those troubled both physically and mentally. Impart your Holy Comforter to be with them in their times of need. Especially we remember today our hospitalized, our homebound and especially Robert Wolpert, John Weaver and the family of Margaret Kaltrieder and all those we lift up in our prayers to you now...

LORD IN YOUR MERCY, hear our prayer.

Lord, we pray for this community of faithful; teach us to use the many gifts you have given us for the common mission of your Church. Take and use us as your witnesses, as your servants in this community and beyond to spread your word, to share your good news, be with our newest members: Jane, Hunter, Jennifer, Benjamin, Nicholas and bestow on them your blessing of wisdom and patience, goodness and love. Grant to those baptized here today, a life dedicated to walking in your ways and growing in the faith given through your Word. Lift them up with the vows they make this day with all your people gathered here who also reaffirm their faith. Grant us the power of your spirit to lead us in life and guide us always in your ways.

LORD IN YOUR MERCY, hear our prayer.

Into your hands, O Lord we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your mercy; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.