

A Pentecost Story

We were still reeling from everything we had seen and heard:
The horror of that dreadful day
When we stood helpless and watched as Jesus was crucified,
The excitement and confusion
Of those early morning stories and encounters with him risen from the dead,
And still we were confused as to why and how and what next.
“When?” we asked him,
“When will you restore our nation and let the whole world see your victory?”
“Not now” he said
“It’s not for us to know” he said
Then disappeared into heaven before our very eyes.



“Wait” we were told – and dutifully, we waited
Never sure whether it was an act of pure obedience,
Or simply because there was nothing else we could do.
We gathered together and locked our doors,
Afraid of what reprisals might yet come our way;
Sharing our stories, our memories, our hopes and our fears.
There were moments when it was easy to wonder if the whole thing had been a dream
Yet when we were together, it all remained so real.

Outside in the street, we could hear the celebrations of Pentecost,
Crowds flocking from everywhere to join in the festival;
Their noise grew louder and louder,
Almost as if they were in the house with us.
And then we realised - it was not the crowd at all,
But what seemed like a rushing wind streaming through the room,
Fire-like tongues rested over each of us.
Yet more profound was what was happening within us,
It was as though God’s very self had taken hold of us

We cried out our words of praise,
Speaking in languages that we’d never known before.
And suddenly those festival crowds,
People from every nation we knew,
Had fixed their attention on us.
We were no longer hidden away,
Huddled together in fear and bewilderment,
But the centre of attention,
Proclaiming the Glory of God to everyone around.

Some made fun of us.
“They’re drunk” they cried.
But others told us that these unknown languages were their own,
That we were speaking plainly to them, the praises of God.

Then Peter stood up,
Crafting his words with new-found authority,
An authority that reminded me of how Jesus used to speak
When confronting those who would put him down.
“We are not drunk” he said
“No-one would be drunk this early in the morning
This moment is of God,
Foretold by the ancient prophet Joel,
God’s Spirit will pour out on everyone
Your Sons and daughters will declare the mysteries of God,
The young will see visions,
The old will dream dreams.
The Spirit will rest on all who are God’s servants;
The wonders of heaven will be revealed;
Signs of God’s presence will be seen on earth;
Anyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”

And then he spoke boldly of Jesus,
Openly accusing our leaders of putting God’s anointed one to death,
Declaring unashamedly that Jesus was risen from the dead,
Announcing that Jesus was now reigning at God’s side,
And calling on any who would believe
To repent and be baptised.
It was as though in that moment
Our community was truly born.

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