

- I. My Notes ... WWC message 10/4
- II. Series: A Disciple's Life – Our Daily Journey
  - Title: Communication Breakdown
  - Text: Acts 2:1-13
  - Quote: We're concerned with how things turn out; God seems more concerned with how we turn out. Philip Yancey (Author)
- III. Introduction
  - In 1915, Robert Frost published a poem and part of it said ... "Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—I took the one less traveled by, And that has made all the difference." (taken from The Road Not Taken by Robert Frost). I say this because I feel that it is necessary to take us to place that this passage in Acts 2 doesn't frequently take people. To be somewhat poetic, I am taking "the road less traveled" in this message. I have heard hundreds of sermons about "power" and what it means that people have used this passage for. Many of these sermons, though good intended, bring in some very bad theology. No, I'm in no way saying that I have the "right" answer and the only correct interpretation. What I am saying is we need to read and study the Bible for what it says, not what we want it to say. The Bible must be used to evaluate interpretation and help us understand. The message is consistent – from Genesis 1 to Revelation 22 the Bible reveals God's love and His desire for us to have a deeply intimate bond with Him. To get there today, I will reach back and do what I can to explain some misunderstood Biblical history and connect it to the place that we are in our journey through the book of Acts. I ask you to bear with me, to not shut out what the Lord may be saying in this moment in our faith journey, and to trust the power that comes through His word.
  - It looks to me that we are in the midst of a communication breakdown. This is happening in our Country, with many people that I know, and in daily life. (You might be thinking at this moment, Rick – this isn't the way to begin a sermon). Communication is important. Can you imagine being in a conversation or a relationship of any kind and not communicating? We live in a time where the noise has reached epic volumes. The consistent barrages of texts,

notifications, tweets, alerts, and so on have equated communication to noise. The quest for likes and followers has minimized the significance of effective communication. As I address this issue, I think of the Tower of Babel. **Genesis 11:4 NLT** – *“Then they said, “Come, let’s build a great city for ourselves with a tower that reaches into the sky. This will make us famous and keep us from being scattered all over the world.”* This was a direct violation of God’s command after the flood ... **Genesis 9:7 NLT** – *“Now be fruitful and multiply, and repopulate the earth.”* Understand that God was telling them to go, to separate, to cover the entire Earth as caretaker and protector. The ability to communicate was important in this. First, the communication between God, Noah, and Noah’s descendants. Next, the communication to each other. There must have been hundreds of years between this command and the building of the Tower of Babel. Read Genesis 10. Noah’s sons and their family were listed. Different languages developed ... perhaps it was different manners or customs in how they spoke to one another (see Genesis 10:5,31). The confusion of languages at the Tower of Babel was God enforcing His command (edict) to cover the entire earth. Man’s idea was different; they wanted the fame and accolades that God deserves.

- Now, I know that I have already said a mouthful. Bear with me for another moment. I’ll start this off with a question (imagine that). What did Jesus tell us to do in the Great Commission? This isn’t a trick ... communicate. *“Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe everything I have commanded you...”* (Matthew 28:19-20 CSB). It’s communication that reveals God’s mercy and grace. Disciple-making is an investment done through involvement in the life of another. This happens through communication – both verbal and experiential. Jesus clarified this by saying, *“teaching them to observe everything I have commanded you.”* Have you ever known a teacher that doesn’t communicate?
- In our present time, the battleground of communication has become less about truth and more about who can yell the loudest. How can we fix this? Let me start by giving you a piece of advice – *“19 Understand this, my beloved brothers and sisters. Let everyone be quick to hear [be a careful, thoughtful*

*listener], slow to speak [a speaker of carefully chosen words and], slow to anger [patient, reflective, forgiving]; 20 for the [resentful, deep-seated] anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God [that standard of behavior which He requires from us].” (James 1:19-20 AMP).* This chosen lifestyle is one that reflects God’s mercy and compassion to those we meet.

- One more thing here. As believers, we need to have a better understanding of Pentecost (Festival of Weeks, Shavuot). (Note: the following has been copied from [www.jewsforjesus.org](http://www.jewsforjesus.org)). “Pentecost is a prominent holiday on the Christian church calendar today. But did you know that it is a holiday from the Hebrew Scriptures that Jewish people still celebrate? In Hebrew, it is called Shavuot (rhymes with “a blue oat”), meaning “weeks”—and so it is known as the Feast of Weeks. Pentecost comes from the Greek word for “fifty” since it occurs fifty days after the preceding holiday, Passover ... Once Israel was settled in the land and there was a permanent sanctuary, an entire ritual developed around the bringing of firstfruits. We were instructed to take some of the first of our harvest, place it in baskets, take it to the Tabernacle (later the Temple) and turn it over to the priest as an act of worship and gratitude to God for the land He gave us (Deuteronomy 26:1–11) ... This holiday was more than just the bringing of the first of the crops to present before God—it was a time to remember how Israel arrived in the land, which was something not to be taken for granted. Just as an individual might tell their story of their journey of faith, so our ancestors recounted the journey of faith of the entire nation. This meant never forgetting where they had come from in the past in order to continue to be thankful in the present. It meant remembering that the land was a gift from the Lord. And it was also an opportunity to rejoice, to enjoy the fruit of the land and, yes, even to party with family and visitors!”  
([www.jewsforjesus.org.au/articles/the-jewish-roots-of-the-feast-of-pentecost-1](http://www.jewsforjesus.org.au/articles/the-jewish-roots-of-the-feast-of-pentecost-1))
- Now, this might seem like too much history for a message today, but it is important to see the parallels. Pentecost is time of celebration; it is a time to come together and thank God for all the blessings He has brought to life. It is taking the opportunity to remember what He has brought you though. This Festival of Weeks is discipleship lived out. It is a time of unity, of thanking God for His blessings, it is an attitude that must be carried throughout our lives.

#### IV. The Moment

- Remember, the Disciples of Jesus were told to go back to Jerusalem and wait (Acts 1:4). They were together, being obedient, being together.

- **Acts 2:1-4 BSB**

*1When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place.*

*2Suddenly a sound like a mighty rushing wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. 3They saw tongues like flames of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. 4And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.*

- This is an incredible fulfillment of Jesus' words and assurances of what was to happen. The Holy Spirit burst on the scene in a powerful way (but God always does that. Think about past instances where He showed up).
- The key here is unity, it is being obedient, it is trust and faith lived out. Listen to how Luke recorded this event. "A sound like ..." there was a powerful sound – a proclamation (if you will allow). It filled the entire place and was audible. "They saw tongues like ..." the arrival of the Holy Spirit was visible, and it touched each person there. Because an encounter with God always brings results, there was evidence in each person, "they began to speak in other tongues ..."
- This moment is evidence of Spirit-filled speech ... it is an ability to communicate in a way that is far beyond our ability. It reveals the power of God to those who the message is for.
- Please hear me ... there is a difference between what happened here and the "unknown tongues" that are a gift of the Spirit (1 Corinthians 12). This instance was missional; it was God communicating to everyone who was there of His desire for a relationship with them.
- There are some that believe that tongues are a sign of true salvation or a sign of superiority. First, the is not true. And this creates chaos and division; it inhibits the unity that God wants from His children. Now, let me be clear ... I believe there is a time and a place for every gift of the Spirit to be active. But they must be led by the Lord, not by man's desire for recognition or approval.

- The circumstance here in Acts 2 got the attention of those who had come to Jerusalem for the Festival of Weeks. It brought boldness to the Disciples so that they could communicate God's love and grace to everyone who could hear them. They spoke known languages, just not known to these men from Galilee. Can you think of a good reason why this might have happened? Do you think that the Gospel Message applied to these people?

## V. The Perception

- Listen to how people perceived what the Lord was doing.
- **Acts 2:5-11 BSB**

*5Now there were dwelling in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven. 6And when this sound rang out, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard them speaking his own language. 7Astounded and amazed, they asked, “Are not all these men who are speaking Galileans? 8How is it then that each of us hears them in his own 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, 11both Jews and converts to Judaism; Cretans and Arabs—we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues!”*

- Others heard (again, it was audible) the arrival of the Holy Spirit. It wasn't a secret. For me, this shoots down the thought that God isn't involved in our daily lives – that He just sits back and watches, disinterested in the moment. Jews, both those born into Judaism and those who chose it as a way of life were gathered in celebration. They had come to worship the Lord God. And surprise, surprise, God showed up. Perhaps not in the way they expected but He was there, involved.
- It's a great lesson for us in the life that we are facing today. God shows up, He is involved. The words that Jesus told His Disciples, “I will always be there, with you, right to the very end” (my paraphrase of Matthew 28:20) were true in this moment.
- Have you thought about the “wonders of God” (vs. 11) the Disciples were proclaiming? Part of what we, as believers, get to do is proclaim (talk about)

the goodness and graciousness of God. God is often viewed as unjust, as vengeful, as trying to catch us doing something wrong. This is not an accurate understanding of who God is. His love is everlasting (Jeremiah 31:3; Romans 5:8). His kindness touches all (Luke 6:35; Ephesians 4:32), and His mercy is available to everyone (Psalm 103:8; Lamentations 3:22-23). Perhaps these thoughts contain some of the things that the Holy Spirit was helping the Disciples talk about in languages they had not known.

- Just a reminder (one of my go to verses) ... *“9 But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his possession, so that you may proclaim the praises of the one who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. 10 Once you were not a people, but now you are God’s people; you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.”* (1 Peter 2:9-10 CSB)
- We live, every day, with the privilege of doing this very same thing. We can sing about, testify of, and live out the goodness of God in our everyday lives. We can be a living testimony of the truth of God’s grace that was demonstrated in the life of Jesus Christ. We can be examples of kindness and mercy in a world that does not value these traits as much as other things.

## VI. The Misunderstanding

- **Acts 2:12-13 BSB**

*12 Astounded and perplexed, they asked one another, “What does this mean?” 13 But others mocked them and said, “They are drunk on new wine!”*
- Have you ever known someone who has not understood what God has done or is doing in your life? As we already talked about, people don’t have an accurate view of who God is. So, this would make it difficult for them to acknowledge or accept the evidence of God’s work in your person, in your life.
- Those attending the Festival of Weeks (presumably to worship God) heard the evidence of God’s presence and they could not understand what was taking place or accept the praises of God’s goodness and grace. They justified it by saying these people were “drunk” ...
- It was evident there was a spiritual and cultural bias. Galileans were seen as unsophisticated; they were considered unlearned and lower class. Let me let

you in on a truth ... without the Spirit, people are unable to discern (understand) spiritual things (see 1 Corinthians 2:14).

- And because of these misunderstandings, accusations and a dismissive attitude were evident. It seems this a common human response to not understanding what God is doing.
- If people can move beyond their prejudices, past their expectations, then God's way – His mercy and compassion – become clearer.
- Understand that misunderstandings will happen, that confusion can take place. But God's desire is for communication to happen, and we can trust Him to make His love known.

## VII. Last Words

- We live in a time when communication feels broken—where shouting often replaces listening, and confusion drowns out clarity. But this portion of Acts 2 reminds us that when the Spirit speaks, understanding is possible. The disciples didn't just speak—they spoke as the Spirit enabled them. And the result wasn't chaos, but conviction. People heard the wonders of God in their own language.
- As Christ-followers, we are called to rise above the noise. To speak not for recognition, but for redemption. To communicate not from pride, but from presence. The Holy Spirit still empowers speech that heals, convicts, and connects. Whether through testimony, teaching, or quiet encouragement, our words can carry the wind of heaven.
- So today, ask yourself:
  - Am I speaking from weariness or from renewal?
  - Are my words building bridges or barriers?
  - Do I communicate to be heard—or to help others hear God?
- Let's be people who wait on the Lord, who listen before we speak, and who trust the Spirit to give us words that lift others into the light. Because when heaven speaks through us, even the most broken conversations can become holy ground.
- Let's Pray
- Grace First, Grace Always