

Series: Wind in the Sails
Title: Fresh Wind for a New Tongue
Text: Acts 2:1-9
Key Word: Characteristics
Proposition: Everyone can have the fresh wind of a new tongue by modeling these characteristics.

Several years ago, Melinda and I took a trip to Ontario, Canada, along the eastern shore of Lake Huron. We traveled along route 21 through Blue Water, Bayfield and all the way up to Goderich. We enjoyed watching the gracious beauty of large sail boats on the deep blue Huron water. I remember thinking, “I wonder what it would be like to sail on the Great Lakes. I wonder how a sailor catches the invisible force of the wind, harnesses its power to take his vessel to his destination.”

I admit I know nothing of the sailing world. I am afraid that I would not be able to speak the pure tongue or language of a sailor. I would have to sit down and read a few books on sailing and listen to the coaching of an experienced sailor. But I would want more than that. I would have to experience the wind in the sails to fully enjoy the mystery of wind and water. The same could be said for life in the Spirit.

John’s Gospel tells of a time when Nicodemus made his way through the back alleys on a star lit night for a conversation with a prophet. As a religious leader, he was curious about this prophet’s unusual authority. Certainly, Jesus’ miracles confirmed his claims.

Noticing his sincerity, Jesus participated in a captivating conversation. While discussing the idea of being born again, born of the Spirit, Jesus compared the working of the Holy Spirit to the “Wind.” He says, “*The wind blows wherever it*

pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going.” Even though the source of wind is beyond human understanding, its effects can be clearly seen.

Like sail boats on the Great Lakes, we can see evidence of a “Fresh Wind” of God Spirit. God is moving all around us, within us, producing a spiritual filling of the sails of life, awakening us to the deep awareness of God’s power and peace. All we have to do is raise our hearts toward heaven to catch His power. With the Holy Spirit we can cope with the demands of daily life. With the Holy Spirit we can fully understand God’s plans and purposes. With the Holy Spirit we can fully enjoy our relationship with Christ. With the Holy Spirit we’re empowered to witness to the world.

Many people say they believe in the Holy Spirit, but they just don’t know much about Him. They long to understand who He is and how to live in the flow of his power. People are looking for something more than dull religion. My friends, this Spiritual Wind, the Holy Spirit is our constant helper, our truth-teacher, the will-of-the-Father revealer, the Gift-Giver, the hurt-healer, our abiding friend, our life-coach, the fire of God, the wind in our sails. He is God who desires to take up residence in us.

What happened on Pentecost was the fulfillment of this promise. God’s Spirit moved like a mighty wind, turning thousands from their own ways to God’s way. By the Spirit’s Fresh Wind the early church turned the world upside down with their life

changing message. It was the intervention of this supernatural power which superseded the laws of human nature, environment, conditioning, and training that shape human personalities. So, it is a miracle when a personality is transformed, or a person is able to think and act beyond the limitations of ones capabilities. That is what happened at Pentecost. Over a hundred frightened, impotent, self-centered, willful, and discouraged men and women were transformed into new creatures. They were filled with “Fresh Wind.”

If you sense that you're ready for “Fresh Wind in your Sails” then I believe that today and the weeks to come will be just what you are looking for. If one of the greatest challenges that we face in our daily lives is the use of our tongue, then there is hope for you today. Since no one can tame the tongue, God sends the Holy Spirit to do what we are incapable of doing. Let’s take a look at the characteristics of this new tongue.

First, the Holy Spirit provides a unified tongue. Acts tells us “...*they were all together in one place*” “*They were all filled with the Holy Spirit.*” Their unity was forged in the fires of waiting worship and sustained by the breath of the Resurrected Christ. Pentecost’s fresh wind represents a new unity in the Holy Spirit transcending racial, national, emotional, and language barriers. Here we see the Holy Spirit unifying a crowd by empowering them to speak with one voice.

The movie, “We Are Marshall,” tells the story of West Virginia University steeped in college football. For this team and this community, Marshall Football was

more than just a sport; it was a way of life. But on a fateful night in 1970, after a game in North Carolina, 37 members of Marshall's football team, plus coaching staff and team boosters, were killed in a plane crash.

As the board prepared to terminate the football program after the crash, a sudden fresh wind blew among the students. Marshall's president addressed the board and alumni saying, "I think we all know why we are all here today. What I would like to do first..." Then he was interrupted by an intruder. One of the four remaining Marshall Football players walked into the room. Everyone's attention turns to this player wearing his green varsity jacket.

The president says, "Excuse me, young man, excuse me, this is a private meeting."

Nate McDrake replies, "I don't mean to interrupt sir, but I think there is something y'all need to hear."

The president replied, "If you have anything to say we can set up a time for you to come to my office."

"Oh, no sir, I have nothin' to say,"---pause---, while pointing to the window Nate continues, "But they do!"

Everyone turns and looks toward the windows. Some leave their seats and walked where Nate had pointed. The president looks over at Nate and then walks over to the windows. Surprised, he sees thousands of Marshall Students on the college lawn. Another board member joins him at the window. Nate joins them as

they gaze at the crowd. Then Nate raises his arm with his hand in a fist. As one voice the students chant, “We are Marshall! We are Marshall!” Everyone knew that a fresh wind of the Spirit was blowing bringing hope.

Drake turns to the president and says, “It is the right thing to do sir.”

With his eyes beginning to water, he says, “Frankly, son, I don’t know where to begin.”

Drake replies, “You can start with a coach, sir.”

“Let’s see the wind blow in the sails of this grieving community. (Clip)

About 2000 years ago, many thought that this Jesus movement was dead. They saw no hope for life. They believed that his followers were all washed up. But a fresh wind started to blow. These Christ-followers stood up and chanted, “We are – the Church! We are – the Church!” All were amazed by this Spirit of unity blowing in the wind.

Next, Luke mentions that it is Spirited-filled tongue, that is to say that it was not natural, but supernatural, it was not ordinary, but extraordinary. Luke the writer of Acts tells us, *“They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them.”* *“...and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.”* So what does this mean? It was not the result of intoxication. They had not drunk too much wine. It was only nine in the morning. In ancient times most drunks were asleep at 9:00 AM. Also it seemed to the onlookers that they were under control. When the Holy Spirit comes into a person’s

life they do not lose control, but possess self-control. Paul indicated that one of the characteristics of the fruit of the Spirit is self-control. A few onlookers were simply ‘making fun of them.’

Next, Luke reveals that the crowd had heard them correctly. They were not misunderstanding the disciples. Luke says, “*each one heard them speaking in his own tongue or language.*” Truly, this was a miracle of speech.

Next, Luke tells us that it was not a case of unintelligible speech or simply babble. Luke was a doctor by trade and notable historian by hobby, as well as a well-respected Christ-follower and contributing writer of the New Testament. One would think that he would be able to tell the difference between ‘babble’ and intelligent speech. So, Luke explains that the Holy Spirit gave them the supernatural ability to communicate the wonders of God in recognizable languages.

So, does that mean that all “Spirit-filled” Christ-followers possesses the gift to speak in a known language different from there native tongue? Does this mean that all “Spirit-filled” Christians must speak in tongues? No. The apostle Paul wrote that there are different kinds of gifts, all originating from the same Spirit for the common good. Some receive the gift of wisdom, others knowledge, others faith or healing or miraculous powers or prophecy or discernment of spirits or the speaking in different kinds of tongues/languages or the interpretation of tongues. All these gifts are the work of the Holy Spirit who gives them to each as He determines. (1 Cor. 12:7-11)

However, Spirit-filled Christ-followers can overcome any verbal weakness. “*For it is*

God who is at work within you, giving you the will and the power to achieve his purposes.” (Phil. 2:13)

Many Christians who have been made spiritually **alive** by Christ are not yet spiritually **adequate** in Christ. The Risen Christ is willing and able to empower us for meeting life’s demands and making our language witness to His wonderful name.

Finally, it is a global tongue. Luke tells us, *“God fearing Jews from every nation under heaven...each one heard them speaking in his own language....”*

In the *National Review*, columnist Joel Rosenberg recounts former Ohio Congressman Tony Hall’s words at the 2005 National Prayer Breakfast. When Hall first went to Washington, he felt hollow. "I didn't know God," he said, and "I was tired of my ambition."

He shared how he attended a prayer breakfast, heard others describe the process they had gone through to begin a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, and how that event set him on a spiritual journey that led him and his wife to become Christians.

Hall urged religious men and women of both parties not to be shy about bringing their faith to the office and letting it be part of who they are in public. He described a trip he took to an Islamic country where he was greeted by the U.S. ambassador at the airport. "Congressman Hall, I just want to remind you that you're in a Muslim country. Don't talk about religion, or it could really set back what we're trying to accomplish here."

Hall said he just nodded politely. When they arrived at the office of the Muslim leader, Hall says he was asked why he had come to the country. "I would like to be your friend," Hall said. "I would like our countries to be friends. And I would like to invite you to the National Prayer Breakfast, in the name of Jesus."

The Muslim leader got very excited. He slapped his knee and, according to Hall, said, "That is remarkable. You have come all this way to be my friend and to talk to me about Jesus. That is wonderful. My mother used to talk to me a lot about Jesus when I was a child. We should talk about Jesus more often." "Breakfast with the President,"

National Review Online, (2-4-05); submitted by Ted Weis, Little River, Kansas

When the Spirit indwells His people, we see that He creates a new unity that goes beyond racial, national, language, and emotional barriers. God desires that all the people of the world come into a life-transforming relationship with Him and under the reign of His kingdom. He desires that all would be made fully adequate to fulfill His purposes. God desires that all nations be gathered together in Christ. His Fresh Wind for a New Tongue is blowing. Let's raise our sails to catch the wind.