

9.1.19 Pastor Jordan Gades Sermon, Acts 2: 1-18, Matthew 28:17-20

Grace and Peace be to you from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus the Christ.
Amen.

Happy labor day weekend. To all you retired folks out there, you are already enjoying the fruits of your hard work. Fruits from seeds planted long ago, tended with hard work and watered with your own sweat. For the rest of us, we take this weekend as acknowledgement of what we are in the midst of, this life of work that has been set before us by our God. Good work to do for ourselves and our neighbors sake. I hope you all get to enjoy it!

The life we live is one full of labor. There's no way around it. But the good things that we have seem all the better when we have put the effort we put in. Think about making yourself a good meal. I know for me I'm thinking of grill a nice juicy steak on the grill.

Just knowing on a personal level how much effort and what mastery it took to make it just seems to elevate it. It tastes so much better. Or has anyone here made their own wine before? I'm thinking about trying it. I've talked to a lot of people who have tried it. It doesn't look too difficult to get into really, but there seems to be a lot of labor involved though. It also seems like the more you get into it the more and more details there are for you to refine. Pick your grapes/fruit. Smash it, strain it, wait and ferment it, bottle and wait, syphon and wait, then another 6 months at least until it's anywhere near good. That's a long labor but you can tell when people show off their homemade wines how proud they are of them and how much better they taste to them. Through this labor of love and care they have created something special.

This life we live works our bodies and minds but it is also a Labor of the Spirit -We Witness to the Word and the truth. We Witness to what we have seen and what we believe. It our Job to explain our faith to the world in a way that they can understand it.

I just explained how to make wine right but that's not the full story and for you to be able to do it you would have to know more to be able to actually show someone else. You have to have a bit more experience to actually be able to teach.

To be able to share the Gospel we have to know the gospel in our own language and the language of others

We are blessed though because the first step has been taken in this process - Spirit has come and dwells with us that mighty wind has come in our baptism.

I'm going to make this quick parallel between the coming of the Spirit on Pentecost and our baptism. We, as Lutherans, believe that baptism is the work of God. Purely and only the work of God. Because as Luther Wrote

I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, or come to Him; but the Holy Spirit has called me by the Gospel, enlightened me with His gifts, sanctified and kept me in the true faith. In the same way He calls, gathers, enlightens, and sanctifies the whole Christian church on earth, and keeps it with Jesus Christ in the one true faith. In this

Christian church He daily and richly forgives all my sins and the sins of all believers. On the Last Day He will raise me and all the dead, and give eternal life to me and all believers in Christ.

I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength believe - It's the Holy Spirit at Work. Grapes don't just magically turn into wine, someone's gotta smash them, to get that amazing juice and flavor out. At Pentecost, the gathered believers are there and there just grapes. There not saying I now believe enough for the Holy Spirit to come to me and for me to be given incredible spiritual gifts. I now have reached this point of knowledge and faith where I am acceptable before God. No they are celebrating Pentecost as all good Jews were and the Holy Spirit comes to them because the holy Spirit decided to. Because God chose to. And the Holy Spirit comes to them. They didn't climb some holy mountain, didn't have to go on some crazy pilgrimage, God comes to them where they are and blesses them.

God comes to us, who by our own strength and reasoning cannot believe in Jesus Christ our Lord, but because our God comes to us, wherever we are and dwells with us, resides with us, we are able. WE are broken human beings, unable to believe what is before us. And yet God makes these bonds between us possible. There is this amazing song by Hillsong United called new wine. Its 8 minutes long, give it a listen
In the crushing, In the pressing, You are making New wine. Gods holy work in us, creating something new out of us. Changing us forever.

The reason I love working with youth is because they are wrestling with questions. We adults don't really. They are uncomfortable questions to wrestle with because you could answer them with the negative. You can say to them something like God is changing you and they'll ask what you mean or Why does being Christian matter to you; Answer: it doesn't. Now if you recoil from that, as I do whenever I hear it, then maybe you can answer this question. Why does that answer sound wrong to you?
Why does this matter?
How does this make meaning in my life?
How does this inform on who you are and what you will do in your life?

We have to know these things, have to know these answers for ourselves, as we start to bring them together and start sharing them. I can't just answer these for you but I get to gladly walk beside you as we figure them out.

So it's it to start our batch of new wine. Not just to share it with friends but to share this wonderful gift with all those whom we meet. We are the givers of the best gift. We just have to be able to tell people about this gift that we are offering. Tell them its story. How it began. What went into this gift that you are sharing with them. The labor that went into it so that we can enjoy it together now. Tell them the important things about this precious gift that make it so incredible. This is not cheap gift we speak of but rather the blessed loving grace and presence of our lord and savior in every aspect of our lives forever more. Show these things with pride and the assurance that these words are not your own but rather your God working through you to help others know our God. Amen