

The Rev. Dr. Calvin Jones:

What? Amazing. Amazing. Good morning.

Congregation:

Good morning.

The Rev. Dr. Calvin Jones:

All who are able please rise for our responsive reading. We're so grateful that you're here for our daily worship of Morning Prayers. We will read Psalm 84.

How lovely is your dwelling place, O Lord of hosts.

Congregation:

My soul longs, indeed it faints for the courts of the Lord; my heart and my flesh sing for joy to the living God.

The Rev. Dr. Calvin Jones:

Even the sparrow finds a home, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young at your altars, O Lord of hosts, my king and my God.

Congregation:

Happy are those who live in your house, ever singing your praise.

The Rev. Dr. Calvin Jones:

Happy are those whose strength is in you, and whose heart are the highways to Zion.

Congregation:

As they go through the valley of Baca they make it a place of springs; the early rain also covers it with pools.

The Rev. Dr. Calvin Jones:

Behold our shield, O God; look on the face of your anointed.

Congregation:

For a day in your courts is better than a thousand elsewhere. I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than live in the tents of wickedness.

The Rev. Dr. Calvin Jones:

For the Lord God is a sun and shield; he bestows favor and honor. No good thing does the Lord withhold from those who walk uprightly.

Congregation:

O Lord of hosts, happy is everyone who trusts in you.

The Rev. Dr. Calvin Jones:

You may be seated.

(singing)

The Holy Spirit is here this morning. Oh, my goodness. Whoo. Thank you. If you haven't already guessed by my southern vernacular and southern drawl, I'm a native of the South, specifically North Carolina. The South, with its storied and complex history, yet has offered a richness to the nation and the world, from the conceptual motifs of life and death found in the blues, to the moans and the gospel found in the spirituals. From the jazz mosaic to the dance and the beat of the Black church. From ragtime to country music, to rhythm and blues, to the rock and roll.

In addition to the South being the birthplace of some of America's most treasured musical traditions, you must not forget the amazing food. One of my favorite dishes is Brunswick stew. Brunswick stew consists of potatoes, vegetable, green beans, okra, lima beans, corn, carrots, squash, and rutabagas, with the protein of either chicken, pork, beef, or brisket. However, a good chef will tell you the secret ingredient to the stew is the special tomato paste that has a blend of barbecue sauce and vinegar and sugar that adds the smokiness and sweet savory flavor.

This tomato paste is what enhances and alters the flavor of the stew. The Holy Spirit of this paste enhances the flavor, binds the elements, and the spiritual aroma. The stew can only become the best unified stew when it is possessed by the spirit of this special paste. For the stew cannot come together without this paste. Maybe, just maybe that's what Pentecost is, the biblical writer of the literary corpus Luke, Acts writes, "When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place." Like the tomato paste that binds all the ingredients together in the stew, that is the power of Pentecost. That's what real Pentecost looks like. It is not a denomination. It is a movement rooted in the revolutionary love, compassion, and spirit of Christ.

Pentecostalism has sometimes been stereotyped to mean any charismatic worship. However, this morning at Morning Prayers, I posit that we are called to reclaim what Pentecost really is. We are called to be who the early Christians were, a Pentecostal people who were a part of a movement created in a deep commitment to revolutionary love, diversity, unity, justice, and compassion. People for Africa, Rome, Greece, Asia, and Judea gathered in the Jerusalem upper room in the first century. Women and men gathered there. People with different identities, cultures, languages, and backgrounds assembled there. No barrier could prevent these early Christians from speaking and understanding the same language of love and compassion.

In a day when the words Pentecostal and Christian have seemingly been hijacked by those who have made racism and hatred their idols, may we reclaim the unifying power of Pentecost. Like that special tomato paste that enhances and brings together all the ingredients in that southern Brunswick stew, may we share the spiritual aroma of Pentecost around the world. And maybe, just maybe, the love of God will unite us and remove all barriers. If we dare, like those in the upper room, we can through Christ spread the transformative love of God's kingdom. Amen.

Congregation:

Amen.

The Rev. Dr. Calvin Jones:

Pray with me. Come Holy Spirit come. Divine Teacher, whirl around us with your wisdom. Divine Comforter, encircle us with the peace that comes only from you. As the holy winds fill our lives with dreams, empower us to live God's hope in this world. May we be a Pentecostal people. Amen.

Congregation:

Amen.

The Rev. Dr. Calvin Jones:

Now, please stand and let us pray the prayer that Jesus taught His disciples saying...

Congregation:

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

The Rev. Dr. Calvin Jones:

Now let us sing together hymn number 306, There Is a Balm in Gilead.

(singing)

May you reclaim the true meaning of Pentecost. Go forth in the world in peace. In each gust of wind may we reach out to the God of inspiration. In each flicker of flame may we follow the Christ of light. For the spirit of God surrounds us, filling our hearts with dreams, our minds with visions, and our souls with their energy to create the ram of God here on earth. Go forth as a Pentecostal people. Let us bless the Lord.

Congregation:

Thanks be to God.