

Pentecost on the Paper Route

Based on Acts 2:1-13

The children are at the age, where it is time to give up their paper routes. On to bigger and better things! Tara has been delivering 106 papers to a condo and townhouse complex for over five years now. The dog and I got in the habit of walking with her, as she was rather young to be on her own when she started. Over the years, I have seen and met some rather interesting people.

#31 – Who started or stopped the paper every week. Was she confused or ill?

#18 – Who would call Morningstar if the paper was not delivered exactly on time.

#11 – Who could only speak German.

#72 – Who always had beautiful flowers on displays by her door.

#101 – Who used the condo only once in a while, while globetrotting the world.

#58 – Who didn't like anyone else's paper touching her paper.

#76 – Who walked the dog route every morning, long after his dog had died.

#44 – Who always had cookies or treats for us on Sunday morning.

#61 – Who's front door never changed: no light, no mat, no sign of life at all.

#68 – Who was moving out at 5:30 AM, eyes frightened, movements hurried.

One hundred and six condos. One hundred and six different families, with different stories, living together, sharing the same space; yet, oddly enough, having very little to do with

each other. One hundred and six lives moving in one hundred and six different directions.

One imagines Peter gathering the disciples together as they ate, and chatted, and strategized. Still raw from the events of Calvary, wary of Roman guards appearing

suddenly, questioning the safety of returning to ministry, yet at the same time, determined to continue the work of Jesus, they looked one to the other with the same questions. Where do we go from here? What crowd do we preach to? Who's going to be in charge? How are we going to pay for this? Is anyone going to listen to us after all that has happened? Each time they designed a plan to re-create the work of Jesus, they were met by roadblocks. It wasn't going to work the way it had before.

Then something in the room changed. Inspiration from one at the table? Prayer? A shout from outsider in the street? The Breath of the Spirit at work?

*Amazed and perplexed,
they asked one another,
"What does this mean?"*
(v12)

Something changed in the disciple's thinking. Instead of looking inward, seeking ways to hold tightly to what they still had, they began to look around them, and out the windows

into the street, and talking about the next village down the road. The fires of imagination began to ignite deep within them. The things that had appeared as roadblocks now appeared as opportunities. The many different peoples of Jerusalem and the communities beyond its walls, now potential places to establish centers of worship, and support for new disciples.

As excitement grew around the table, Peter and the others realized that for all the things that were different about people: language, food, culture, music, there was a common thread, a desire to believe in something greater than themselves. It was a holy place in the heart of everyone, a place where conversations about Jesus could begin: in

familiar and in new ways: in different languages, around dinner tables, at market squares, in quiet moments in gardens.

The tenacity of the Christian faith since that time has been in great part, because of our willingness to look up and out, instead of down and in; to look out into our congregations or our communities or our global family with eyes open, and ask ourselves, “How may I serve my Saviour today?” rather than sit firmly in your chair with head lowered, saying, “There is nothing I can do!” When we view the world with heads up and eyes open, looking out, we see that the work of the Spirit abounds, not over there, far from our touch, but all around us within arms reach. And it often surprises us. Suddenly, this difficult

world is seen with a new lens, and beauty and holiness can be seen also. We do not remain isolated in our own ‘condo of faith’, away from the world, but see ourselves, as people of the Family of God, reaching for harmony.

Today we approach our table, not as individuals, but as family; coming to the table from many different directions, but knowing that we are welcome to come, just as we are. Today, we are challenged to keep our eyes open and our heads up for the Spirit’s signs, and its unexpected glimpses in the midst of our daily walk. Be alert! Be ready! Put out the welcome mat, and open the shades. The Holy Spirit is knocking!