

Day of Pentecost-2018-The Wedding from another Place  
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Acts 2:1-21

### **The Wedding from another Place**

Yesterday as millions watched the Royal Wedding in Windsor a mighty wind of the Spirit rushed through the Chapel where they were all sitting and everyone could sense the change. The dead stiff world of English propriety gave way to something alive and teeming with hope.

This joy, hope and vitality came in the midst of this week's darkness of yet more school violence, of confrontations between Palestinians and Jews, and of politically caused famine in Yemen. The darkness of the week caused the light to stand out brighter by contrast.

Luke says the new energy came from Heaven. In Luke's mind "Heaven" exists beyond human jurisdiction, outside the human force-field; the beyond, where Jesus is with God and the power they generate together can't be seen but we can see the effect. This week we saw the light in the face of the bride and groom, in their love for each other and in their desire to impact the world and make it a better place. It was like the wedding came from another place and it lifted our spirits.

A sense of this invisible unity-power filled the entire house. Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them and everyone had a tongue with none excluded. Some spoke in the tongue of music; Gospel music, classical music, orchestral music and popular music. All of these art forms were afire with love. They wanted the world to feel it, absorb it and allow it to warm the world's cold heart.

Others spoke in the tongue of artistry, beauty and order. Colors of the rainbow took human shape in dresses of many forms and colors, skin of many hues spoke in the language of the beauty of God's diverse creation.

Still other tongues pulled humanity back to wisdom, back to respect for others and diversity, and back to our common grounding in God who loves us all and has no favorites. People from the states spoke with accents we couldn't hear. Other's presented their wisdom in those thick

British accents that we struggle to understand. And then of course, there were the Africans, the Australians and the Indians and the combinations of accents as our world continues to learn how to talk to each other and gradually come to understand that we all speak the common human language, coming to know that in what is essential we are alike.

This experience of unity that respects individuality Luke calls the Holy Spirit. When we are under the influence of the Holy Spirit we are not cut-off from each other. The rivalry breaks down and we are able to touch each other from the place of our common humanity. We saw this at the Royal Wedding. The elderly and the extreme elderly watched the wedding together and children carried the brides train. Everyone knew that whatever was happening here was important and could have a lasting impact on the world. Only a power from outside all of them could accomplish this. It was a kind of contemporary day of Pentecost.

People from all over the world were gathered in one room. People coming from different cultures with vastly different experiences were there, people from Africa dressed in their native garb, people from various points in the Middle East, Australia and Europe were all there. Some of them were rich and some were not and they were all together.

Many of them were people of accomplishment who had already made an impact on the world. Serena Williams, Elton John, Opra Winfrey, George Cluny and his international human rights lawyer wife, whose name I did not catch. I watched their faces and I could tell the powerful wind of the Spirit had reached them too. The fractured Tower of Babel was being repaired as the builders of culture discovered again their foundation in God who loves us all.

Some of them in that room were of dark complexion, their eyes lite their faces and their teeth sparkled in contrast, beautiful sight. Some of them came with the pale skin and red hair of the north of Europe and Prince Harry was among them. There were men and women there, and they came in all colors. Michael Curry, the African-American Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church of America was there and he electrified us by calling us to the fire of love. He quoted Martin Luther King and Teilhard de Chardin. He was passionate, expressive, and animated in his call for unity, inclusivity and a love that we knew encompassed forgiveness. We felt his love. Amazed and astonished we wondered how this man could speak with such authority and power

to the world's most powerful. The bride and her mother just smiled. They knew what a preacher can do when he or she is under the influence of the Holy Spirit.

Before and after the wedding clumps of people talked to one another. What were they talking about? It wasn't who among them was the greatest. It wasn't whose culture was the most advanced. It was not about who could force their will on all the others, who had the most powerful army, the most war planes, the most destructive systems of weaponry. No, they were talking "about God's deeds of power." In the context of the wedding it was about how God had brought this man of royal ancestry and this beautiful woman, half Caucasian, half African-American, together so they could support each other in their desire to make the world better. Everyone was marveling about it.

They were talking about the beyond that had come into their midst. Instead of being aware of each other as rivals in the game of who has more and who has less, they were all tuned to God's deeds of power. And God's deeds of power came from a place of weakness, forgiveness and compassion.

The power of the cross that removes the basis for us and them was settling into our hearts, our homes, our relationships, and even the Royal Family. People everywhere cheered as their hope for changing the operative structures of the world stirred again. The divisions were dissolving. The young people were excited and hopeful.

Even the old division between those who were thought pure and able to wear white and those who must not, had disappeared as the formerly married woman wore white as she married the Prince in the Royal Family. So many changes, so fresh the spirit; even the glorious weather seemed charged with hope. In astonishment everyone experienced themselves participating in an event come from beyond them all.

The marriage of Prince Harry and Meghan Markle represented far more than a beautiful romance and new love for Princess Dianne's younger son. It represented the bridging of gaps and the vindication and valuing of the worlds outcasts. Both Prince Harry and Meghan represent standing by those who culture would rather ignore and possibly remove. In fact, the

Gospel Choir sang “Stand by Me,” a prayer for connectivity, as their bodies swayed to the rhythm. Consider their support for the children of aids in Africa who society wants to ignore but they protect. Consider their support for those experiencing mental illness and Prince Harry’s candor about his own struggles after his mother’s death.

On the day of Pentecost Jesus sent us the Advocate. It’s the other name for the Holy Spirit. What does the Advocate do? He defends the accused. He stands up for those society wants to scapegoat and cast out. Harry and Meghan have volunteered to help the Advocate in his work in the world. We rejoice they have joined God in the struggle to teach us all to view each other with respect and love and never to cast any out.

At the first Pentecost not everyone looked on the coming together of people as a good thing. Some trivialized it with a sneer saying “They are filled with new wine.” Well they were, but it was not the kind that intoxicates the body. It was the kind that intoxicates our hope, our faith, and our desire to change the way we see the world. This is something we can do no matter who we are or where we live. We can change our view of the world. Amen.