
A Good Day to Dream

**A sermon by the Rev. Canon David Boyd
The Day of Pentecost**

*In the last days it will be, God declares,
that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh,
and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,
and your young men shall see visions,
and your old men shall dream dreams.*

Today is a good day to dream. School's out, graduation exercises have concluded, summer is here! This is a time of both endings and beginnings, a time ripe for visions of the future, for dreams of what will be. Steamer trunks plastered with camp stickers are emerging from attics, freshmen roommate decisions are being finalized, and the Braves are the best team in baseball. Summer stretches out before us, and so do our dreams.

I find myself dreaming a lot these days. As my wife and I wait expectantly for our first child, due to arrive later this summer, I find myself dreaming about first breaths, first words, and first steps. I dream about the sound of his laugh. I wonder what will bring him joy, and who he will become. I have visions of him here in the pews with you, learning how to love and be loved. I have visions of holding his hand, praying, "Our Father..."

Every dream I have, every dream you have, is an invitation to more, an exercise in expanding the immensity of our imagination. Think of the disciples, tucked away in an upper room on Pentecost. Who could blame them if they thought small? Jesus, the one who taught them to imagine the kingdom in their midst, had been tragically killed, impossibly raised, and suddenly snatched up into heaven. They could have stayed safe in small rooms, returned to their old lives, and kept the kingdom to themselves.

The Holy Spirit had other ideas. Wind whirled, fire descended, and suddenly these frightened, grieving, small-dreaming people found themselves standing in the streets of Jerusalem, proclaiming in languages they had never learned, to faces they had never seen, a kingdom bigger than anything they had dared to imagine. And she didn't stop there. The wind kept blowing: James to the shores of Spain, Thomas to India. Each apostle sent out on an adventure into the unknown, their imaginations so expanded by the Holy Spirit that they could see the kingdom anywhere they went, finding Christ in each person they met.

Not everyone was impressed. Some in the crowd looked at this boundary-breaking, kingdom-expanding moment and concluded: they've had too much to drink. New wine, they said. That's all this is. Might we be tempted to respond in the same way? When the Spirit moves in ways that exceed our categories, our first instinct is to find the smallest possible explanation. To reduce the inexplicable to something we can control and manage. We are very good at this, at taking the magnificent more offered by the Spirit and settling for something less we can grasp and understand. When we do this, when we reach for words like practical and efficient and realistic, we lose our Spirit-given imagination. And when we lose our imagination, we lose sight of the kingdom. The church without imagination becomes one more inward-focused institution uninterested in the stranger at the gate, offering only reasonable explanations for why now is just not the right time.

But today the Spirit which moved over the apostles is still being poured out. On all flesh. On you and me. It is being poured out in the waters of baptism. Over the newly baptized, we will pray this prayer: "Sustain them, O Lord, in your Holy Spirit. Give them an inquiring and discerning heart, the courage to will and to persevere, a spirit to know and to love you, and the gift of joy and wonder in all your works." And we will make promises today, to do everything in our power to support that life in Christ. Which means, at least in part, this: we will

refuse to let them settle for small. We will dream on their behalf until they can dream for themselves.

This is what I keep coming back to, in those daydreams about my son. I cannot give him a small world. not if I am going to hand him our faith. Because our faith is not a small thing but the most expansive hope I know. We dare to claim that the God who made the universe became flesh and walked among us, that death could not hold him, that his Spirit was poured out on all flesh and has been moving ever since. We dare to dream of a world that will one day be made new, filled with God's perfect love, adorned with God's glory. This is the kingdom we are invited to inhabit — not someday, not in theory, but now, with the imaginations the Spirit is expanding in us today, opening our eyes to see the world not as it is but as God dreams it to be.

Summer stretches out before us. So do our dreams. The Spirit is moving, and it is moving toward more than we could imagine alone. The same Spirit that blew open the upper room, that carried the gospel to the ends of the earth, that has been expanding the imagination of God's people for two thousand years, is here, now, being poured out on all flesh.

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