

Rev. George Arceneaux

Day of Pentecost

5.19.2024

Alright everyone. This morning, I want to start off with some fun history and symbolism about today's celebration of Pentecost which is going to include some numbers and addition and multiplication, because what's more fun than church? Church AND mathematics! Really, I want to talk with you about history, faith, and math because there's a lot going on in our readings and with this day. And how that's kinda the point of today. Today is a day that says the world may give you a place and role, we may each of us be told what we're supposed to be like as the perfect worker or the perfect grandparent, or the perfect kid or the perfect whatever. Today's a day that reminds us that the scripts we're given by the rulers of this world that would TELL us who we are, these scripts were written by con artists who convinced us they were greater than God and to remember that there's something in everyone, in your neighbor, in you that defies limitation and codification.

Today is Buzz Lightyear Sunday, quick poll, does anyone know Buzz Lightyear's catch phrase? "To infinity, and beyond!" That's the message of Pentecost. I promised some history and some symbolism so here we go. Numbers have always been a big deal for our faith and in the Hebrew Bible, seven is the most sacred number. 7 days of the week and of creation in Genesis, 7 pairs of clean animals that enter Noah's arc, seven branches on the menorah, and on. There's a sense of perfection, uniqueness, and completeness about the number seven between its being a prime number and being written in Hebrew in the almost exact same fashion as the word "complete".

Every time you see ANYTHING that is divisible by seven in scripture, the reason is because the lesson is playing off of the perfection of God. That's why its such a big deal, for example, that Jesus tells Peter in scripture that we are called to forgive others not just seven times, we're not only called

to work towards complete forgiveness, we're supposed to forgive folks seven times seven times, to so earnestly seek healing and forgiveness and right relationship with others that we can't even fathom how important healing and forgiveness are and, at least as I would read it, how much work it can take to get to right relationship sometimes.

So alright, we're at 49 as we think about 7×7 times, Well you may be thinking to yourself, this is all well and good Mr. George, , but when I hear the word Pentecost, I aint thinking of no sevens. I'm thinking of fives! When do we celebrate Pentecost? It's 50 days after easter! Not 7, and try as you might, 50 isn't 49!

Well friends, today we we get to 50 because of Buzz Lightyear. Because with today, with God through Jesus and with the power of the Holy Spirit which baptized the those folks at Pentecost in fire and which fire us up through our own baptism in the fire of the Holy Spirit, we're to go to ininity and beyond. If 49 is the number of infinite perfection, if it is 7 times 7, 50 is one more than that. We celebrate on this 50th that is, God is beyond infinite perfection.

And what's amazing is that the perfection of God is not so remote and above us that we have no part to play. That greatness of God which goes beyond infinity is something WE ARE PART OF.

Our very own Dr. Richard Sobak along with the choir are going to show that off as they sing at the anthem today about the spiritual gifts of the Holy Spirit, gifts spoken about by Isaiah and by Paul in just about every one of his Epistles and which we remember today. And you know how many of them there are? Seven!

I promise you I am not drunk, for it is only 9am in the morning, I'm just full of the holy spirit.

Your gifts that play off of and compound with the gifts of everyone at this church are part of God's equation. You are part of the mathematics that create this infinitely complex and beautiful existence.

Your gifts are in your voice, in your story, in the coffee you brew in the kitchen and the conversations you have with one another, and in the talents you share or which are to be discovered. Your gifts are in your hurts too. Pentecost is a really fun and wonderful day, but our faith isn't about the happy joyful stuff. I don't mean to celebrate any pain you may have as I say this, but your struggles and sins and sufferings are a gift in this place, not for reason of the hurt itself but by reason of its being here with us so that we can bear the difficulty too. Infinity includes the good and the bad, the joy and the hurt.

Speak the language of your soul, the language you've learned through a life. Speak it in this place with the rest of us, let's join in that holy cacophony of Pentecost that joins beyond infinity as we too speak of God's deeds of power.

Amen.