

HEAR WHAT THE SPIRIT IS SAYING

In Scripture and Prayer and The Great Cloud of Witnesses

Week of May 5, 2024

Collect for the Sixth Sunday of Easter

O God, you have prepared for those who love you such good things as surpass our understanding: Pour into our hearts such love towards you, that we, loving you in all things and above all things, may obtain your promises, which exceed all that we can desire; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.** BCP 225

Acts 10:44-48 NRSVue, 2021

In our New Testament lesson Peter has gone to visit Cornelius, a Gentile and Roman centurion, and has proclaimed to him the good news of Jesus, that all who believe in Jesus will receive forgiveness of sins. Even as Peter is speaking, the Holy Spirit falls upon the gathered and they extol God and speak in tongues, as had happened to Jewish disciples with the arrival of the Spirit. The Jewish believers who had come with Peter are astounded that the Spirit has fallen impartially also upon Gentiles, and Peter is persuaded that baptism must be extended to these new believers.

- 44 While Peter was still speaking, the Holy Spirit fell upon all who heard the word.
45 The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astounded that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on the gentiles,
46 for they heard them speaking in tongues and extolling God. Then Peter said,
47 “Can anyone withhold the water for baptizing these people who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?”
48 So he ordered them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they invited him to stay for several days.

Exploring Acts 10:44-48

Acts. This book is the sequel to the gospel according to Luke. Beginning with Jesus' ascension, Luke tells the story of the beginnings of the church. By no means a comprehensive history, it does however describe the spread of the church from Jerusalem to all of Palestine, and as far as Greece. The episodes he reports show how Christianity arose out of Judaism. He shows us something of the struggles the church underwent in accepting Gentiles as members. The Holy Spirit guides and strengthens the church as it spreads through much of the Roman Empire.

Theological Perspective

By Noel Leo Erskine

We may appropriately refer to these verses as the [Gentile Pentecost](#). “The Holy Spirit fell upon all.” At Pentecost the Holy Spirit fell on all who were in Jerusalem, then the center of the Jewish church. The scene changes in [Acts 10](#), as the Holy Spirit interrupts Peter’s preaching outside Jerusalem as the gospel is carried to the Gentile world. Through the Holy Spirit the life, death, and resurrection of Christ are mediated to foreigners, and [Joel 2](#) is fulfilled as the gospel is proclaimed to men and women, sons and daughters outside the Jewish circle. A new day dawns as Gentiles under the aegis of the Holy Spirit break out in tongues and lift their voices in praise to God.

The larger context of this chapter points us to Peter’s vision of a smorgasbord of food, much of which Jews are forbidden to eat, and the subsequent visit of Cornelius’s messengers.

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Peter begins to make interpretative sense of the command to “Get up, Peter, kill and eat” without due concern for Jewish law against eating reptiles ([Lev. 11:29–38](#)) and birds ([Lev. 11:13–19](#)) that are considered ceremoniously unclean. Peter responds to the vision with an emphatic “By no means, Lord; for I have never eaten anything that is profane or unclean” ([10:14](#)). Peter’s response may be inspired more by Jewish custom than his lack of faith in the heavenly vision. It is then that the heavenly voice says to him three times: “What God has made clean, you must not call profane” ([v. 15](#)).

It is clear Peter is “greatly puzzled” about this vision. The knock on his door brings him back to what God is seeking to say to him, although he is apparently still caught up in his vision and at first fails to hear their knocking. The Spirit of God intervenes, indeed interrupts the rhythm of Peter’s plans, in order to make him aware of what God is seeking to make happen through him.

The intervention of the Spirit in Peter’s meditation indicates that God in the Spirit often goes before to plead the case of those on the margins, those who are excluded. In Peter’s case the Spirit interrupts his meditation and orders him to engage strangers at his door. Peter is presented with another opportunity to learn something new concerning the divine persistence on behalf of persons in need. It is interesting that an apostle as devout as Peter has something fresh to learn about the divine character. “While Peter was still thinking about the vision, the Spirit said to him, ‘Look, three men are searching for you. Now get up, go down, and go with them without hesitation; for I have sent them’ ” ([vv. 19, 20](#)).

Peter is directed in the vision and now the strangers at the door confirm that he is to go to the house of Gentile Cornelius. Peter embodies the gospel of inclusion by offering hospitality and lodging to the strangers at his door. He is beginning to understand that the mission of the church includes the stranger, the outsider, the Gentile. “What God has made clean, you must not call profane” ([v. 15](#)).

Peter travels from Joppa, where he is staying in the house of Simon the Tanner, along with members of the Jewish church, to Cornelius’s house in Caesarea. In the meantime Cornelius has invited his relatives and close friends to be on hand for Peter’s visit. After Cornelius shares why he sent for Peter and is instructed that obeisance before Peter is unnecessary, as Peter is only human, Peter begins to address the gathering. Peter personalizes his sermon, alluding to what God has revealed to him and the things pertaining to Jesus and his Spirit of which he is a witness. “God has shown me that I should not call anyone profane or unclean” ([v. 28](#)). According to Peter, the purpose of his visit to Cornelius’s house is based on divine revelation. The nature of this revelation has to do with a new understanding about salvation. Prior to this revelation Peter understood that salvation was made possible through the church as a gift for the Jewish people. But now salvation includes foreigners, and the good news is that they are to be included in the new Israel of God. In this saving revelation, God’s love for the outsider, for the Gentile, is made plain.

Peter implies that another reason for including foreigners in the new Israel of God is his pondering of [Joel 2](#), to which he alluded in his famous sermon on the day of Pentecost. “I truly understand that God shows no partiality, but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him” ([vv. 34, 35](#)). Peter shares with Cornelius this new knowledge concerning the nature of God: God is no respecter of persons. God does not discriminate. God is a God of justice.

He was able to make clear that the primary lesson we learn in divine revelation is not new information about the divine but truths concerning the nature of God. The primary lessons are not what we learn about each other or the church but what we learn concerning God’s character and God’s mission in church and world. Peter learned something new about God: the gospel is for all who are pleasing to God and fear God.

It is instructive that in Peter’s sermon in Cornelius’s house the Holy Spirit interrupts him again. It is as if the Holy Spirit seeks to remind the listeners that, as eloquent as Peter’s sermon was, what is crucial is not Peter’s perception of the gospel, but Peter allowing God to speak through and in spite of him. God was and is and must always be the subject of salvation. Peter was an instrument, not the source of salvation. The new revelation made possible by the inbreaking of the Holy One was clear: The Gentile believers belong as much to the household of God as Jewish believers. Gentiles do not have to become Jews. God accepts them as they are.

Psalm 98 NRSVue, 2021

A song of thanksgiving and praise to the victorious Lord, who has made divine righteousness known and shown faithfulness to the people of God.

- 1 O sing to the LORD a new song, for he has done marvelous things.
His right hand and his holy arm have gotten him victory.
- 2 The LORD has made known his victory;
he has revealed his vindication in the sight of the nations.
- 3 He has remembered his steadfast love and faithfulness to the house of Israel.
All the ends of the earth have seen the victory of our God.
- 4 Make a joyful noise to the LORD, all the earth;
break forth into joyous song and sing praises.
- 5 Sing praises to the LORD with the lyre, with the lyre and the sound of melody.
- 6 With trumpets and the sound of the horn
make a joyful noise before the King, the LORD.
- 7 Let the sea roar and all that fills it, the world and those who live in it.
- 8 Let the floods clap their hands; let the hills sing together for joy
- 9 at the presence of the LORD, for he is coming to judge the earth.
He will judge the world with righteousness and the peoples with equity.

Exploring Psalm 98

Psalms is a collection of collections. The psalms were written over many centuries, stretching from the days of Solomon's temple (about 950 BC) to after the Exile (about 350 BC.) Psalms are of five types: hymns of praise, laments, thanksgiving psalms, royal psalms, and wisdom psalms. Within the book, there are five "books"; there is a doxology ("Blessed be ... Amen and Amen") at the end of each book.

Theological Perspective

By Ismael García

The central theological instruction of this psalm is that, in fact, the Lord reigns. The Lord who has ordered creation by taming the waters and the wind is the same Lord who has conquered those nations who have attempted to deny and who have actively opposed God's redeeming purpose. The Lord's continuous intervention within history and creation manifests God's steadfast and faithful love for all spheres of creation. While transcendent, the Holy One is neither absent nor indifferent to the historical lot of God's subjects.

Ultimately, it is the ordering rule of the Lord that alone provides the stability and dependability that makes it possible for us to live full lives within both nature and history. God's new, unexpected, and marvelous acts do not just sustain order but point toward the creation of new possibilities of life beyond all human expectations. A new song thus becomes imperative, so that all creation praises and celebrates these unexpected, unique, and marvelous deeds of the Lord. We can sing new songs of praise because we have witness of how the Lord is in control and that nothing will stand against or defeat God's liberating purpose. We can sing new songs of praise because God too is constantly doing new things among us—new things to renew nature and history as well. The salvation of the Lord will prevail—good news indeed and worthy of a new song.

The victory of the Lord has been made historically manifest through the freeing of Israel from bondage and granting Israel the gift of land and new life. God alone, by God's own power and might, has achieved this political and military goal on Israel's behalf ([vv. 2–3](#)). The focus of the psalm, however, is neither the privileges nor the benefits gained by Israel. What is at stake is the unveiling of God's redeeming nature and purpose. The salvation and liberation that are the exclusive prerogative of God's action are not just for Israel; they are a sign of God's gift to humanity and to all creation ([v. 9](#)). The Lord reveals through Israel God's rule and God's command over all that is. We all have witnessed these deeds; thus, the liberating and salvific acts of the Lord become the occasion to celebrate, not just for Israel but for all the nations ([vv. 3–6](#)). God's mercy to Israel is the first fruits of God's mercy to all nations—and to all creation. All nations can praise and acknowledge the good news of the new reign of God, because they too will inherit its liberation and the fullness of life that are intrinsically intertwined with it.

The judgment of the Lord ([v. 9](#)) is an occasion for joy and celebration, because it is neither merely vindictive nor merely punitive. God's judgment is essentially righteous. It is the kind of judgment that does bring down, with God's holy arm ([v. 1](#)), all those who oppose God, but essentially God's judgment consists of a new world order that represents a radical departure from the present orders, which demand human sacrifice and are sustained by structures of domination and oppression.

All nations can rejoice, because they have witnessed the rule of righteousness, that transvaluation of all values that awaits them. God's judgment is good news because it sets all our relationships right again. It is the creation of a new order under the judgment of the One whose rule does not need to oppress, subjugate, or dominate others. As righteous, the Lord's rule announces freedom from the arbitrary and domineering proclivities of our present rulers. The Lord's judgment brings the kind of justice and equity that makes it possible for humans to live in harmony among themselves and with the whole of creation. The salvation of the Lord and the justice of the Lord are one and the same. No dimension of existence that has suffered the distortions and abuses of the prevailing powers and principalities will escape it. The personal, the social, the political, and the ecological spheres will be made anew and whole again ([vv. 7–9](#)). Thus, even the sea and the earth are invited to praise and rejoice. No one and nothing ought to avoid the imperative of wanting to praise; all are invited, all are redeemed.

For Christians, the Christ event is another historical manifestation of the marvelous and unexpected working of God's steadfast love for us. It is another reminder that the transcendent Holy God is not distant but makes God's self actively present within history and creation (Emmanuel, God with us). The character of the new social movement Jesus initiates manifests the justice and equity that are intrinsically intertwined with God's judgment and that discloses for all those who have eyes history's ultimate purpose and meaning. This is why God's reign is central to Jesus' words and deeds and why he prays for God's kingdom to come. Being witnesses and models of this new righteousness constitutes the new historical project Jesus invites his disciples to join.

This is what makes the proclamation of the gospel good news. The good news is that the captive and the poor will be liberated and the blind will be given sight ([Luke 4:18–19](#)). The good news is that no dimension of reality will be untouched by the redeeming activity of God. The good news is that by God's grace we are justified in spite of our shortcomings. The whole of history and creation are restored, and all relations are set on the right path again. The judgment of God affirms and anticipates this new reality. All of us thus can rejoice and sing a new song to the One whose justice, mercy, peace, and truth are one and the same.

1 John 5:1-6 NRSVue, 2021

In this lesson we hear that belief in Jesus as the Christ, together with love of all God's children, form the heart of the Christian faith. This faith is victorious over the world; that is, over godless society. To love God means to obey God's commandments, and the essence of the commandments is the love of all who are of God. The one who overcomes the world believes that Jesus is the Son of God, who was present in the world not only through the water of his baptism but in the blood of his crucifixion.

- 1 Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God, and everyone who loves the parent loves the child.
- 2 By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and obey his commandments.
- 3 For the love of God is this, that we obey his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome,

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- 4 for whatever is born of God conquers the world. And this is the victory that conquers the world, our faith.
- 5 Who is it who conquers the world but the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?
- 6 This is the one who came by water and blood, Jesus Christ, not with the water only but with the water and the blood. And the Spirit is the one that testifies, for the Spirit is the truth.

Exploring 1 John 5:1-6

1 John. This epistle was addressed to a general audience, unlike those written by Paul. It shares a style, phrases and expressions with the Gospel according to John, so it is very likely that both were written by the same person. It appears to have been circulated to various churches. The author seeks to combat heresy, specifically that the spirit is entirely good but matter is entirely evil. John tells his readers that morality and ethical behaviour are important for Christians.

Commentary on 1 John 5:1-6

By Judith Jones

[The community to whom 1 John was written](#) was facing a crisis.

Former members of the community were denying that Jesus was truly the Messiah, God's flesh and blood, fully human, son. Like many churches facing doctrinal conflict, 1 John's community seems to have been confused, afraid, and unsure what to do. Whom should they believe? How could they know what was true, and what was not? How should they react?

1 John's simple, confident response is as relevant today as it was when the letter was first written: You know who you are, you know whose you are, and you know what you have been told from the beginning. God's own Spirit shows us what is true. There's no need to panic or argue. Focus on living your faith instead. God has the whole situation under control.

1 John reminds the community that everyone who believes that Jesus is the Messiah — the anointed Son of God — has been born of God. They have no reason to be afraid, for they belong to God. As God's children, they can rest assured that they are loved and protected by their divine parent.

If they love God, then naturally they will love anyone born of God too, because how can one love a parent without loving the child whom the parent brought into being? The child of God referred to in [1 John 5:1](#) is first and foremost Jesus, but the author also means to say any child of God, as verse two makes clear. Jesus is born of God, but everyone who believes in him becomes his brother or sister. Whoever loves the parent loves not just one of the parent's children but all of them. The consequences of this conclusion are enormous: every child of God is linked to Jesus. Every injustice done to a child of God echoes the injustice done to him. Every act of violence committed against a child of God recalls the violence committed against Jesus.

Loving God, loving God's children, and keeping God's commandments form inseparable links in a circular chain. In its depiction of this interwoven reality, 1 John echoes Jesus' conversation with his disciples on the night before his death: "If you love me, you will keep my commandments" ([John 14:15](#)); "They who have my commandments and keep them are those who love me; and those who love me will be loved by my Father, and I will love them

and reveal myself to them” ([John 14:21](#)); “This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you” ([John 15:12](#)).

1 John reminds its readers that God’s commands are not burdensome. Here again we hear an echo of Jesus, who denounces the religious leaders for loading people down with “heavy burdens hard to bear” ([Matthew 23:4](#)). The Greek word that NRSV translates as “heavy” is *barus*, the same adjective translated as “burdensome” in [1 John 5:3](#). By contrast, Jesus says, “Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens ... For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light” ([Matthew 11:28–30](#)). Like Jesus, 1 John insists that God’s commands are not difficult. In essence, they consist in the call to love, “not in word or speech, but in truth and action” ([1 John 3:18](#)). Genuine faith, therefore, is firmly connected with active love.

Those with true faith also confess that Jesus is the Son of God. For 1 John, confessing that Jesus is the Son of God means believing that Jesus is the one who came through (*dia*) water and blood ([1 John 5:6](#)). The verse goes on to specify, “not in (*en*) water only, but in (*en*) water and in (*en*) blood” (*my translations*). Scholars argue about the precise meaning of this phrase. Some suggest that it refers to the blood and water that came out of Jesus’ pierced side after his crucifixion ([John 19:34](#)). Others see it as referring to the water in which Jesus was baptized and the blood that flowed from him during his crucifixion, or as encompassing his whole life from the breaking of his mother’s bag of waters to his bloody death. Whatever the precise meaning of the phrase, its basic point is clear: Jesus did not simply appear to be human. He was truly flesh and blood. Nor was he God’s Son only during his baptism and ministry. The fact that he was God’s Son did not mean that Jesus somehow escaped the full consequences of being human. He shared the whole human experience of living and dying. He remained God’s Son even in his agonizing death by torture on the cross. Jesus was born, baptized, and crucified to empower all of us to become God’s children, cleansed by his blood ([1 John 1:7](#)). This is not some inessential doctrinal point. 1 John insists that this is the heart of our faith.

Truly Christian faith conquers the world not by military might or doctrinal arguments or coercion, but by love. Christians believe in the Son of God who, rather than shedding the blood of others to prove that he was the Messiah, allowed his own blood to be shed. God’s children triumph not by inflicting suffering on others or by avoiding pain at all costs but by allowing God to work within and through them even in their suffering. What applies to individual Christians applies also to the Christian community. The Church triumphs over false teaching not by force or argument, but because of and through the suffering love of the crucified Messiah. This is the truth to which the Holy Spirit testifies: God’s son was tortured and broken for us. This is the faith that overcomes the world: God’s love brings life even out of brokenness and death. This is the victory to which we are called: loving God’s children, and thus living our faith in the crucified, risen Son of God.

[Commentary on 1 John 5:1-6](#) posted May 10, 2015 to [Working Preacher](#) for Easter 6B

John 15:9-17 NRSVue, 2021

In our gospel Jesus speaks of his great love for his disciples and calls upon them to show this same love toward each other that has come to him from the Father. Jesus is talking with his disciples shortly before his death, when he will be taken away from them. But this love has now formed his followers into a new community in relationship with Jesus and the Father. They are no longer servants but friends.

- 9 As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love.
- 10 If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love.
- 11 I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete.
- 12 "This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.
- 13 No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends.
- 14 You are my friends if you do what I command you.
- 15 I do not call you servants any longer, because the servant does not know what the master is doing, but I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father.
- 16 You did not choose me, but I chose you. And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask him in my name.
- 17 I am giving you these commands so that you may love one another.

Exploring John 15:9-17

John is the fourth gospel. Its author makes no attempt to give a chronological account of the life of Jesus (which the other gospels do, to a degree), but rather "...these things are written so that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name." John includes what he calls signs, stories of miracles, to help in this process.

Homiletical Perspective

by Thomas Troeger

The words that you hear in one time and place can have an entirely different impact on you if you hear them in another time and place. "I hope you are doing well" may seem like nothing more than a polite greeting in a casual conversation over the phone, but the phrase has a much more focused meaning if it is spoken by a friend visiting you in the hospital. They are the exact same words, but they carry a different resonance, a different intensity and inflection.

Meaning shifts with the setting. That is an important principle to remember whenever we preach from the Gospel of John, for its words are always sounding in at least two different contexts. There is the immediate story line, the unfolding narrative of Christ and his ministry as recorded on the pages of the Bible, and there is the community that gave birth to the Gospel of John and the circumstances in which that community lived some three generations after Jesus' earthly ministry.

Consider how the exact same words of Christ would sound in these two different contexts. If in the face of Jesus' impending death we read, "No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends" ([15:13](#)), then the verse leaps out to us as an interpretation of the sacrificial action Christ is about to suffer. But what happens if we read it

in the context of the community of John, as it encounters increasing conflict and persecution at the end of the first century CE? The words seem no longer to refer only to Christ and his death, but to the sacrifice of members of the community.

We do not have to choose between one reading and the other. Instead, by identifying both readings the preacher helps the congregation understand how the life of faith keeps expanding and deepening the meaning of Christ's words. It is a process that has kept the church vital generation after generation, and it continues in our own lives today.

Preachers might develop a sermon that draws upon this process to examine our life in light of the hopes that Christ names. For example, imagine how the following words might have sounded to disciples about to experience the arrest and torture of their beloved leader: "I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete" ([15:11](#)). How can Christ speak of joy on such an occasion as this! Then imagine how these words would sound to a community of believers at the end of the first century who themselves are now grappling with rejection and persecution. Did they recall these words of Christ and find in them some profounder perception of what constitutes genuine joy? Finally, what about us, the heirs of Christ and the community of John? How do these words redefine the meaning of joy as we move through strenuous times?

Or consider the different possible meanings of this astounding statement: "I do not call you servants any longer ... but I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father" ([15:15](#)). Imagine first what this means in the context of the immediate story line: Christ is about to leave the disciples, and he is suddenly announcing a new understanding of their relationship. At the very time when they are feeling the least secure and will soon abandon him, Christ grants them the dignity and responsibility of being friends, of having heard from him everything that he has heard from God. In the Greek it is even stronger: they are no longer "slaves" but "friends." In ancient times, to be called a "slave" of a good master was not denigrating, and it could even be a title of respect. But still a "slave" was not on the same level as a friend. A slave's status obligated him to support a master through difficult times, but a friend would do it freely, for reasons of mutual commitment and affection. Generations later, when the community of John heard this passage, they might have received it as a call to shoulder the responsibility of remaining faithful to Christ their friend, even in the face of escalating troubles. What, then, does it mean for us today to be Christ's friends? If we picture ourselves only as his servants, we may be eschewing the greater mutuality that Christ seeks with us as his friends.

Finally, consider from all three perspectives—the immediate context of the story, the community of John, and our present lives—Christ's statement, " 'You did not choose me but I chose you' " ([John 15:16a](#)). For the disciples on that final night, it would be a reminder that even though things were about to unravel, they were embraced by a divine purpose larger than their individual power of choice. For the community of John, hearing Christ chose them might give them the assurance they needed to stand steadfast as they encountered intense opposition. And for us living in a culture that celebrates self-autonomy and choice, these words may call us back to an awareness of God's initiative in seeking us out, gathering us into a community, and sending us into the world.

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A sermon unfolding along the above lines would be less declarative and more exploratory, reflecting on the process of growing into the words of Christ, tracing how the life of a faithful community leads it deeper and deeper into the meaning of joy, friendship, and being chosen by Christ. The sermon would help people to understand how the Word is a living word whose implications grow clearer as we hold the complexities of our life in its illuminating light. It would give people a vision of how they can live a life that answers Christ's deepest hopes and prayers.

Bibliographical and Contributor Information

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Odds & Ends

Homiletical Perspective on Acts 10:44–48

by Barbara K. Lundblad

While Peter was still speaking: before he had a chance to baptize Cornelius and his family, before he heard their confession of faith, before confirmation or new member classes—before any of the essential preparations, the Holy Spirit fell upon all who heard the word. Of course the “circumcised believers” who had come with Peter were astounded. But Peter asked a question that astounded them even more: “Can anyone withhold the water for baptizing these people who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?” (v. 47).

Peter echoes the question the Ethiopian eunuch asked Philip back in chapter 8: “Look, here is water! What is to prevent me from being baptized?” Those who heard that story could have shouted, “Everything prevents you! You’re a different race, you are from a far-off country, you are a sexual misfit, and you have had very little instruction.” In both stories, there were good reasons to withhold the water of baptism. Yet the Holy Spirit surprised Philip on a desert road and surprised Peter in Cornelius’s house.

The Holy Spirit can be disruptive. Church historian Rosemary Radford Ruether says that the church must be organized to do two things:

- To pass on the tradition from one generation to another
- To be open to the winds of the Holy Spirit by which the tradition comes alive in each generation

Jesus modeled this twofold task as he talked with his disciples at the end of Luke. He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, and he told them to stay in the city until they had been clothed with power from on high (Luke 24:44–49). This twofold mission is fleshed out by Jesus’ followers in the book of Acts: the story is passed on from eyewitnesses to those who have not yet heard, and the Holy Spirit surprises many, including preachers such as Philip and Peter.

Sometimes, the Spirit surprises the church and disrupts good order.

Barbara K. Lundblad, “Homiletical Perspective on Acts 10:44–48,” in *Feasting on the Word: Preaching the Revised Common Lectionary: Year B*, ed. David L. Bartlett and Barbara Brown Taylor, vol. 2 (Louisville, KY; London: Westminster John Knox Press, 2008)..