



e - Votion



Dear Friends,

Today I am reading Acts 2:14a, 36-41

But Peter, standing with the eleven, raised his voice and addressed them, "Men of Judea, and all who live in Jerusalem,"

Therefore let the entire house of Israel know with certainty that God has made Him both Lord and Messiah, this Jesus whom you crucified.

Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, "Brothers, what should we do?" Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you, your children, and for all who are far away, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to him." And he testified with many other arguments and exhorted them, saying, "Save yourselves from this corrupt generation." So those who welcomed his message were baptized, and that day about three thousand persons were added.



Devotional:

I've been noticing my affinity for violent TV shows lately. I scrolled through my favorite shows (NO JUDGMENTS HERE...LOL) and they are: The Blacklist, Criminal Minds, Law and Order SVU, NCIS, and NCIS LA---all of which involve violence and a good guy coming in to save the day. I was feeling a little anxious about that until I remembered that for YEARS one of America's most favorite sports has been Football--which looks to me like grown men running into each other at full throttle... The crowd cheers when there is a pile of people on the field. Whew-I feel better now!

Violence is nothing new. Soon after God created people Cain murdered his brother Abel in cold blood. And not long after that God decided to wipe out creation with a flood. The only good guy in that story was Noah, a righteous man, who was saved. A rainbow was then planted in the sky to remind us all that God would give us all another chance! I saw the movie Noah recently and it was right up my alley--filled with violence and a hero. The return of spring every year reminds us of new life and hope for us all despite our bad behavior.

In this scripture from Acts, Peter is talking about overcoming violence and bad living. He says that the world is being influenced negatively. He tells the people listening to "Save yourselves from this corrupt generation." Sounds like nothing has changed much!

Peter reminds his listeners to "Repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. Receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."

The only way to get out of the bad spot we are in is to receive forgiveness and new life offered in God's Holy Spirit. We can count on this promise and our children can inherit it.

The astounding part of the Scripture is the baptism of 3000 people in one day! Can you imagine what First

UMC would be like if my sermons were SO GOOD that 3000 people joined in one day????? WOW...

The church today has a big task in teaching about repentance from a mean violent world. We probably won't add 3000 people in one day. But I bet we all know people who need Jesus, who need help turning away from self-destructive, violent behavior.

And the violence of today is not just human being to human being. We have violated our earth with our constant abuse of God's creation. We pollute and destroy the goodness around us. We continue to produce new ways to upset the delicate balance of nature. I am so excited that we have an edible forest beginning to grow here. Maybe we can learn to live in harmony with God's creation and reach a new generation of people. We have been given the responsibility of being stewards of the earth. Stewardship of the earth goes along with repentance from destructive behavior.

Peter's message was relevant for his day. We have opportunities to be relevant in today's world. With the new life growing around us, I see a great opportunity for relevance! Take care of each other and of God's earth!

The Native Americans who inhabited this land before we invaded them had an appreciation for the environment. Chief Seattle says this: "Every part of this earth is sacred to my people. Every shining pine needle, every sandy shore, every mist in the dark woods, every clearing, and humming insect is holy in the memory and experience of my people. The sap which courses through the tree carries the memories of the red man. The perfumed flowers are our sisters; the deer, the horse, the great eagle, these are our brothers. The rocky crests, the juices in the meadows, the body heat of the pony, and man all belong to the same family. The reflection in the clear water of the lake tells of events and memories in the life of my people. The water's murmur is the voice of my father's father. The shining water that moves in the stream and rivers is not just water but the blood of our ancestors. The rivers carry our canoes and feed our children. We are part of the earth and it is part of us. " HALLELUJAH!!!

Please pray for:

- Evelyn Williams
- Jane Eddy
- Elizabeth Bailey
- Helen Holyfield
- Our church and all our members.
- Our new Minister of Youth: Lisa Reis, who begins part-time Thursday May 1.

Calendar and Announcements:

- Thursday May 1 Finance Committee

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"Preach the gospel at all times and when necessary use words."

St. Francis of Assisi

Blessings,
Jane Taylor
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Johnson City TN