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Acts 2:1-12
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Happy Birthday (To be Human)

Good morning Church family. This morning I want to take you on a journey throughout time. From the creation of the world to an event two thousand years ago when the Holy Spirit descended upon a few Jews. But really, we're going to ask the question, what does it mean to be humans? Are we good or bad, wise or foolish, dispersed or unified? Please pray with me.

Lord, may the words of my mouth and the meditations of all of our hearts be pleasing to you. Our rock and our redeemer. Amen.

To be human is to have God's divine breath within you. This is the Holy Spirit descending on the disciples on Pentecost

I was surfing the internet as I do, looking at some inspirational posts by my pastor friends when I made the mistake of looking down in the comments. And I saw a comment that said, The God of Christianity is so wrathful and unfair, humans did not know about right or wrong, but were still expected to not eat an apple. Then when humans were wicked, God brought a flood to destroy the earth. Then when the people try to build a huge tower to the heavens, God halts their work by making them all speak different languages.

When I read this I was dismayed because what they heard from the Bible was that humans were sinful and needed to be punished by God. This interpretation did not see humans filled with divine breath, but humans with total depravity and corrupt souls. And to be honest, this is an all too common way to read the Bible.

And I replied. Well, that wrathful and unfair God is not the God that I worship. Because when we read ancient stories, especially stories of creation, flood, and the tower of babel, I read stories that exist outside of time as we experience time. I argue that these stories are not only trying to tell you history or what happened, but what is creation and what is humanity's relationship to Creation and God. We may read these stories as God's action. I love that God creates the world with their voice, while the other gods in Mesopotamia created the world from the corpse of their murdered mother. But if we read the story of the Tower of Babel and only get out of it that God wanted to punish human pride, we will have missed half the story.

Instead, this morning I invite you to remember these stories as explanations of how the world is. In the tower of Babel, we see that the world is divided into many different people who each speak their own language. And if we only need to go to our later service to realize that yes

indeed humans speak different languages. Yes, if we put one of our only english speakers with an only spanish speaker, they would struggle to get anything done. Imagine, there would be a lot of si and no, and wild hand gestures.

So with the image of confusion, we come to our scripture passage for this morning, we could look at the amazing miracle of God that allowed the disciples to speak in many languages, but I also love what this passage says about what it means to be human. On Pentecost, God reverses the curse of Babel so that all people can hear and understand the disciples. And just like Babel is outside of time in the past, Pentecost is our eternal future we hope for and live today. This is an invitation to hope for unity. Pentecost says that humans can work together, talk through difficult subjects, misunderstand each other, and reconcile with one another. In the beginning of this sermon, a commenter told me humans were depraved and sinful, but at Pentecost we can work together to overcome our shortcomings and are blessed with the divine breath of God. Or to say it another way, Pentecost declares that humans are good and filled with the divine energy of creation.

So, let us celebrate our new beginning as part of God's good creation. Let us be filled with the divine breath of God, speaking blessings to one another, working through our disputes with grace and forgiveness. Let us work to build that kingdom of God as hard as our ancestors worked to build that tower of Babel. And let us be filled with the humility that comes when we realize that our neighbor is filled with that same breath of God and is worthy of respect and love. Because in the words of Brené Brown a professor of social work, What we don't need in the midst of struggle is shame for being HUMAN