

“Hearing & Understanding God & Each Other”

Psalm 139:1-18, Acts 2:1-8 & 11b-21, Romans 8:26b-27

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Have you ever played *Charades*, *Pictionary* or *Taboo* with two people on the same team that know each other really well and are excellent communicators? One of them draws a squiggle and in a second the other has the correct word. Whereas you draw a fairly good resemblance, and no one gets even close. In *Charades*, the two people that know each other well are in sync with their motions and thoughts, while you are up there flailing around with no correct answer or stand motionless, because you have no idea how to communicate the phrase. *Taboo* is where two people with a common history really have an edge. One says, “Last week we went to a _____,” and the other immediately knows the answer.

Tragically our written and verbal communication rarely, if ever, is fully understood. Human system researchers have concluded that it is impossible for two people to clearly, fully communicate with each other so that they completely understand each other. Also, the receiver of the message never remains emotionally neutral they either charge up or charge down the message. There are so many factors that further distort our communication, fatigue, distractions, stress, noise, time, emotions, thoughts, past experiences, anxiety, depression and on and on. All of us, each of us, has baggage that colors our communication. Researchers begin each meeting with each person telling how they feel. It enables us to enhance our communication. If someone is sad they will likely look sad and unenthused even if the best emotion ever is being considered. Communication is almost completely distorted when a person feels hurt by the communicator or is angry. Their thoughts run wild and snowball and ever growing list of perceptions that they perceive the other person is saying and doing to hurt them. Most of the time the communicator’s intent is not to send negative message, and often they are unaware that the other person has all these negative perceptions. The inverse is true as well. If a person is awestruck by another, then their every communication is perceived in a positive light. The communicator is appreciated for positive messages that they never even intended to send. Fear is another communication destroyer.

Only God fully, completely knows and understands us. The psalmist sings, **Psalm 139:1-18 NLT “O Lord, you have examined my heart and know everything about me. You know when I sit down or stand up. You know my thoughts even when I’m far away. You see me when I travel and when I rest at home. You know everything I do. You know what I am going to say even before I say it, Lord. You go before me and follow me. You place your hand of blessing on my head. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, too great for me to understand! I can never escape from your Spirit! I can never get away from your presence! If I go up to heaven, you are there; if I go down to the grave, you are there. If I ride the wings of the morning, if I dwell by the farthest oceans, even there your hand will guide me, and your strength will support me. I could ask the darkness to hide me and the light around me to become night—but even in darkness I cannot hide from you. To you the night shines as bright as day. Darkness and light are the same to you. You made all the delicate, inner parts of my body and knit me together in my mother’s womb. Thank you for making me so wonderfully complex! Your workmanship is marvelous—how well I know it. You watched me as I was being formed in utter seclusion, as I was woven together in the dark of the womb. You saw me before I was born. Every day of my life was recorded in your book. Every moment was laid out before a single day had passed. How precious are your thoughts about me, O God. They cannot be numbered! I can’t even count them; they outnumber the grains of sand! And when I wake up, you are still with me!”**

God fully, completely perceives every thought and feeling even when we do not know what we are thinking or feeling. The Holy Spirit accurately perceives our subconscious and is connected and will always be connected to our soul. The Holy Spirit unites, communicates, binds all of us with God and each other. Scripture explains, **Romans 26b-27 MSG “God’s Spirit is right alongside helping us along. If we don’t know how or what to pray, it doesn’t matter. The Holy Spirit does our praying in and for us, making prayer out of our**

wordless sighs, our aching groans. God knows us far better than we know ourselves.” Matt Spotts said, “At its very best, prayer is a dizzyingly authentic experience in which God comes to know us in all our beauty and all our messiness while we, in turn, come to know God.”

Pentecost is the celebration of a time when the Holy Spirit enabled people to fully, completely understand each other which was the beginning of the church and is a foretaste of the perfect communication we will enjoy in heaven. **Acts 2:1-8, 11b-21 NLT** “**On the day of Pentecost all the believers were meeting together in one place. Suddenly, there was a sound from heaven like the roaring of a mighty windstorm, and it filled the house where they were sitting. Then, what looked like flames or tongues of fire appeared and settled on each of them. And everyone present was filled with the Holy Spirit and began speaking in other languages, as the Holy Spirit gave them this ability. At that time there were devout Jews from every nation living in Jerusalem. When they heard the loud noise, everyone came running, and they were bewildered to hear their own languages being spoken by the believers. They were completely amazed. “How can this be?” they exclaimed. “These people are all from Galilee, and yet we hear them speaking in our own native languages! And we all hear these people speaking in our own languages about the wonderful things God has done!” They stood there amazed and perplexed. “What can this mean?” they asked each other. But others in the crowd ridiculed them, saying, “They’re just drunk, that’s all!” Then Peter stepped forward with the eleven other apostles and shouted to the crowd, “Listen carefully, all of you, fellow Jews and residents of Jerusalem! Make no mistake about this. These people are not drunk, as some of you are assuming. Nine o’clock in the morning is much too early for that. No, what you see was predicted long ago by the prophet Joel: ‘In the last days,’ God says, ‘I will pour out my Spirit upon all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy. Your young men will see visions, and your old men will dream dreams. In those days I will pour out my Spirit even on my servants—men and women alike—and they will prophesy. And I will cause wonders in the heavens above and signs on the earth below—blood and fire and clouds of smoke. The sun will become dark, and the moon will turn blood red before that great and glorious day of the Lord arrives. But everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.’”**

Today we celebrate that we are each filled with the Holy Spirit. We celebrate that God knows and understands us completely. We celebrate our calling, commissioning, and purpose to be a person who seeks to understand God, to understand others and communicates in a loving manner that builds all of us into the likeness of Jesus weaving us all together in harmony.

Jesus came to assure us of God’s transforming love. The Holy Spirit is loving in us to disperse confusion, turmoil and fear with clarity, peace and grace. Pentecost is an invitation to see visions and dream dreams. Imagine the joy and love of being able to fully communicate and be fully understood, to know you are safe in grace to share everything and be able to fully understand another. Imagine a world where everyone is able to fully and completely communicate. This happened on Pentecost. We are to strive for it in our family of faith. We are to help the world communicate; to be fully present with others; to listen to what they are really communicating by let go of what we expect them to say; by actively listening, by saying back what we think we heard checking for accuracy before we make assumptions and extrapolations; to breathe together of the Holy Spirit so we can hear the love language of others. It takes deep listening to understand for each of us speaks a unique language. Pentecost is invitation to share the wonderful things God has done; to share the wonderful things God is doing today in your life and in the world; to listen to God; to perceive the transforming grace of resurrection; to image how God is restoring your soul; to imagine how God is perfecting you; to imagine how God will save everyone; to imagine how God will save the cosmos. Pentecost is a celebration of sharing the wonders and signs of God that will completely amazing us. Today we celebrate that God, with our help, through our loving communication, is bringing all of humanity together through God’s transforming, renewing grace. Amen