

This week has been an interesting week. It's been interesting because at the beginning of the week, everywhere I went, people were happy to see me. By the end of the week, everywhere I went, people were not happy to see me. It's one of those weeks. It started off just being exciting. It's a new start, a new beginning. We get to do different things, and we had all kinds of great opportunities. This week we had a webinar, a couple meetings talking about how great it is to be in small, rural communities, how great it is to be in a church like ours. And so I was excited. In my first meeting, I'm standing, I'm not standing, it's a zoom meeting, cause I'm sitting there. I'm sitting there, and I'm listening to somebody tell me how everything we do is wrong. Somebody is telling me that everything that I believe is wrong. And I let her go. And other people stand up, and they talk about that. It's not that we need to adjust our thinking that we need to see things in a different light. And the more we talked, the more I got angry. It's an on going theme for me lately. It seems like this week, because I keep getting angry, and I let her go, and I let her go, and I let her go. And finally, I'm like, okay, this isn't the time to have this talk. This isn't the time to do these things. And we continue our talk. And finally, I started yelling, And I started yelling louder. And then, I realized that I am missing the point of this week.

I am missing the point of Pentecost because I couldn't hear anything she was saying. We were speaking in the same language, but I couldn't hear that what she was trying to say is that she's mourning what the church was. What I couldn't hear her say was how sad she was that things have to change. I couldn't hear her saying that, well, I could hear her say was that I was an idiot. That's what I heard her say, but that's not what she was trying to say at all.

We've been going through Paul's letter to the Galatians and a lot of what he talks about in there is he's trying to be the Immediary between the Jews who follow Jesus And the Gentiles. The Jews are like this person. They believe in the old traditions. They believe in the old laws. They believe in the old ways, and they think everybody should follow that way. And gentiles are on the other side of it. They're thinking, why do we need to do these things? Jesus came and talked to us. He died for us, too. If that wasn't the way it was supposed to be, why would we need to start all over and go through this? And that's like when I was thinking, well, I was listening to her. I don't agree that we have to do things a certain way. If we all did things the same exact way, then it wouldn't really matter, right? We would all be the exact same, and we'd all be boring because that's the best part about being us. We get to decide for ourselves. We get to decide within our own walls. What works for our church, but if we just follow everybody else, that's not the same thing. And the more we talked about it, the more she dug in, the more I dug in. And we missed an opportunity that we could have come together, that we could have found a better resolution than just arguing.

A lot of people use today's second reading. They're reading from Galatians as an example for hate. They use it to justify hating Muslims. That's not what it says at all. It says specifically in it that it's an allegory. It says that it's supposed to teach us a lesson. It's supposed to teach us in a way that we can hear. The first part of it is talking about the birth of Ishmael. It's talking about the old ways. It's talking about how the covenant with God came to be in a way that they can understand.

Today, Pentecost is a celebration. It's a celebration of the old ways. It's the feast of the first fruits. Pentecost is the day that God came to Moses in Mount Sinai in the burning bush. It's the day that he gave the Torah, the Ten Commandments to Moses. It's the day that the beginning of the laws were written. Pentecost is also the day that Elijah ascended. It's the day

that they saw the pillar of Fire. It's the day of speaking of the prophecies that came. We don't always think about that when we talk about Pentecost. We talk about the Holy Spirit being a part of us, coming over through the fire. For the fire is always there. The fire was there at the beginning with the Old Testament, with the Ten Commandments, with the burning bush. The fire was there when Elijah ascended, when he gave the prophecies. The fire was there when Peter was in the temple, and it came out through all of us to remind us that the Holy Spirit is in us, that the Holy Spirit talks through us, that God talks to us in ways that we can hear for some of us.

The new ways are how we continue. The new ways are how we share God's love to some. The old ways are how they share God's love. There comes a time when sometimes the old ways don't work. And we have to accept it. We have to accept and move on. There are times that the new ways don't work. And we have to accept that. We have to accept it. Sometimes we need to be in the middle. We need to be both. We need to remember where we came from, but not lose sight of where we're going, because that's just as important. If we get stuck in our own heads, and we get stuck in our own ways, if we think we are always right, we will never be right. If we think that everybody else is always wrong, we will never be right. Sounds like the same thing, don't they? But they aren't. Cuz sometimes we think we're wrong. We're part of the big mix. We're part of following everybody else, so that makes us not wrong, because we're doing what everybody else is doing. We're not wrong because we see things, but we don't always act.

God came to us today to act. He came to us with the Holy Spirit so that we can act, so we don't have to just listen. We don't have to just be. We remember, and we grow. And we take his love, and we spread it throughout the world. We spread it throughout the community. We spread it throughout ourselves, and we remember he didn't put us here to be right. He put us here to love us. He put us here to remind us to love one another, to treat people the way we want to be treated and to pray and help each other whenever we can. Let us pray.