

Pentecost Drama

Minister/Leader: Let us imagine ourselves transported through time and space to Jerusalem, two thousand years ago that we might interview some of the witnesses, and try to understand what happened that day. Perhaps we will discover what Pentecost can mean for us, today. Now we go to our roving reporter in Jerusalem.

Reporter: Good morning, I am live at Jerusalem Square where many people have gathered. Excuse me, what is your name?

Andreas: My name is Andreas.

Reporter: Andreas. That is the Greek name for Andrew. What a coincidence, many of our United Reformed Churches are named St Andrew's for one of Jesus' disciples named Andrew, Andreas.

Andreas: Hmm... I am that follower of Jesus. My brother Simon, too. Jesus called him Petros, the Rock. And our friend, Thaddeus.

Reporter: It's you? Andrew and Peter, the apostles! How wonderful to meet *You*, of all people, in this crowd.

Petros: God works in mysterious ways...

Reporter: Indeed, God does. Are all these people here for Pentecost, the arrival of God's Holy Spirit?

Andreas: Everyone is here today because they are Jewish, and this is the fiftieth day after Passover, a special day called "pentecost." It is when Jews celebrate the Giving of the Law and the Festival of the First

Fruits.

Thaddeus: [Have a look on the cover of your service sheet. It talks about this.]

Reporter: Yes, the law. Mt. Sinai and Moses and all that. You say you are celebrating the Festival of the First Fruits. The first fruits of the Spirit, as Paul calls them?

Andreas: No, no, no, the first fruits of our fields and gardens. Here in Palestine, our rains come in the winter. So, we plant our crops then. We harvest our first fruits in early spring -- grain, fruit and livestock. So today, Pentecost, we celebrate a successful growing season.

Reporter: Aaah! (*slowly*) So, Jews observe Pentecost fifty days after the Passover as...

Andreas: As the Festival of the First Fruits. But today, something different, something perplexing and amazing has happened here during the Festival.

Reporter: That is why I am here. We want to talk to an eye-witness, someone like you, Andreas and Petros, Andrew and Peter, Jesus's apostles, and find out what happened.

Andreas: So... what do you want to know?

Reporter: Ten days ago, Jesus ascended into heaven. You were there, right?

Petros: Yes, we were.

Reporter: How did you feel?

Andreas: First, let me tell you how we felt before that, when Jesus was killed. When Pilate crucified Jesus, Pilate crucified our hopes, too. We felt shattered.

Reporter: And then?

Andreas: Then, miracle of miracles, God raises Jesus from the dead. Jesus, the promised Messiah for us Jews, or as you Greeks say, the Christ, the one foretold in the Torah, God's holy book.

Thaddeus: I think you call it the Bible.

Andreas: The Christ was someone we, young or old, barely dared dream of, at best a distant dream.

And then in Jesus, we thought the Messiah was alive and standing amongst us.

Reporter: Pretty awesome?

Andreas: Awesome? We were filled with awe, alright. *(Slowly...)* We were filled with awe, confusion, doubt ...

Petros: Even fear.

Andreas: We wondered what it all meant. Would Jesus usher in God's reign? Would Jesus do it all? And what would we need to do? Just sit back and watch it happen, as we had done so often during Jesus' ministry?

Reporter: So... How did you feel when he ascended into heaven?

Andreas: We felt mixed feelings.

Reporter: Mixed feelings? How do you mean?

Andreas: On the one hand, Jesus' ascension confirms God's hand on his life. Just as the great prophet Elijah ascended, so we witnessed Jesus' ascension.

Petros: A great man. The Son of Humanity. The Son of God.

Reporter: But on the other hand...?

Andreas: On the other hand, what sort of Messiah, what sort of Christ is this? We think he is supposed to lead us into God's realm. We thought he would be the one who would free us from this sinful world. He would be the one who would break the chains of Roman enslavement.

Reporter: Are you saying that Jesus did not finish the job?

Andreas: From our point of view, Jesus has not finished the job by a long shot! Jesus ascends into heaven. Great. He is God's beloved son. Wonderful. But where does that leave us?

Petros: We felt so disappointed and deserted.

Andreas: We were lost, afraid and wondering, "Where do we go from here?"

Reporter: So you feel lost and adrift on a sea of doubts. And you find your way here to the Festival of First Fruits, Pentecost. A crowd gathers, what happens?

Andreas: As you say, our hearts feel a great void and chill by his absence from amongst us. Ever felt that way?

Reporter: Absolutely. Many of us know firsthand. Because of hardships in our own lives-- illness, death, fear, loss, a loved one living far away,-- we know how it is to long for another to be near us.

Andreas: Well, today, during this Festival of First Fruits, this day of Pentecost, we hear a mighty roar like the sound of rushing wind. We feel a warmth in our hearts, a warmth so real, you can see it dancing off the tops of our heads like, like, ...

Petros: Like tongues of flame!

Andreas: The Lord fills our empty hearts with... well, my heart feels as though it has been filled with ...love.

Reporter: With love... love for the Lord?

Andreas: (*Slowly...*) Yes, with love for the Lord. But, we already feel love for Jesus.

Reporter: There is something more...?

Andreas: Yes, so much more. See, at the Festival of First Fruits, Jews gather each year from all over the empire: from north, south, east and west. And everyone speaks in their own language: Pathians, Elamites, Egyptians, Romans, Turks, you name it. And even if we all spoke the same language, we may all be Jews, but we do not all see eye to eye.

Petros: Frankly, I cannot stand the Jews from Rome. They think the rest of us are plebs.

Andreas: We know your prejudices, Petros. [*to reporter*] See what I mean. Do you people ever experience that sort of thing?

Reporter: Big time! And not just in the big things of life, but in the little things as well. If you start talking about what's best in food, football or politics, watch out! The sparks will soon fly!

Andreas: Putting politics, football and food aside, listen, cuz what I have to tell you is indeed amazing. Today, Pentecost, there is this wind—we say ruach in Hebrew, and I think you say Pneuma in Greek. After this wind comes upon us, love warms and fills our cold, empty hearts.

Petros: Then...as always, we hear all the people from across the empire speaking in their own tongues, their own languages.

Andreas: But today we can understand each other! I can understand every person, as if they are speaking in **my** native tongue.

Reporter: Wow! The Spirit breaks through the walls of differences that divide you, so you actually understand one another?

Thaddeus: Clearly. It was profound!

Andreas: That word, 'Spirit,' that you just used is interesting. In Hebrew, *ruach*, wind, can also be translated as 'spirit.' The same is true in Greek. *Pneuma* – wind, can mean 'spirit,' too. This wind, this spirit that

came upon us today really changes everything!

Petros: The Spirit enables us all to really hear and understand one another.

Reporter: What do you reckon it means?

Andreas: I think this Spirit is from God, from Jesus, and it empowers us! One thing we know, as disappointing as it is, the time of God's reign through the Messiah has **not** yet come. What did Jesus say? "*About that day and hour no one ... knows.*"

Reporter: And in the meantime, Andreas?

Andreas: In the meantime, the work that Jesus left undone is for us to do. The Spirit of the Lord is upon us, to step into Jesus's shoes, or sandals, and continue his ministry – to *bring good news to the poor,*
to proclaim release to the captives,
to bring recovery of sight to the blind,
to heal and comfort the sick,
to let the oppressed go free and
to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour.

Reporter: Sounds like a plan, following in the footsteps of Jesus. So, the Spirit, the wind of Pentecost, has reminded you that Jesus' mission is your mission.

Andreas: You are right! Our mission is to tell the world about

God's amazing love and forgiveness. No matter who we are or where we are on life's journey, Jesus love extends to all of us. Even when we abandon him or betray him, Jesus still loves us. Even when we deny him...*[look at Petros]*

Petros: Okay, okay. I did deny him three times. But I know Jesus loves me!

Thaddeus: Hey, that would be a catchy song, *Jesus loves me this I know.*

Andreas: This Pentecost, the Spirit of the Lord falls upon us to love as we have been loved. To love, not as the world loves but to love as Jesus has loved, as God loves. To love, keeping no tally of wrong doing, to love -- being slow to anger and quick to forgive, to love without end.

Reporter: Thank you Andreas and Petros, Andrew and Peter, and Thaddeus.

[to the congregation] I'm reporting live from Jerusalem on this Pentecost Day where the winds of the spirit are blowing, and love is all around! Over to you, Reverend/(name of worship leader).

Minister/Leader: Thank you all for visiting us today.
Pray with me (continue with a Pentecost Prayer).