

Pentecost

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Date: 01 May 2022

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- [0 : 0 0] Good afternoon, good afternoon. I will note that after seeing Pastor Anthony play that piano and have all the bounce going that I do feel, yes, yes.
- I feel a little pressure to bring the energy, so we'll see today if we get there. So today we are continuing a series that we began last week called Called Together.
- In this post-Easter season, we're taking a few weeks to reflect on the story of the birth of the church as recorded in the book of Acts.
- We want to contemplate as a community what it means to be called together as Christ Church, to be called together as the table church and as Resurrection City in this almost post-pandemic world.
- Today we're going to do two things that are a little bit different. First, we're going to look at the first few verses of Acts 2, a text that's usually preached on a specific Sunday in the year, on Pentecost Sunday.
- [1 : 1 3] This year, Pentecost Sunday falls on June 5th. However, like so many texts of Scripture, I think that this is one that warrants our attention throughout the year and particularly for our focus in this series as we again think about what it means to be called together into community birthed by the Spirit.
- The other thing you probably already noticed that we'll be doing that is different is that Pastor Anthony and I are going to be co-creeching. You need to pray for us.
- You got to pray for us, please, okay? Don't clap, pray. Don't clap, pray. Don't clap, pray. Don't clap. So we have not done this before, so we...
- It's a little bit of an adventure and we will see how this goes. Can y'all hear me okay? Okay. But we both felt that this passage was really, really rich and we both had lots of thoughts about how it applied to this community and how it applies to the wider church.
- So we both wanted a chance to share and to kind of hold a bit of a conversation on this important text. So for me, as I approach Acts 2, the story of the giving, the outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost, the outpouring of the Spirit on the disciples, I come to this text with a little bit of, I come with extreme love, I love this text, and I come with, if I'm honest, a little bit of fear.
- [2 : 5 7] See, the story that Pastor Anthony and I are going to talk about today has radical implications for our life together as people of different cultures and backgrounds and ethnicities and classes, and I could go on and on, all the categories of difference.
- It has radical implications for our sense of what it means to be together as one church. Yet, far too often in churches, talk about diversity, at least in spaces I've been in, talk about diversity has often been little more than a thinly veiled dyes for assimilation.
- It's about political correctness and what we feel like we should say and be, but there's not a lot underneath it. So are too often championed without any insistence on justice or repair.

We'd like to talk about reconciliation, but not kind of add in those elements. In D.L. Mayfield's book, *The Myth of the American Dream*, if you have not read this book, it is a high recommendation of mine, she includes this brief reflection on the murder of Larnell Bruce Jr.

in her home city of Portland in 2016. Bruce was a 19-year-old black man who was brutally murdered by two self-avowed white supremacists who chased him down in a truck and ran over him.

[4 : 37] In her book, Mayfield reflects, our community was shaken, both by the violence itself and by its racially charged circumstances.

Two white supremacists, a man and his girlfriend in a truck. One black man running for his life. Over the next few days and weeks, makeshift memorials were set up on the wall outside of the 7-Eleven.

Spray-painted hearts and messages of love for Larnell, a teddy bear. Mylar balloon, shiny and silvery. I wanted to add something, but felt as though my grief were displaced.

I didn't know Larnell, and now I never would. But then it's what Mayfield writes next, writes about what happens at this memorial that really, really strikes me and gets at the heart of where my fear lies when we confront this text in Acts 2.

Here's what she adds. Eventually, the messages of love and remembrance were painted over.

[5 : 54] First in the bland beige of the surrounding store, then with a brightly colored mural. The mural, I suppose, was meant to evoke feelings of goodwill for our neighborhood.

It showed the max train, buildings, and birds. In the center, a large tree with hearts all over the trunk, hearts with expressionless heads and varieties of black, brown, and white.

I know it was supposed to make me feel better, but it didn't. It felt instead like it was telling a lie. It felt like that mirror had painted over the truth.

How many times in our churches have we painted beautiful imagery of reconciliation over injustice and pain and anger and guilt and desperate need for repair?

How many times have we settled for such images as the best we can do as the church? I'm not even scratching the surface of what God has called us to be and to do as God's church.

[7 : 06] So, basically, and I don't know if I've ever done this before, I'm starting off this sermon in Acts 2 with a little bit of a content warning. We're called together to this beautiful diversity that we're about to talk about in Acts 2, the diversity of God's creation.

We're called to this incredible beauty of a God who loves reconciliation. Love is definitely, definitely the goal. Beloved community is ultimately the goal.

But we can't get to genuine diversity and reconciliation without justice and the embrace of the kind of deeply intersectional conversation, a conversation we're going to try to model a little bit of.

We can't get there without becoming the community we're called to be and become. So, one more thing I want to say before Pastor Anthony comes up.

There is a great list in a book by Austin Channing Brown called *I'm Still Here* that grounds us in what reconciliation is not. So, I want us to have that in mind as we talk about this text as well.

[8 : 18] So, she says, Reconciliation is not a fancy word for any of the following. There are lots of, insert ethnicity here, people in my church. It's not a multi-ethnic church.

Reconciliation is not sharing a building with another more diverse congregation. It is not having one person, one or two people of color and or women on your leadership team.

It's not diversity that's represented only in custodial positions. I have seen that. That is, I've seen that. It is not asking lots of racial questions over a cup of coffee.

It is not celebrating various ethnicities and cultures every month or missions work or outreach work or urban ministry. In its true form, she says, reconciliation possesses the impossible power of the lion lying down with the lamb, the transformative power of turning swords into plowshares.

But instead of pushing for relationships that are deep, transformative, and just, instead of allowing these efforts to alter our worldview, deepen our sense of connectedness and inspire us toward a generosity that seeks to make all things right, we have allowed reconciliation to become, contentedly hanging out together.

[9 : 51] So, let me say, as Pastor Anthony takes over to start us off in Acts 1, or sorry, Acts 2, 1 through 13, that even as we talk about the beauty of Pentecost, we are not talking about contentedly hanging out together.

There is something far richer and more beautiful that God has for us. Thank you. I told Pastor Tanetta earlier that I feel like a little bit of, she's Batman and I'm Robin, and that she is, so we didn't get a lot of time together, so we're like, there is a seat of your pants, and we are flying by.

And as Pastor Tanetta was sharing with me her notes and all of her preparations, I was like, oh dang, this is deep, this is deep, and I'm like the Robin figure going like, yeah, yeah, get them.

Or if you've ever been to like a black church, like they've got the preacher, and then they've got like the row of chairs with the deacons going like, you tell them, you tell them, because the deacons don't want to tell them.

But we're going to tell them tonight, all right? All right. Friends, this is the book of Acts, chapter 2, verses 1 through 13. It says this, when the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place.

[11 : 18] I want to stop right there. Two things. One, there was about 40 days from Jesus' resurrection to his ascension.

And we don't get a lot of details about those 40 days. We get some like glib explanations from John. It says, the heavens could not contain all of the volumes. I'm like, well, could you have at least tried, John?

It would have been nice. And then there were about 10 more days from ascension to Pentecost. And Pentecost is this Jewish feast that people were in town for.

And so there were these 10 days where the first Christians were waiting together. And if you ever read scripture, something you have to keep in mind is that there are always, time is always being cut short.

It's always being telescoped into each other. And so we get from chapter 1, verse 26, and we skip ahead to chapter 2, verse 1. There's a 10-day waiting period in there.

[12 : 18] And I don't know about you, but the waiting periods are the place that I hate the most. And scripture gets to skip over them because, yay, they get to edit the Bible. We don't. It's often the place where we live and spend our time, in the waiting moments, between Jesus saying, stay still and I will send your spirit, my spirit, and the Christians being like, it's day 7.

7's a holy number in the Bible. What's happening? Day 8. Maybe it's a special extra day. It's day 9. What's going to happen? And when we are sitting in those waiting spaces, what are we going to do?

Do we run? Do we turn tail? Or do we stay faithful? The second thing I want you to notice is that they were all together in one place.

I have spent some time in some charismatic, tongue-speaking, miracle-working, demon-casting out kinds of places. And often, there is a turn to the personal and to the individual that if you are going to encounter the Holy Spirit, it's about you and the Spirit alone together.

Get in your prayer closet. Don't let anybody see your works. All that sort of thing. And there's some elements of truth to that, but there's also an element of truth that most times in Scripture, when we see God do God's mighty deeds, it's in the context of community, of togetherness.

[13 : 48] And so, yes, they waited these 10 days. They didn't know how long they were going to wait, but it just so happens that when the Spirit came, they were together. And I'd like to believe that they had been together each and every day waiting.

And so I think even when we are in those waiting spaces, the togetherness may ease the wait. Verse 2, Suddenly, a sound like, and pay attention to those similes in Scripture, a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting.

Verse 3, They saw what seemed to be, what was like, tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. And all of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues or languages as the Spirit enabled them.

Now, they were staying in Jerusalem, God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven because, as you remember, this is a Jewish feast. Everyone had gotten back together in Jerusalem 50 days after the Passover to celebrate a feast.

And when they heard this sound that was like a blowing wind, a crowd came together in bewilderment because each one heard their own language being spoken. Utterly amazed, they asked, Aren't all these who are speaking Galileans?

[15 : 16] And we'll pause for a moment here. How would they know that? There's all sorts of God-fearing Jews everywhere gathered together in Jerusalem. They hear their own mother tongues being spoken, and yet they make note that these folks are Galileans.

In other words, they're speaking other language with an accent. It's like if you asked me to speak Spanish, my daughter, Audrey, she's in a bilingual school. She speaks English.

She's learning Spanish. And most of her teachers are from Central and South American countries. And so Audrey's Spanish. She's been in bilingual school for about two years. Her Spanish is fair, but her accent is impeccable because she hears it all the time.

And so I'll say like, Adios, amigo. And she'll be like, No, no. You got to roll the R's. You got to double the D's. You got to, because she tells me all these things like can't possibly impersonate for you because my accent is bad.

All right? And hers is great. So these people gathered in Jerusalem. They hear the sound like a rushing wind. They hear people speaking in their mother tongues, but they're speaking in a Galilean accent, which we're going to get into the implications of in a bit.

[16 : 20] Now, then how is it that each of us hears them in our native language? Verse 9, Parthians and Medes and Elamites and residents of Mesopotamia and Judea and Cappadocia and Pontus in Asia.

This is why you get the MDiv. And Phrygia and Pamphylia and Egypt and all the parts of Libya near Cyrene and visitors from Rome, both Jews and converts to Jerusalem and Cratons and Arabs. We hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own languages.

And they were just amazed and perplexed. They asked one another, what does this mean? Some, however, made fun of them and said, they have had too much wine.

Over the past couple years, I've had the opportunity to be your pastor and to be at a church that when we say things like, hey, the Table Church is going to be at Pride this year, there is applause.

Now, we all know that that is not often the story. The reason that there's applause, the reason that churches need to show up at Pride is because so often there have been stories after stories of churches who have pushed others away and created minorities, created marginalized people, created oppression.

[17 : 40] The church has done that. So then other churches get together, churches like the Table, and we attempt, we try, sorry, but there's somebody at the door.

There's someone listening. Thank you. There we go. We try to create communities where everybody feels welcome, where there's literally an open door. And so we have to show up to places, we have to say, no, God's love, God's acceptance, God's forgiveness is for everyone.

By everyone, that's not a euphemism, there's not an asterisk, there's not footnotes, it means everyone. Now, you start speaking like this online, on social media, you start sharing things your church creates, you start preaching sermons on a platform, and people hear that message of inclusion and love and justice and things that go beyond mere racial reconciliation but actual justice, the actual work of repair.

people start hearing that and they start pointing and making fun and saying, you've had too much wine. When God's people start speaking in the voice of love and justice, there will always be those on the outside pointing, saying, you are speaking gibberish.

gibberish. And I know from the stories in this room, online, in this church, that when we go out on a limb, we start speaking the tongues of God and angels, we start speaking of the work that God wants to do in the world, that those very words get pushed aside and the people who speak them get pushed aside.

[19 : 23] moment of honesty from me. We are hoping and intending to take a trip back to our former, where we lived before we lived here. That we'd love to make our way back to the church where we used to serve.

Yet, there is a trepidation and anxiety there because enough people have heard my sermons, have heard the kinds of sermons that get preached at the table, have heard the kinds of things that we're up to and have broken connection.

They don't just make fun, but they want to cast demons out of me. They want to sever all connection. And, that creates this anxiety of like, do we go back?

Do we go back to our old church? What's that going to be like? And it's the same moment that the disciples are in in Acts chapter 2. They've experienced the Holy Spirit. They've experienced the filling of God.

And there are those on the outside who say, you're just drunk. you're just making stuff up. But that does not allow us to back away from the truth of what God has done in our lives.

[20 : 37] Because when God speaks, when God speaks that word of healing, when God speaks that word of love, when God speaks that word of you belong, you have a duty and a right and a joyful privilege of living out that word in your life and sharing it with others.

And even though there are others who want to take that away from you, you can say no. You can say, God has spoken and I will believe it.

Are you with me? Amen. Amen. A couple other things I want to point out. There is this moment of God's blessing.

And the disciples have just experienced it. They've waited. They've waited together. They experience the blessing. And a question that I sometimes get is how do we recognize God's blessing apart from just lucky happenstance?

God's blessing, God's will and desire for our lives apart from just I was working hard. I was in the right place at the right time. And the way that I recognize this is the fact that when the disciples get together, they receive the Holy Spirit.

[22 : 18] There are others in town. Some who are curious and interested. Some who are ready to, you know, basically ignore them or make fun of them. Their disciples' response, and we'll get into this a little bit next week, is to share the blessing.

Peter preaches a sermon. Thousands get saved. And others are invited into the community. And there are communal economic effects to that, that those who are poor are invited in to partake in the riches and the benefits of everyone else.

The way that we recognize God's blessing from just prosperity, that God's blessing blesses not just you, but those around you as well.

which means that we have an opportunity to take what we may just call happenstance, happy accident, being at the right place at the right time, and we get to transform it into God's blessing.

It's like the opposite of Midas' touch. Not that everything we touch is gold, and eventually we ruin our lives and those around us because of such things, but rather that everything that we touch, we have an opportunity to turn it into the health and the overall well-being of the neighborhood, of the community, of the church, of the person next door.

[23 : 41] This is an invitation, an invitation to see what it is that we have, our bodies, our jobs, our words, our lives, and to treat them not merely as happenstance, but as opportunities to be blessed, to be a blessing.

And so the disciples, they wait, they receive, and then they give, and they give, and they give. When we are called together as a community and as a people, God will bless that and then God will scatter us, scatter us for the blessing of the nations, for the blessing of the world.

And so that means the work is more than just being contented together because that can turn toxic and insular. That's why the table church is not content saying, hey, we've got a great church, please come and see, but why we're willing to go march in a parade while we're willing to go protest on the streets, why we are willing to go put our money and our lives and our stuff on the line to make sure that it's not just being contented together, but rather that the doors keep getting open wider and wider.

all right.

So I'm going to say a couple of things about what blows me. I moved my, I moved because I didn't, I thought you were going to put the energy. I wanted you to have space. So yeah, what blows me away and you'll notice some of this, you know, we're flowing together on this.

[25 : 35] But what blows me away about this passage, and I definitely hope this is one that you will go home, pull up, reflect on, and spend some time with because it's so important.

But what blows me away is the way in which power flows and is exchanged here. As I heard a scholar that I really like, Chad Myers, say once, the story of Pentecost starts with a redistribution of cultural power and ends in a redistribution of economic power.

And this is what Anthony was getting at. In two weeks, Anselm, who many of you know, is going to continue this to talk about Acts 2. And he's going to talk specifically about the end of Acts 2, but I'm going to give just a little preview.

Verses 44 and 45 say this, all who believed were together and had all things in common, they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all as any had need.

So being called together, being knit together in this community should entail, as Anthony mentioned, this redistribution of cultural power that is entwined with a redistribution of economic power.

[26 : 53] where one cannot go without the other. They go together in the community birthed by the Spirit. Well, how does this happen at the inception of the church?

Like, what happens to these disciples when God comes and shows up through the Spirit? The Spirit begins with language.

and that he talked about this. And for my part, if you don't remember anything else, please remember that the Spirit coming and the genesis of the church is a language event.

It's our knitting together always meaning intimacy, the intimacy of speaking each other's languages of people that we had formerly considered other.

now we speak their languages. Yes, out there, but also in here. It means being drawn into the world of other people that we are sitting beside, knowing their native tongue.

[28 : 07] That tongue, they speak at their mama's house. That's what we're learning together as a community. Willie James Jennings, y'all know I love him.

He's, here's what he says in his commentary on Acts. The Spirit creates joining. The followers of Jesus are now being connected in a way that joins them to people in the most intimate space of voice, memory, sound, body, land, and place.

It is language that runs through all these matters. It is the sinew of existence of a people. My people, our language.

To speak a language is to speak a people. Speaking announces familiarity, connection, and relationality. At the birth of the church through the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, God uses the intimacy of language to bind the disciples together.

Now we also know, probably some of us by our own experience, that language can also be a tool to master others. We've had maybe personal experiences or seen experiences where languages, certain languages are promoted over others.

[29 : 33] Languages like French, languages like English are used to push forward and promote the logic of trade and other languages are suppressed.

Which means other people are suppressed. We can use language as a tool of domination or we can use it as a point of connection.

We can do this work of speaking each other languages and remember first thing that happens at the birth of the church. We can do this work of redistributing cultural power in order to live into God's dream of joining.

So, I'm old enough to remember when you would call like, I don't know, customer support on a phone. You can stay up, it's not that long of the story.

Oh, okay. And they would start offering the option press two for Spanish. I'm not going to do it in Spanish because my accent is bad as my daughter has told me.

[30 : 39] And I remember the reaction of, you know, some older folks in my life being like, oh, this is America. You don't need to speak press two for Spanish, you just need to learn English.

And that sort of energy to me is anti-Pentecost energy. Because the miracle of Pentecost is not that a bunch of foreigners started understanding Aramaic.

It's that a bunch of Aramaic-speaking Christians started speaking the language of others. And this sets the posture for any sort of evangelism or mission or proclamation work that the church is to do.

It is not one where come to us, learn our ways, assimilate into our language and our customs and our culture, and then maybe if you're lucky we'll let you in on these good news that we have.

But rather, would God's Spirit be at work in me to transform me from the inside out where I am willing to change for the sake of others to begin to sound like others others for the sake of the gospel.

[31 : 51] Yeah. Yep. So a couple of other things before we try to model this briefly because I realize when y'all laid hands on me I got words. That's what happened.

I don't know why but I got words. Okay? More words than I usually have. So a couple of things about this before we do that. So first I don't want us to miss that the disciples are recognized as Galileans and then he talked about this that diaspora crowd from all over the world they say are not all these who are speaking Galileans.

They're amazed. They hear the accent of Galilee and what's important about that to me is that in this crossing the disciples don't lose themselves.

They don't lose who they are. They remain rooted in the culture that is their own. They remain rooted in the emotional geographies from which they come but the spirit enables them to reach across beyond themselves as themselves for this purpose of radical connection and that is something that I pray for us.

I pray for us. Second, Jewish tradition held that the law of Moses was given on the day of Pentecost. It's not an accident. This event involves wind and fire and it echoes the most important identity shaping experience in the life of the Jewish people.

[33 : 24] The giving of the spirit through the expression of speaking in other language like the giving of the law is a foundational lens for us to see and understand what it means to be church.

It's a constituent part of our identity. And then the story is connected to the story of the Tower of Babel. Bible hypertext. Click. Takes you somewhere else.

So the story of the Tower of Babel is essentially about the resistance of a people to being scattered. It's the resistance of a people to obey the creation mandate in Genesis 128 to spread abroad and that resistance comes because these people want to build empire because they think it's how you get security instead of community that is authentic.

The story of Pentecost reminds us that God loves difference and dispersion and serves as a caution against all our cultural leanings of concentration and that we think brings security.

Concentration that is about assimilation and sameness. And then the last thing I will say is that the Spirit comes and moves inside the community of disciples towards this language of newness when the Spirit comes and this is in most translations it felt violent.

[34 : 53] It was not comfortable. It felt like wind. It was not controllable. They did not know where it was going to take them.

But and this is also in the text it was from heaven. It was Spirit enabled. It was from God and beyond what human beings could create together as community.

There was this vocation like Mary's to be overshadowed in order to birth newness. Now I think we're going to do probably an abbreviated version of this but one of the things we wanted to do is in front of you all to just take a minute to name what it is and looks like to take part in this kind of intersectional awareness of another person's identity.

We have to do this we meet every Tuesday. we hear each other's stories as we share and work and one of the things that comes out of that is our sense of how the Spirit is calling us to action to be at work in each other's stories.

So I'm going to share I'm going to share briefly y'all but I can't stop talking I'm going to share briefly. So my identities things I think about and that in community we have to be talking about as I'm sharing these think about what these are for you.

[36 : 21] Surprising I am black. My specific ancestors were enslaved and I think a lot about my faith is deeply shaped by these enslaved people who were doing the work of reconstruction like spiritual reconstruction were given a plantation religion and in themselves said something is wrong with this and they went down to ravines and woods and cane breaks and as one of my a scholar I really like she says we took our gods we went into the woods and we found Jesus for ourselves.

That shapes my identity in this space and as we work together I am also surprisingly queer I'm connected to this global family of people who are often cast out and yet have this experience of being bound together and I think that experience can teach us something about what it means to find our identity as Christians to name it to face being kicked out because hopefully we're becoming more counter-cultural so I think that I bring that queerness into the space and we'll talk more about that as June comes maybe put on some rainbow or something I'm a woman I'm a woman and it took me years to realize that God was not a man so I always bring that into the space and next week Anthony's preaching on hallelujah the divine feminine yes the spirit the spirit is feminine anyway I can say more then I'll just say

I'm gender non-conforming if you're confused maybe that word helps you and so I'm shaped by this sense that God you know just as God creates night and day God creates dawn and dusk and there's lots of middle in there that God has also created and finally I'll say one of the things that's been fascinating to talk through and to have to bump up against and that's always hard for me is that although I've been always adjacent to communities that were deeply under-resourced that's how I grew up I also come from a two-parent home my parents were like you are getting a master's if you want to live in this house okay you want to come back to this house I come from and now I'm married to an attorney like so I definitely deal with that tension of what does it mean as a black person to think about black wealth creation and giving back like I bring that into this space like that's part of the kind of language I'm thinking about how to inhabit that all that but the opposite

I my first memories are of living in pretty abject poverty cockroaches and rats in projects in Elkhart, Indiana and a mentally unstable mother living out of the car eventually being put in the foster system and finding you know finding Jesus at a pretty young age but mostly out of a sense of obligation and the cultural pressure of a family but then eventually as I got older 12 years old I know Taneta you shared a bit of your Holy Spirit story last week and my Holy Spirit story is being at a youth retreat 12 years old the song open the eyes of my heart was being played by the team worship banger some of you are not in your heads right now and the only one of the one of the few times I could I could say the audible voice of God said kneel down and so I did and felt this power wash over me so grew up at first in poverty and then eventually with a you know middle class home but I was the first to first generation of kids to go to college graduate from college so

I was white I definitely was part of the kind of evangelical racial reconciliation movement one of the you know to confess this in front of you most embarrassing moments looking back was I was part of this group of students who was trying to get rid of our college's diversity week because I just thought color blindness we should all just pretend that we're the same and I look back on that now which is absolutely like gosh how ignorant I was and the harm that I was causing to try to say literally white wash an entire campus and as I got into ministry and honestly I have my wife Emily to thank a lot for this because she has been and continues to be always the most progressive one in the couple always kind of pulling me along in terms of like inclusion and justice and love and me being like yeah but the Bible what does it say and Emily being like but what do you think God wants for people and so as I was learning and developing and growing recognizing what that whiteness was a thing that was created that all of these concepts in our nation like borders and boundaries and refugees and illegals as a mound and recognizing all of these things and my part that I played in them had to come to a moment where

[42 : 03] Willie James Jennings again talks about it wasn't just that there was Christianity and systemic homophobia racism systemic classism it was that Christianity had created these there was something actually deeply entwined about these and so whatever crisis of faith I had it was about that that I was part of something that was actually creating other people's pain then I had a friend who they were in a straight marriage they kind of awoke to their sexuality and recognized that they were not straight and I they were the first one I was one of the first ones that they were told and so then we started to have conversations about my role was in a non-affirming church and what was I doing and saying and communicating to those who weren't straight who

I just assumed everybody was like me and had to confront and deal with the fact that I was part of the very systems that I was beginning to have a deep amount of guilt and I don't know hatred for honestly deep down and so then dealing with internal stuff of what part role had I played so white and straight and a man the whole package 2016 came along and everything about maleness seemed to come to a head in our chief of state and began looking into patriarchy and its effects and again looking back on who I was

I was a person that when I entered college I was one who firmly believed that a woman's place was certainly not in the pulpit a woman's place was certainly not in leadership and fortunately had very very patient professors and mentors and teachers began to deconstruct that but that sort of thing that you grow up in for decades you don't just unlearn because you read a book and so continuing to recognize my own complicitness in what patriarchy has inflicted upon the world I think one of the most interesting feelings that I deal with and Tanetta and I have talked about is this sense of oh oh look how look how good I am now which is just this performative grossness as if doing the right thing is something that like you get brownie points for rather than recognizing the years of doing the wrong thing now needs reparation and so as we get deeper into the book of

Acts what we're going to see is a community that is deeply deeply invested in the act of correcting harm not looking for brownie points and attaboys and pat on the backs for what ought to have been the default position to begin with everyone belongs and recognizing that when there are years and decades of harm then you've got to put in the work to start bringing healing and you can't just say that's somebody else's job or it's okay I'm better now but rather no it was me I played my part I was complicit I was active and now I've got to dismantle all the things that I was a part of friends I consider myself so incredibly deeply blessed to call Tanetta my friend my colleague and you all should consider yourselves so deeply blessed to call her your pastor thank you