

When God Came Down Like Fire

Pentecost is both an event in the life of the church and a season that lives out the implications of the event. Pentecost Sunday marks the shift in the liturgical calendar from telling the story of Jesus, our Messiah and Savior, to telling the story of the church, the ones who choose to be disciples of Jesus the Christ. It doesn't mean, of course, that we stop talking about Jesus or that the church doesn't appear in the first half of the liturgical year. It does mean that this long season we sometimes call Ordinary Time is our time, the church's time to remember the sending of the Great Commission and the empowerment of the Pentecost event and to live our faith out loud in the world, reflecting the values and priorities of the kin-dom of God.

To shore us up for the long journey ahead of us, we remember the sending. We remember the moment when fire came from heaven and the power of the Spirit blew through the church with gale-force winds. And then we stop in adoration and awe as we consider the source of this power and the sustaining presence that is ours in this endeavor of faith. So, a short, two-week series this time, Pentecost Sunday and Trinity Sunday together. Join us as we remember together the time when God came like fire.

Pentecost Sunday - He Breathed on Them

May 28, 2023

[Acts 2:1-21](#), [John 20:19-23](#); [Psalm 104:24-34](#), [35b](#)

Color: Red

PLANNING NOTES

We present a choice this week. The lectionary gives us two different stories of receiving the Spirit, two different Pentecosts. Maybe there is space to do both within worship this week. Or maybe you pass on the choice and make space for those who want to feel the fire and stand in the wind as well as those who want to feel the peace breathed on them by the breath of God.

Pentecost calls for celebration, for signs and symbols of a God who pushes through, who rushes in when it seems all is lost. The traditional wind symbols – like balloons and kites and streamers – can be powerful reminders of movement and of an irresistible force and presence. The traditional color red reminds us of the flame and the passion of the one who calls and transforms us. Fire is also a great reminder of the power of the presence and speaks as well of the danger inherent in an encounter with the Spirit. Pentecost is traditionally full of sound and movement and song and joy. Many look forward to this exuberance and outpouring of laughter and celebration as the community gives thanks for the gifts of individuals and of the body as a whole.

Yet, exuberant celebration is not the only way to observe this day. The gospel text reminds us that there can be a gentler receiving of that Spirit. The Christ who comes and breathes on us in our brokenness still offers this same grace and peace today. Maybe in your setting, this would be a more appropriate and comforting acknowledgment of the coming of the Spirit into the lives of those who are hurting or afraid, into a community where there has been or continues to be conflict or concern.

Either way; or even observing both the loud and the quiet Pentecost, there is a uniting presence celebrated on this day. Barriers and divisions are overcome. Differences become signs of the artistry of

God and not reasons to be afraid. Strangers are not enemies to be opposed but sisters and brothers to be embraced and included. This is a day where we remember that Spirit, wind, and breath are all part of the same experience and that life itself is a gift from God and a sign of God's goodness and presence in our lives. We share in common the need to breathe; we are impacted by the same wind; we share in the same Spirit. Let us find ways this Pentecost Sunday to breathe in our unity and celebrate our oneness with God and one another. This is the day he breathed on us.

PREACHING NOTES

Compare and contrast this Pentecost Sunday. That's what is on offer if you lay the Acts event alongside the Gospel text for this week. Two Pentecosts, two accounts of receiving the Spirit, two sides of our own story, two retellings of our own varied experiences. We need them both, don't you think? Yes, there are times, glorious times, wonderful times, exuberant times when the Spirit overwhelms us, and we are set on fire; we are shouting in languages we don't really know. There are times when the joy spills from us and the laughter pours from us, and we can't help but be carried away by the wonder and glory of the God we worship.

Read Acts 2; please read it again. I know it seems overly familiar and somewhat tame from this distance of more than two thousand years. But try; read it and try to put yourself in that room again. Recall the despair and the fear that soaked through all the layers they sought to cover themselves with; remember the emptiness that gripped them as they tried to avoid thinking about the rest of their lives without his presence among them. They had a taste of life, of living fully, of being alive like they never knew was possible, and now it was gone. They avoided eye contact with the others in that room, afraid of swirling down the drain again into the void that threatened to consume them every time they breathed.

But then, a sound shook them out of their stupor. It sounded like a freight train if they had a clue what a freight train was. Like a desert windstorm, blasting the sand into a scouring force exposing the bones with surprising speed. And yet this sound, this roar sounded different somehow. It was not like an oppressive, angry threat, but rather like hope. Hope? A wind-like hope? It blew through their despair like the wind drying sheets on a line. They were those freshly washed sheets, fluttering in this wind, lifted into a new day, drying their tears. They were kites flying high in the cerulean sky, tethered only by their faith in the one who was gone and yet still somehow present with them and in them. Remember that feeling, that joyous certainty. Remember flying on the wind of faith and for a moment believing in eternity like you could feel it bearing you up with grace.

And the fire. Remember the fire. Remember the fire in your bones that you had to let out in laughter and movement. Luke writes that it was divided tongues, as of fire, that settled on each of them. Be wary of that word "divided" though. This is not a separation or an individualism. No, this is inclusion; the tongues reach out like octopus arms wanting to gather in, to bind together, to make as one. This was an individual experience that had a corporate reality. They were each in this together. They were all as if they were one. This is a fire that unites, a blaze that leaps from one to another and to all. This is a fire that builds up, not one that destroys. Unless what is destroyed is all that would keep us from leaning into the joy of this day. All of this was glorious and unexpected.

Pentecost was originally an agricultural festival celebrating the first harvest of the growing season. Later it became a commemoration of the giving of the land of Canaan to the people of Israel; and then even later, it morphed into an observance of the giving of the law to Moses on Mount Sinai. All are important times of celebration, but nothing to indicate the power that was unleashed on this day. I'm sure it caught the disciples by surprise too. They were used to a low-key holiday (not like Yom Kippur or even Rosh Hashana), but instead found themselves in an encounter with God that literally blew them away.

The Day of Pentecost came like the sound of a violent wind, Luke tells us. It was fire; it was power; it was chaos and noise, but it was also meaning, and it was hope. And then to be filled with the power to be, the power to grow, the power to love as Christ loved.

That's what Pentecost is all about. It's not simply a birthday commemoration, just a marker along the road, a milestone passed. It is a moment of power, an offering of transformation. So, how about it? Ready to come to church on Sunday? Who knows who you might be once you've been windswept by the Holy Spirit?

Except. Sometimes it is hard to rise to the occasion of this kind of Pentecost. Oh, we'll watch the children wave their streamers; we'll smile at the dancers and even be awed by the depictions of fire dancing across our screens. But the breath within us isn't a mighty wind; it is more like a sigh. Of pain or sadness and grief, maybe of uncertainty or fear. Not a gust, but a sigh. Just a sigh. If that is you and your congregation, then sigh with them; breathe with them on this day. Don't play-act a wind you don't feel or a fire that doesn't warm. Just sigh. That's a breath too.

Sigh.

Profound, eh? Just what you were waiting all day to read, right? The gem of wisdom that is going to help you wrap your mind and soul around a taste of God's Word this weekend, don't you think?

Sigh.

Maybe it is more than weariness and exasperation. Maybe there is a hint of contentment. Can such things be? Contentment is a rare commodity, often frustratingly just out of reach. If I can just get this done, if I can just accomplish those goals, just acquire these items, just save this amount of money, master these skills, then, maybe then, perhaps then I might find a sense of contentment. But in the meantime, ... work to be done, miles to travel, burdens to bear, struggles to endure, and on and on and on. Contentment isn't a word that speaks into our experience these days. Life is too hectic, too shallow, too empty, too hungry. Except then, maybe sometimes, once in a while, like a breath, like a cool breeze on a hot day, it is just there. From somewhere.

Sigh.

Remember this? Call it a pre-Pentecost preparation:

Jesus answered him, "Those who love me will keep my word, and my Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them. Whoever does not love me does not keep my words; and the word that you hear is not mine but is from the Father who sent me. I have said these things to you while I am still with you. But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said to

you. Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid.

John 14:23-27 NRSV

And then this ... Call it a quieter Pentecost:

When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you." When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained."

John 20:19-23 NRSV

Two words, or rather the same word twice: peace. "Peace, I leave with you." "Peace be with you." It sounds the same really, not much to distinguish between them—except life and death. The first was on the threshold of death. The second was in the glaring light of the Resurrection. That's what separated them: the last breath. "He breathed his last," Luke says. "Father into thy hands I commend my spirit." He didn't speak it; he cried it, Luke says. In a loud voice, a voice choked with pain, a voice gasping for the breath that wouldn't come because of the suffocation caused by hanging on a cross, somehow in agony, he pushed himself up on the spike driven through his feet, straining the two nails through his hands, so he could catch enough breath cry in a loud voice. Then, Luke says, he breathed his last.

Sigh.

Except he didn't. He breathed again. He breathed some more. "Peace be with you," he breathed on them. Breathed peace. Receive the Holy Spirit. The Spirit he commended to God. The Spirit returned to us, in a breath, peace.

Sigh.

Breathe on me. In the heat of the moment. In the struggle of living and loving and finding our way in a complicated world. Breathe on me. Give me peace. Not a peace that resolves every issue. Not a peace that fixes everything that is broken, that removes responsibility or covenant, that answers every question that removes every doubt. Breathe on me that I might find peace enough to continue on the journey on which I find myself. Peace enough to work toward resolution, peace enough to mend the broken or that allows me to limp with grace and confidence. Peace that breathes through my responsibilities and covenants, peace that lifts up and binds together. Peace that casts out fear. Perfect love - peace - casts out fear.

Sigh.

Where does it come from, this peace? Is it self-generated? Are there disciplines we can practice, rituals to perform? Well, yes, there are rituals - corporate prayer, sacraments of grace. Yes, there are disciplines - meditations that call us to worship, study that drives us deep into the living Word. These and more. But no. We don't create this peace. We receive it. Like a breath. That comes from elsewhere.

From beyond us. The rituals and the disciplines are designed to shape us into vessels better able to hold onto the peace that breathes into us. It is a gift, a joy, an unexpected encounter, a cool breeze that fills the sails and sends us across the horizon into new worlds of love and joy. A promise from one side of life is fulfilled from the other. A description, an image, a story told to a hurting and hungry heart becomes a wind of change in a new world.

He breathed on them. Peace be with you. Receive the Spirit of holiness, of ordination, of mission and ministry, of love. Receive it and then love. Love from the strong center of peace, from the contentment of faith, of putting your hands in the source of love and joy and peace. Lean into it, trust it, receive it.

Sigh. He breathed on them. On you. On me.

Breathe on me, breath of God, fill me with life anew, that I may love what thou dost love, and do what thou wouldst do. ... Breathe on me breath of God till I am wholly thine, till all this earthly part of me glows with the fire divine.

Breathe on me. Sigh.

Trinity Sunday - Go Therefore

June 4, 2023

[Gen 1:1-2:4a](#); [Matt 28:16-20](#)

Color White

PLANNING NOTES

Trinity Sunday is about God and not about us. And yet, because we can know God only in relationship, it has to be about us too. We acknowledge the God we worship and praise, the God to whom we owe everything, but we understand and/or experience God through how God interacts with us individually and collectively. We know God, then through one another, through living in community and worshiping as a gathered body. We cannot know everything about God; our minds cannot comprehend the totality of God. So, everything is a metaphor. Everything we know about God is a description, a shadow of what God really is.

We've placed the Gospel text for this Trinity Sunday alongside the text from the Hebrew scriptures. Keeping the focus on God, what we see is a Creator God, the source of everything that is who nonetheless chooses to send us on the mission to share the kin-dom of God with the whole world. A God of immensity and a God of particularity. The classic terms for this are transcendence and immanence. Not an either/or but a both/and. God is both wholly other and intimate friend. God is both out there and in here. Out there referring to all that is beyond us and above us and around us. In here being both the indwelling Spirit within us and the presence that permeates the community of faith in which we worship and experience God's presence and God's love and God's grace.

God-focused worship, then, is about giving praise and offering confession, about spending time in the presence of God. But it is also about the celebration of the gift of the church through which we have come to know God. Worship gives expression to how we have experienced God in our lives. There could be a time or place of naming – how do you describe God? What description, what metaphor reveals how

you have come to know God? How God has interacted in your life? There could also be space for giving thanks for those who have shared God with you. What teachers or leaders, what pastors or friends have been instrumental in shaping your understanding of who God is? Can we write their names or offer them up in prayer and thanksgiving? How can we both honor God and honor the community that shares God with us and with the world?

At the same time, we honor the creating God by responding to the sending God. This is a day to speak of the nature of God by living into our mission to make disciples of all peoples. And we cannot make disciples of all people until we see all the people, see them as brothers and sisters, see them as part of God's plan and purpose for creation, see them as signs of God's presence. We embrace the fullness of God by embracing God's creation as a whole and our role in protecting and preserving and stewarding all that God has made in partnership with people of all ages, nations, and races, as our baptismal vows declare.

On this Trinity Sunday, we celebrate a God who is not distant and aloof and apart, but a God who is present in what came to be through a word spoken in the void. We worship a God who came down like fire and burned a mission into our hearts.

PREACHING NOTES

It is always our inclination to explain God on Trinity Sunday. Resist that inclination. All the metaphors ultimately fall short and serve only to reduce God into accessible bites that we can snack on like popcorn. We set aside these two weeks with the hope that Pentecost and Trinity Sunday will serve to inspire awe in the worshiper. Your task, preacher, is to open folks up to the amazing wonder that is God. We describe God as Trinity because that is how God is experienced, not really understood. Certainly, we can and need to theologize, to wrestle with understandings and interpretations, and your Bible study or small group would be a perfect place to do that. Here you can walk with your people through the gallery of the glory of God. Not just to gawk, however, but to be inspired – filled with the Spirit. And that Spirit is a sending Spirit, our texts tell us.

But maybe we should start at the beginning. We've got a bit more than the whole first chapter of Genesis. Why did the lectionary preparers choose that as the Hebrew scripture text for Trinity Sunday? Do we see the three-in-one God at work here? Do we experience something of that completeness, of that wholeness, as we work our way through this familiar account? Let's look.

Genesis 1 says that when time began, God was. When Creation came to be, God was the cause. The water here is the incubator, the womb of God out of which Creation is birthed. "The wind of God swept over the face of the waters," says the **NRSV**; "the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters," says the **NIV**. Eugene Peterson's **The Message** says, "God's Spirit brooded like a bird above the watery abyss." I like that. Brooded. Like a hen tending the eggs before they hatch, like a mother waiting for the time to give birth. God tends the creation; God calls it forth.

But wait, is it the Spirit that is the creative force of God or the Word? The Spirit brooded, the Word was spoken, and there was. The Prologue to the Gospel of John tells us the Word was that force: John 1:3 "All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being." It was the Word that brought forth light, and then it was the Word that pronounced it good.

We sometimes forget that part of the story. We wrestle over creation; we argue about theories, but we sometimes forget the goodness that is a part of all that God has created. Or maybe we forget what “good” means.

God saw that it was good. But the light was not yet complete. The sun hadn’t been made yet, in the story. The moon and the “lesser lights” of the stars were still on the drawing board. But it was good. Goodness must mean something other than finished. It must mean something other than perfect as we define that term. Perhaps it means born of God. Perhaps it means in process, growing, moving on toward perfection. On the way to order out of chaos.

Order out of chaos. Light in the midst of darkness. And the light was good. And there was morning. When you didn’t think there could be another one, there is morning. Thanks be to God.

*And God said, "Let there be a dome in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters." **Genesis 1:6 NRSV***

The waters represent chaos, the unknown and unknowing. In the ancient world, sending sailors to sea was a traumatic experience. The ritual for sending was like a funeral, the return like a resurrection. Who knows what is going to happen out there; who knows whether those who are sent will ever be seen again. Now we have tamed the sea. At least we think we have. Until the storm surge reminds us what power is, until the threat of rising waters troubles our easy confidence. What will our coastlines look like in fifty years? In a hundred?

By separating the waters, God was staking a claim as Lord of chaos and order. Saying “when you pass through the waters, I will be with you.” Our God is in control.

*Then God said, "Let the earth put forth vegetation: plants yielding seed, and fruit trees of every kind on earth that bear fruit with the seed in it." And it was so. **Genesis 1:9-13 NRSV***

Let the earth put forth. God enlists the aid of creation in the act of creating. God invites partnership. Work with me here, God is saying, get on board. Though perfectly capable of creating solo, out of nothing, God instead chooses to invite participation. Let the earth bring forth... it was good. And there was morning. It goes on.

The Genesis story stands in opposition to other creation stories. Many have pointed to the similarities and believe that this diminishes the story somehow. But Genesis makes its claim regardless. God is the only deity; notice that the sun and moon are not named in this story. In other tales, these are gods themselves, but not in Genesis. God is the only power; the lights “rule” only because God put them there. And it was good.

The story goes on, of course. For sixty-six books and for thousands of years. It goes on until today, where we find ourselves in the midst of chaos attempting to throw off order. It goes on until the day when we find ourselves forgetting that there is a purpose to our existence. It goes on, the story, the mornings go on.

That’s the blessing here. It was evening and it was morning, a new day. Another day. When you were sure that your failures meant the sun would never shine again, it crawls over the horizon even so. God set it all in motion and invited us to be a part. Whatever dominion meant, it now must mean caring for; it must mean stewarding. We participate in God’s act of creation by making sure that it lasts as long as it

can. Whatever subduing meant, it now must mean partnering with the earth to bring forth enough to feed the teeming billions.

And why? Why are we called to participate in this act? Why are we privileged or burdened with an extra responsibility or promise? Because we are made in the image of God. And we are given the story, so we know. We know that everything there is did not come about because of us. We know that our main mode of existence is one of gratitude. We know that all we are and all we have belongs to the one who said, “let there be light.”

That’s where things get interesting, which is code for messy. Or complicated. Because we are invited to participate in God’s ever-continuing act of creation. We are called to join in. We are called to go.

It’s time to go. You’ve heard that a few times in your life, I know. You’ve said it many times too. Go. Let’s go. Can we go? Ready to go? Questions, statements, promises, pleading – “Go” has lots of moods, lots of attitudes. It’s hard to deny the excitement inherent in “Go”. It just drips with possibility and with newness. Go into a new world, a new reality, a new way of being. Who could say no to “Go”? The horizons are calling, and the world is yours. Just go. Go and see, go and live, go and be. A new chapter is a new beginning, but also a continuation of the story so far. Go! Of course, we want to go.

But. There is the other side of “Go.” To go you have to leave. To move toward a new tomorrow is sometimes to leave a comfortable – or even not so comfortable, but maybe familiar – yesterday. To embrace the call to go is to turn your back on “stay.” It is to leave behind those who have become family, even as you stride into an uncertain hope, a possible joy.

Now we stand on a mountain with the remaining disciples, as they wait for whatever might be coming next. Mountains in the Bible are more than simply geologic formations. They are theological signposts. Something significant is going to happen. You can tell. There’s a mountain. It’s a dead giveaway. Or rather a living one. Mountains are alive (thank you Rogers and Hammerstein by way of Julie Andrews), but not just with the sound of music. No, mountains are alive with the Presence and Power of God. Standing on this mountain, the disciples’ lives were about to change forever. In fact, the whole world was about to change forever. Not that they knew that at that moment. All they knew is that they heard that word: “Go.”

There’s some very important information in these verses from the end of Matthew’s Gospel. We want to get right to the crux of it, to the “Go,” the Great Commission. And that’s certainly understandable. That’s where the work is; that’s where the call is. We are a part of a denomination that takes as its mission the understanding that we are to be **Making Disciples for Jesus Christ for the Transformation of the World**. And we say it like that, with capitals and emphases. You can hear it in how we say it. We say it with fervor, with passion; we say it, let’s admit it, with a bit of desperation. We’re losing our grip on what we have been, and we are uncertain about what we will become. So, we cling tightly to the Great Commission for the salvation of the church, of the denomination. And we hold it so tightly that we squeeze the life out of it. It has become our weapon, our bludgeon to force a resurrection of the churches we were once upon a time, in our memory, if not in fact.

It comes down, I believe, to how we hear the word “Go.” “All authority has been given to me,” says Jesus, to drive his point home. To sear it into their souls, so that they would bow to the king and scuttle out of the mountainous throne room ready to do his bidding by hook or by crook. Go. Make disciples!

Whether they want to be made or not. Baptize them, even if you have to hold them under the water until they stop squirming; get them in; get them done. Then teach them to obey. *Obey*. Put them in their place. Under the thumb, under the heel. Make them good; make them pure; make them right when all they seem to want is wrong. Get 'er done!

You're squirming as you read those words, aren't you? I hope so. I was squirming as I wrote them. But the truth is, that is the attitude of many in the faith historically and today. The Great Commission is a license to hate, to wield the sword, to put down, look down, and come down on those who don't measure up. Go, run over the world until you've made it into the image that is palatable to Us! And if some get hurt in the process, well, better than to miss the urgency of the call to "Go". "It's in there," they say. That steel, that iron; don't mess with God. All authority has been given to me. There is no other way. So, you'd better shape up. Get in line. And if you don't have the right credentials, we don't want you; we won't let you in. Go.

Matthew says, with what sounds like a certain amount of sad honesty, that it was eleven disciples who gathered on that mountain. Did you notice? Maybe he hoped you wouldn't. Eleven. They were broken. Incomplete. One of them turned, betrayed them, threw it all back in their faces, and pushed to make something happen that wasn't going to happen, or pulled down the curtains to reveal the smoke and mirrors of the whole enterprise. At least that must have been what he thought. Oh, I know, John says it was the enemy. That he was infected, diseased. Can't blame him; he was a cancer that was cut out. Let's point the finger and let him take the blame. It absolves us. Our betrayal can remain hidden that way. Our weaknesses, our failings, pale before his.

But Matthew doesn't seem interested in blame, just in truth. Eleven disciples gathered on that mountain, carrying their wounds, their failures, their disappointment, and their fears. Even when Jesus appeared, he says that they worshiped but some doubted. Really? The resurrected Christ, stood before them, about to ascend into heaven and take his place at the right hand of Almighty God. And some doubted? Still? On the mountain?

We aren't told what they doubted. Him? Themselves? The mission that was about to be handed to them like hot coal from a fire? All the above or something else entirely. Who knows? We don't. Except that we do. Because we have them too: those doubts. That sense of inadequacy. That feeling that maybe we shouldn't force someone else to believe what isn't within them to believe. Maybe we should just keep it to ourselves, this faith thing. Keep it quiet; don't make waves; don't disturb the neighbors. "Live and let live." That's a better motto. Better than "Go," anyway.

But then, maybe we've got the tone wrong. Maybe it isn't about triumphalism, but about joy. Not about being right, but about being whole. Maybe Jesus meant that all that happened has just shown that his way, his life, his parabolic teaching were indeed the better way to be; and that if we were thinking right, we couldn't keep it to ourselves if we tried. It will leak out of us as we live in the world as fully alive human beings. "So," says Jesus, "live intentionally. Live outwardly." When Jesus says "make disciples," he doesn't imagine an anvil upon which we pound them into shape. Instead, he imagines a relationship. He says, "Go, spend time with people, value them, learn from them, know them, help them, tell them what makes you the fully alive person that you are." It isn't a course you take and get a diploma; it's a way of living that we are always growing into. Like creation itself, the goodness is found in the process. Make disciples as you are being made into a disciple.

“Baptize them”: that sounds formal, ritual, joining up, signing on the line, right? Well, sure. But maybe more. Baptism means cleansing. Washing. Maybe Jesus meant less of a rite of the church and more of a process of being made clean, peeling off the understandings of a self-centered culture, scraping away the stuff-centric life, and immersing ourselves in the Creator God, the Redeemer Christ, and the Sustainer Spirit. “Give them something else,” Jesus was saying, to live by, to be defined by. “Give them Me,” he said with that trademark thousand-watt smile. And teach. Oh yes. Teach them obedience. Not by breaking their will, though, not by beatings and repetitions, but by passion and joy and encouragement.

“Go,” he said to them and to us. Go. And trust that he knows how hard that is. That to “Go” forward is to leave something behind; that to accept the call to “Go” is to live with uncertainty and a sense of *what if* and *why not*. It is to embrace the goodness of God in spite of those doubts. Trusting that new place, the new world is a mountain of potential and power and the Presence of God. And maybe the real call is to live into “Go” rather than to jump and run to meet some deadline, some quota. Because we have known failure, “Go” is harder to hear. Harder, but not impossible. Because, with God, all things are possible. Even “Go.”

Verses marked NIV are from the Holy Bible, New International Version®, NIV® Copyright ©1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by [Biblica, Inc.®](#) Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.

Verses from [The Message](#) (MSG) Copyright © 1993, 2002, 2018 by [Eugene H. Peterson](#).