

Let us pray,

Lord, when we don't know what the future holds. Remind us of your mission, remind us of what you call us to do, each and every day.

Amen.

Today we are celebrating the graduates.

Some are graduating high school, trade schools, college and even a doctoral program.

These are all wonderful and exemplary accomplishments!

They should all feel very proud of themselves, and we are very proud of them!

But there is something that comes with every graduation that is rarely talked about.

There is the loss of what was, and the feeling of,....

“NOW WHAT?”

You did the thing.

You studied, you took the tests, you did the research, you put in the blood, sweat and tears of challenging yourself in various different ways.

You reached the goal.

But NOW WHAT???

Some may have jobs or internships or prospects of a job.

But there is always that anxiety, of NOW WHAT???

Many of us have experienced this feeling even if we didn't go to college or get a special degree or graduate from something.

Think of a time that you changed jobs, lost your job, got a job, moved, there is this feeling of uncomfortableness, this feeling of what do I do now?

What does this new future look like?

Today we are also celebrating pentecost.

The day that the holy spirit descended upon the disciples and they started speaking in tongues.

Meaning they were preaching the Gospel in the languages of those around them, so that all could understand what they were saying.

Days before, Jesus ascended into heaven.

Completing his work here on earth.

One can say that he graduated.

Is that in bad taste?

Anyway...

The disciples needed to figure out what this graduation meant for them and for God.

Just because Jesus finished his work here on earth in that form, doesn't mean that God's work is done,

In fact, just like when we graduate from these schools or programs, our work isn't done, it is just the beginning.

These disciples went through 3 years of training, 3 years of learning what it meant to follow God, learning what it meant to truly follow the way of the Lord.

And when Jesus left them, he didn't say well done disciples, rest and take your leave.

Nope, instead he said, I am not leaving you but giving you the Holy Spirit, the advocate, to help guide you and lead you.

So what did the Holy Spirit do for the disciples?

Well, She opened their mouths so that the truth that they have been learning about and experienced may be proclaimed and heard by all those willing to listen.

The Holy Spirit gave the disciples the ability to speak to those in their own language, maybe even to those that normally would not be able to understand them.

That would have been left out.

And here is the key phrase that makes all of this even more miraculous.

The author of Acts says that the Holy Spirit filled the house

Suddenly.

In the Message Paraphrase, Eugene Peterson replaces suddenly with “without warning”

the Holy Spirit without warning entered the room.

And for me, this is the message that we need to hear today.

We plan, we schedule, we work towards making sure that there are no surprises in life.

We like to have control over our lives and especially the future.

But the thing is, we need to be more open to allowing the Spirit to show up “without warning”.

No one knows what the future holds.

No one knows how our lives will turn out in a year from now, 5 years from now, 10 or more years from now.

Heck, we don't even know what tomorrow brings.

The anxieties of “What's next”, “What now”, “What am I going to do with my life?”.

We need to give these to God, and we need to allow the Spirit to show up Suddenly, Without Warning, and be ready to follow.

We do so much work trying to lead, trying to be in charge of our own destiny that we don't leave room for God's Spirit to show up and move us.

We aren't flexible, moldable, or adaptable.

But what if we were those things?

What if we could allow the spirit to guide and transform us on a daily basis, without warning.

Not worrying about tomorrow, but simply saying Yes to God today and every day.

Doing the basic work of serving God through serving others.

What if we lead, by following.

What if we looked at uncertainty, not as an issue, but an opportunity to see how the Spirit is calling us into unknown and mysterious and exciting paths forward.

What if we kept taking steps into the unknown, not knowing where we are going, but knowing that the one who leads us, will

show up without warning, and surprise us with the mystery of God that we never thought was possible.

Graduation is filled with uncertainty.

But don't let that uncertainty be a source of anxiety.

Let it be a source of excitement, curiosity and a chance to put full faith in God.

At the lead pastor training I was at they sung the hymn Will you come and follow me.

And I want you to listen to the first verse.

“Will you come and follow me if I but call your name? Will you go where you don't know and never be the same? Will you let my love be shown, will you let my name be known, will you let my life be grown in you and you in me.”

So what are we suppose to do?

What now?

As Christians, we know what we are suppose to do.

Lets reshape the world around us, Lets follow God when God shows up suddenly, without warning.

May we stop trying to figure out what to do with our life, and instead focusing on doing what God has called us to do with our life.

We already know what we are suppose to do, all we have to do is go out and do it with the time, talent, gifts and interests that we were given.

Congratulations to the graduates, may God show up without warning, and may you learn to follow and speak in the tongue that God has given you.

Amen.