

Rider Of The Wind

Psalm 18:1-19 (v.10)

John 3:1-10

Acts 2:1-4

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You can't control it.
You can't contain it.
It varies - daily, hourly. And from place to place.
It is big, powerful.
And it is totally outside of us.
And yet - it can also be gentle,
 a whisper of a touch,
 light.

And as you watch it,
 as you feel it,
 as you experience it,
 you come to understand a little more about God.

Over the last three weeks we've been meeting God through the book of Psalms. This week the Psalmist directs us to turn our faces and meet God in the wind. Feel it blow. Watch its power. Notice it shift.

 And in all that
 see
 God.

Psalm 18:10 -

He came swiftly upon the wings of the wind.

And towards the end of our reading - the rebuke of God, tearing at the earth:
 at the blast of the breath of your nostrils

Big.
Powerful.
Overwhelmingly strong.

The wind -

Jesus met with the inquiring Nicodemus, who wanted so much to nail down everything about God into nice, neat categories. He wanted to understand. He wanted clarity.

 Jesus looks him in the eye and says, "the wind blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes..." (John 3:8)

It's bigger than you, Nic.
You can't pin it down, Nic.

That's how it is with the wind.
That's how it is with the Lord.

Almighty God - who rides the wind.

Acts 2 - believers gathered. Pinned down by fear. Huddled together.
The wind comes.
It shakes them up.
It brings them into the public eye.
It blows a whole new courage into them.

The wind of God.

Tell me, believers - as you begin to think about it, what image comes to your mind?

[play video]

The Wind Is His Servant

Remember this, first of all.

Something, perhaps, that many of us may assume, but I think needs to be said anyway. The wind - strong though it may appear at times to us, overwhelming even, unpredictable and volatile, rough and moving, elusive -

- even with all of that -

the wind is but a servant to God

but an instrument in the almighty hand of the Creator.

The son of God demonstrated his dominance over the wind in Mark 4.

He's asleep while the disciples are navigating across the Sea of Galilee.

A great storm erupts. I believe that to be a storm evoked by demon powers, powers who thought that they could sneak up on the sleeping saviour and drown him. The ship is tossed. Water begins to fill the craft. The disciples woke him up and said to him, "Teacher, do you not care that we are in danger?" Jesus wakes, and much like an irritated parent says to a child who interrupts her much needed nap, says to the wind, "*Peace, be still*".

Something like, "*HEY, do you mind????!!!*" And the wind stopped and the sea

was quiet. The disciples, in awe, respond "*What sort of man is this? Even the wind and the sea obey him*". (Mark 4:37-41)

Yes - total obedience. The wind must give it to God.

Psalm 148:8 tells us that the stormy wind fulfills his command.
And Psalm 104:4 says that God makes the winds his messengers.

The winds are God's messenger.
The wind is not the same as God.
And God is not in every movement of the wind.

Witness 1 Kings 19, where the prophet Elijah goes up on a mountain. There he witnesses all KINDS of enormous powers. And God is not in any of them.

There is an earthquake. God is not in it.

There is a great fire. God is not in it.

There is a terrifyingly powerful wind, breaking rocks in pieces, ripping it seems at the very roots of the mountains.

And God was not in that wind, either.

Then came a silence. Sheer silence.

And out of the silence comes the voice of God.

He doesn't **NEED** any of these shows of power.

He is greater than any of them.

He is greater than all of them combined.

Remember that next time you see or experience wind.
Great though it is - God is greater.

Powerful Wind

God.

Great God.

God who rides the wind.

Wind that moves.

Wind with active power.

Here in Canada we're just starting to figure out what other countries have known for quite some time - wind can produce electricity.

The wind has power we can harness.

That's something I quite enjoy every time I get out in my sailboat. Harnessing and moving with the power of the wind.

Just - well, be careful not to get too cocky, thinking that we're the master and can deal with whatever wind conditions happen along.

That power can quickly overwhelm us.

In 1953, storm winds pushed tides on the coast of Europe far higher than anyone expected. The power of that wind-driven water broke through dikes protecting southern Holland. Nobody expected it. Nobody was ready for it. And in the chaos and confusion which followed, over 1800 people lost their lives.

Gerry and John are back from working with CRWRC in Louisiana. They saw unbelievable devastation from Hurricane Katerina. The power of wind and water overwhelmed all human defences. And what took just a few days to devastate is going to take thousand of people years to restore.

Another thing about wind is how unpredictable it is.

Every Thursday before race time, you'll find me at the computer looking at various models from Intellicast, Environment Canada and others which try to predict what the wind is going to do - how strong, what direction, and when.

Sometimes they're not too bad. This past Thursday they got it reasonably right. Sort of.

But at the end of all that looking, and mouse clicking and figuring, we've still got to get out on the water, with one of the crew up front looking across Lac Deschenes to figure out exactly what the wind is doing on the bay.

And, when we think we've got it right - sails all set in a particular way - better be ready to change quickly because the wind is going to shift direction or suddenly pick up in intensity or something else we didn't count on.

If you get too cocky someone will end up overboard or hurt or something will get broken... or worse.

Rule # 1- *respect the wind!!*

And that wind is but a servant of God - God who rides the wind. The God of power. God way beyond our control, beyond our ability to predict.

God - I wonder sometimes how much we respect His power.

I wonder sometimes how much we stand in awe of that power.

I wonder if sometimes we in North America have an idea of God that is far too small, far too tame, far too limited, far too neat, far too convenient for our own particular whims –

that we can harness as needed,
ignore as desired,
and addressed when convenient,
all in a manner that is comfortable.

God of power.

God that moves.

Recall the account of Pentecost - God's Spirit descends on His people.

Riding -

remember???

– a violent wind.

And a small band of cowering disciples, paralyzed by fear in a hidden room.

Till they're blown by that wind of God into the open.

Their spirits are inflated by the wind of God.

Their courage is given power by that wind.

And the Church is born.

You may notice that the disciples weren't exactly ready for it.

They weren't consulted as to the suitability of this moment.

And they weren't given input as to what it would look like.

The wind just came and did its own thing.

All those wind-blown, fire-filled disciples could do was respond in obedience.

The wind of God -

When you think wind, think Holy Spirit.

Both the Greek and Hebrew words for "Spirit" can also be translated as "wind."

Where we have become so used to hearing the phrase "Holy Spirit" or "Holy Ghost" we could just as equally have been using the phrase "Holy Wind."

Holy Wind that is powerful.

Holy Wind that is unpredictable.

Holy Wind that is active.

Friends, we believe and teach the Scriptural truth that every believer in Jesus Christ is filled with the Holy Spirit - with that Holy Wind of God.

And this is not just to make us feel happy.

It is not just to make us comfortable.

It is not just to give us confidence in our eternal future.

It is to fill our lives with the power of Christ.

It is to make our lives active for Christ.

Wind is about movement, about doing, about going.

Every believer is given divine power to move, to do, to go for Jesus.

Perhaps in ways you never expected.

Or places you never thought possible.

Or in times that weren't exactly of your own choosing.

Or in settings that weren't quite comfortable.

Perhaps you're finding yourself being challenged by that right now.

Or you've been fighting such a challenge which somehow has entered your life over the last few months.

I want to ask you to think carefully before trying to resist the Wind of God.

And I want to encourage you not to doubt that wind. If you feel yourself being drawn, pushed, or even swept along in a certain direction of ministry and service to Jesus – here within this congregation, or somewhere out in the community – pay attention!

God of power.

God of movement.

God beyond predicting.

God calling for response.

God of the Wind.

Presented In Context Of Intimacy

One more thing - there is also an intimate side to this God of Wind. It is an intimacy that we saw in our first scripture reading, Psalm 18. It begins with a deep statement of personal connection -

"I love you, O Lord..."

The Hebrew word used here is an intimate one. A personal one. Even in the context of a Psalm speaking of the great power of God, even there is intimacy.

For these two go together with God.
Power
and
Intimacy.

The Bible calls us to respect and respond to and honour the power of God.
Be in awe of Him.
And **ALSO** to be deeply in love with Him, personal with Him, close to Him.
"I love you, O Lord."

Why?

Because the Great God, who rides the wind, first loved us.

He loved us in His Son Jesus, the Saviour, who took the time in the middle of the night to sit with Nicodemus. He loved us enough to save us.

He loved us with His Holy Spirit - it was the Spirit who hovered over the primordial waters of creation, and over the earth when it was formed, and over the yet inanimate forms of the first human. Genesis tells us that God ***breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living being.***

The breath of God, life-giving breath.

And guess what?

The Hebrew word for "Breath of God" is the same word as the one for "Wind."

God faces the first human.

Face to face.

Close.

Breathes right into him.

And gives life.

God faces each of us, too.

Face to face.

Close.

And He breathes His Holy Breathe, Holy Wind, Holy Spirit right into us.

And gives us life.

God gives faith into our hearts.

Gives us the ability to love him.

Gives us the ability to respond to him.

Gives us every bit of faith life that we have.

Allowing us, now, to join the Psalmist and say -
"I love you, O Lord."

And so, will you?
Join me in saying that?

Please, let's say that together -
"I love you, O Lord."