

## **Jumping the Couch**

*May 11, 2008*

(The Day of Pentecost - Year A)

Acts 2: 1-21

*St. Alban's Episcopal Church, Waco, Texas*

Alleluia! Christ is risen! *The Lord is risen indeed! Alleluia!*

Three years ago this month, a historic moment happened that was broadcast on American television.

On May 23, 2005, the actor Tom Cruise appeared on the Oprah Winfrey show.

In that episode of Oprah, Tom Cruise was newly in love with his girlfriend, Katie Holmes.

In that infamous Oprah episode, Tom Cruise bounces around the set, he falls down on one knee in front of Oprah, and he jumps up and down on the couch whenever Katie Holmes' name is mentioned, shouting out:

*"I'm in love! I'm in love! I'm in love!"*

After famously jumping on the couch, Oprah says in astonishment to Tom Cruise:

"Tom, something has happened to you.

What has happened to you to make you do all these crazy things?"

After Tom Cruise's infamous display of love for Katie Holmes, Folks around the country began to find the whole display to be unbelievable.

How could anyone act so crazy and so enthusiastic and so illogically in love, especially by jumping on furniture on national TV?

Was Tom Cruise crazy? Or was he just plain drunk?

Two thousand years ago, on a Pentecost morning, the city of Jerusalem is filled with thousands of people celebrating the Jewish festival of Pentecost.

The followers of Jesus, however, are huddled together in one place, still in bewilderment that the risen Jesus that they had loved and seen had ascended into heaven 10 days before.

Then, a huge sound from heaven, like the wind from a hurricane, fills the entire house.

Flames of fire appear over each of Jesus' followers.

They are filled with the Holy Spirit and begin to speak in other languages.

The disciples run out of the house, speaking in ways that everyone can understand.

The crowd witnesses these crazy things, this jumping around and hopping on couches and says:

“What has happened to you to make you do all these crazy things? Are you Galileans crazy - or are you just plain drunk?”

Whether we are watching Tom Cruise jump the couch on the Oprah Winfrey Show,

Or whether we are watching the disciples of Jesus make fools of themselves on Pentecost by running around with flames on their heads and acting drunk,

We cannot fully understand the craziness of being in love,

We cannot fully understand the craziness of the love of Jesus.

Today is the Day of Pentecost.

Today is the day when we remember that - 50 days after the Resurrection, 50 days after Easter - the followers of Jesus were filled with the crazy love of Jesus.

We call this crazy and unpredictable love of Jesus by a special name.

We call this crazy love of Jesus: the Holy Spirit.

And this Holy Spirit gives us boldness and power to love people in ways that we could never do on our own power.

I know, from my own experience, that I cannot fully love other people, without the working of the crazy power of the Holy Spirit.

Several years ago, I listened to the story of a man who had come to my office so drunk with cheap liquor that his entire body smelled so horrific, that I was convinced that I was going to vomit.

My prayer to the Holy Spirit was specific:

I prayed that the Holy Spirit would give me power, power so that I could love this man and not throw up all over him.

And when I had loved this man and prayed with him, without being overcome by nausea, I felt like jumping on the couch, as a witness to the crazy love of God for other people, that works through the Holy Spirit, working through me.

Another day, when I worked in a hospital as a chaplain, I had to be the person to tell a huddled family that their beloved husband and father had just died on the operating table, when the family had been told that the operation was just a routine surgery.

My prayer to the Holy Spirit was specific:

I prayed that the Holy Spirit would give me power, power so that I would be able to open my mouth and say these words:

“I am sorry, but your husband did not make it through the surgery. The doctors did everything they could.”

And when I had loved on this family and prayed with them, I felt like jumping on the couch, as a witness to the crazy love of God for other people, that works through the Holy Spirit, working through me.

You see, a lot of times, I am not naturally a very loving and bold and courageous human being.

Many times, I have no choice but to rely on the power of the Holy Spirit - *if* I am going to try to love other people whom I don't really want to love, but whom Jesus wants me to love anyway.

Where the power of Jeff Fisher stops, that is where the crazy Spirit of Jesus that we call the Holy Spirit steps in -

To fill in the gaps so that I can love others and do things in the ways that I believe that Jesus would want me to do.

When Jesus was on this earth, he showed us God's love.

And now, Jesus' Holy Spirit is still here on this earth, showing us that God is still in love with us.

For Jesus still invites us sinners to dinner.

Jesus still rejoices when one lost sheep is found.

Jesus still weeps for his friends who have died.

And Jesus still jumps up and down on the couch whenever your name is mentioned, because God is so crazy in love with you.

And that spirit of love,  
That spirit of enthusiasm,  
That spirit of craziness,  
Is the same Holy Spirit that was poured out on all on the Day of  
Pentecost.

That same, crazy Holy Spirit gives us power to say “I love you” to a  
sibling whom we have disliked for years.

That crazy Holy Spirit gives us power to forgive ourselves for all the  
mistakes we have made.

That crazy Holy Spirit gives us power to not flip off somebody who cuts  
us off on I-35.

For the Holy Spirit gives us the power to love, when we cannot love  
based on our own power.

Three years ago, after jumping on the couch on the Oprah Winfrey  
show, Oprah exclaimed to her famous guest:

“Tom, what has happened to you to make you do all these crazy things?”

Two thousand years ago, after being filled with the Holy Spirit, the  
followers of Jesus are accused of being drunk, and the crowd  
exclaims:

“What has happened to you all to make you do all these crazy things?”

And on this Day of Pentecost, 2008, I hope that we will be so loving and  
so forgiving and so bold that everyone will ask us:

“What has happened to you to make you do all these crazy things?”

And we will jump on the couch and shout out:

*“I’m in love! I’m in love!*

*I’m in love with all of God’s people!*

*Because I’m filled with the crazy Holy Spirit... of love!”*

AMEN.