



Pastor Hanke's Blog

October 7, 2018

Includers: Worship 1

Bible Reference: Acts 2:1-13

I know, I know. "Includers" is a made up word. My professors in Seminary made up words all the time. In my defense, though, I didn't make up this word; StrengthsFinder did. They are an organization that offers assessments to help you find your top 5 talents, or strengths. I remember when I first got my StrengthsFinder assessment results back and found out that I was an "Includer," I didn't like it. I wanted to be something other than an Includer. I have since come to embrace it, and acknowledge how right they were about me. I want everyone to be included; it's just how I function. It breaks my heart if I see one of my kids left out. I picked Abby up from a birthday party one time and she was playing alone. I was so sad. Come to find out that Abby wanted to play in the sand box while the swings were busy. Initially, when I thought she had been left out, I was heartbroken.

It takes so much work to include people who are different than us. Perhaps that is why there is so much division in the world; we naturally exclude people because it is easier. Just think about all the problems the world deals with based upon exclusion. But as God's people, we become "includers." God includes all people. Following His example, we should work to include all people as well.

In the book of Acts, the Holy Spirit came upon the disciples in a way that allowed them to speak the native languages of all the peoples present that day. It is what we know as Pentecost. At that moment, all people were included in that time of worship. Yet even then, even being a witness to the event, there were those who were so used to being separated, or excluded (by language or whatever), that they questioned what was going on. I know it is hard to include people who are different from us in worship. They may not have the knowledge or history to worship like we do. They may act differently or dress differently while worshiping, or something else. Yet I truly believe, now more than ever, Christ is calling the church to be the example and include all of His people. This Sunday we'll look at the story of Pentecost, and what it teaches us about being worship includers.

God's Peace,

Pastor Will