

Acts 2 1:21

I first want to thank everyone that is here today, it means so much to me to see you all here. Also, I would like to thank Pastor Paul for welcoming me into the chapel with open arms. I am sure it was a little confusing for him at first to find out that a nonreligious person had signed up to give a senior sermon. But nonetheless he was very gracious throughout the entire time with helping me prepare for this event.

So let's start shall we, Hi, how is everyone today? I'm going to ask that everyone bear with me for the next few minutes as I venture outside my comfort zone a bit. I never thought for a moment that I would be in front of people giving a sermon. And the look on my mom's and many friend's faces when I told them about my sermon showed the same shock mine did as I hastily scribbled down my name on the signup sheet.

I want to start with a story that may give light to the reason why I am here today. J-term of my Freshman year, I came home from class to the tail end of a conversation between a man from a certain religious organization talking to my roommate about faith. As he stood up to leave my roommate introduced me to him and told me I should talk to him. Now anyone that knows me, knows how much I

like to have discussion about controversial topics such as politics and religion. It comes with the territory of being a government major. So naturally I agree to meet with him. So the next day as I was in my room, the man knocks and I invite him in. He sits down and pulls out his pamphlet of questions. As the conversation began I realized how unfair of a discussion this would be as he asked questions that were slanted and only gave one answer (his answer). I point this out and try to vocalize issues with what he is saying and questions presented, but he continues anyways. We get to the end and on the last page of his booklet is a circle and he tells me to point where I belong. Inside the circle is heaven and is reserved for those who believe in the existence of God and accept Jesus Christ as Savior, but outside the circle is hell where everyone else belongs. He asks me what I need to do to get inside the circle. I respond with nothing because I don't believe the circle was there in the first place. He is obviously now frustrated with me for not taking away all I needed to from his conversation with me. He reminds me that until I accept Jesus Christ as my savior I am doomed to hell and that no one will fully accept me until I do. I raise a question as he gets up to leave, I ask him about the Vineyard parable. He tells me it doesn't exist in the Bible as he quickly heads for the door with a huff.

"And suddenly a sound came from heaven like the rush of a mighty wind...and at this sound the multitude came together, and they were bewildered,

because each one heard them speaking in his own language" This passage shows the confusion the Jews have when suddenly they are able to understand every culture that is present, from the Arabians to the Pontus. It suddenly became a marvelous thing to be able to understand one another and speak the same language. I believe language in this passage is meant to be more than the simple words our mouths extrude, but also the ideas and beliefs behind each one of these words. The Jews were suddenly able to effectively communicate and listen to everybody present. These cultures became a community suddenly united by language. Naturally, every group had a different background and had different beliefs, but they had the common goal of sharing God's mighty works.

Community is not meant to be a group of people of likemindedness, but a group of people that focus on their commonalities rather than their differences. This is something I think Augustana has forgotten when it comes to our core value of community. I sat in my Religion in American Culture with Dr. Haar on one of the first days of class, a girl sitting next to me became shocked when I said that I was an atheist, she had never met one before and the unease in her voice was far from unnoticeable. Do not be so quick to judge the person next to you that has varying beliefs. We are all in college now, it is time to grow up and realize that there are people of different backgrounds all around us! Republicans I implore you

to have lunch with a Democrat. Christians have coffee with a non-Christian, we are hard to find on this campus but we are here. Share your ideas, listen to theirs. You might both be speaking English, but you are far from speaking the same language. Understand one another, understand why the opposition believe and say the things they are sharing. "(both Jews and converts to Judaism); Cretans and Arabs—we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues!"

It is not to say that I have not many friends here that understand the language that I am speaking, or more importantly respect it, but the larger Augie community has not been respectfully listening. So many people rightly ask why I decided to stay at Augie if I did not feel a part of the community. The simple answer comes from my father, you can live anywhere for 4 years. But I think the better answer is because Augustana is a great education. It has opened up many doors for me, including my internship at the U.S. Department of State this Spring. And Augie allowed me to Study Abroad in France and travel all over Europe, which broadened my horizons by teaching me to think critically and be more open to many other points of view which challenge me each and every day. So fellow students and friends, remember there are a thousand languages here at Augustana, not just yours.