

# GOD's Breath Mint

*Disclaimer:*

*This sermon was preached with out notes. This is a draft of the sermon that I used to be the basics of the sermon, but I memorize the sermon when I preach, so some parts are left out and others added, hopefully by the Holy Spirit! It is my desire that this sermon be used to bring Glory to God and to encourage his people to be His people not their own people. You may share this sermon with others only with my expressed permission. I do not assume that I am always completely theologically correct, so I encourage others to join or create a discussion about any of what is found in this sermon. Thank you for your interest in this sermon. All Scriptures are NLT.*

## Genesis 2: 7

Then The Lord God formed a man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being. (NLT)

## Psalm 104: 24-34

24 O Lord, what a variety of things you have made!

In wisdom you have made them all.

The earth is full of your creatures.

25 Here is the ocean, vast and wide,  
teeming with life of every kind,  
both large and small.

26 See the ships sailing along,  
and Leviathan,[c] which you made to play in the sea.

27 They all depend on you  
to give them food as they need it.

28 When you supply it, they gather it.  
You open your hand to feed them,  
and they are richly satisfied.

29 But if you turn away from them, they panic.  
When you take away their breath,  
they die and turn again to dust.

30 When you give them your breath,[d] life is created,  
and you renew the face of the earth.

31 May the glory of the Lord continue forever!  
The Lord takes pleasure in all he has made!

32 The earth trembles at his glance;  
the mountains smoke at his touch.

33 I will sing to the Lord as long as I live.  
I will praise my God to my last breath!

34 May all my thoughts be pleasing to him,  
for I rejoice in the Lord. *(NLT)*

## **John 20: 19-22**

19 That Sunday evening[b] the disciples were meeting behind locked doors because they were afraid of the Jewish leaders. Suddenly, Jesus was standing there among them! “Peace be with you,” he said. 20 As he spoke, he showed them the wounds in his hands and his side. They were filled with joy when they saw the Lord! 21 Again he said, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I am sending you.” 22 Then he breathed on them and said, “Receive the Holy Spirit. *(NLT)*

# **GOD’s Breath Mint**

Right off the bat I want to say that this sermon is dragon free.... I know some of you might be expecting me to preach something about dragons, and even thought this text talks about Leviathan (a sea monster) I promise this is not the focus of this sermon. But if your wondering why it is in here just see me after the sermon and I can talk about it.

I can those of you who love high church can be happy with this sermon, because we went very traditional and read scripture form the Old Testament, a Psalm, and the New Testament. And for those of you who don’t know it in a lot of high church worship services they read for scriptures, one OT, one Psalm, one Gospel, and one Epistle.

But the reason they do that is to remind everyone that our bible is one big over arching story of how God has revealed who God is and who we are. And Even though I wil be focusing on the Psalm passage, it is obvious that the Psalmist has Genesis in mind in their song writing, and the same is true of the Gospel passage!

While Tiffany and I were on vacation this past week we tried to go see something that was not on any tourist maps and got a little lost, but with a map we knew where we were and got back on track, but while we were walking around Boston to get back on the tour bus we cam across a small chapel that had this scripture carved into the stone above the doors of the downtown church in Boston. “When you give them your breath, life is created, and you renew the face of the earth.” And the more and more I thought about it the more and more that piece of scripture really became an echo in the chambers of my heart and soul.

The entire psalm that we just read is a beautiful song all about God and God’s creation. We did not read the whole psalm, but this psalm has given rise to a lot of inspired other hymns and praise songs that we know of today. It is a song that praises God for all of his creation, almost this entire psalm should be and would be to the listeners in the old

Testament make them remember the stories and scripture of the creation and Genesis. The Psalmists goes on to write about the variety of what God has created, and how they are all dependent upon God to give them life and continue their life through food, and that death is not something to be scared of, it is just a reality. We all die, and that is OK, but the words that really drew all of my attention in my mind were the ones talking about, when God gives his breath to his creation that life is created, and that he renews his creation through them through his breath. And I think the Big words in that last statement is THROUGH THEM, it is God that is bring about the renewal of his own creation, but he does this THROUGH HIS CREATION!

Did you know that the word for breath in the Hebrew can also mean Spirit?

Now it gets interesting, because back in Genesis, man did not come to life until God breathed his breath of life in them, or when God breathed his spirit into them.

And now the Psalmist says that God continues to bring about life through the same giving, and this is the way that God has chosen to renew the face of the earth! Wow, that is awesome. But, here is the hard part in many eyes.

What do you think of when I say, “Renew the Face of the Earth”? Now for me to communicate what I think of that this means we need to deal with what each of us hears when we read “renew the face of the earth”. How does this happen? Who is doing it? When does it happen?

I have tried to come up with a few different ways that I think we may have put our focus when we read these words. And then come back to the way that I think that scripture has in mind...

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1. That is not really our Job, that is Jesus’ job when he comes back.
2. That means we need to work on the public policy side of things.. we should be working at the political things. (this is not wrong, but it is saying that the large institutions is the only place that will happen at.)
3. I am renewed by Jesus...and that is al that matters... or we are renewed by the Spirit (a focus on me) not that it is horrible, but the end result is all about me.. the buck stops with me!
4. Just going green, leaving it at a ecological sense.
5. Just living in peace as an entire world. All the nations would live in harmony.

Now there is nothing wrong with any of those, but if each one that is the only one that we focus on then I think we get it wrong. All too often we as Christians have part of the

story and we stick to that story, but we must read all of what the Scriptures have to tell us.

So, then we come to John's Gospel And here we get to see Jesus who claims to be God! So, here is God again breathing life into God's creation! But this time Jesus says what, "As the Father has sent me, so I am sending you" And then he breaths on his disciples. And after he breaths he says, "receive the Holy Spirit!"

And I think when we look back at the Psalms we see that Jesus is helping out our definition of what it means to, "renew the face of the earth"! God is doing his renewing through his creation!!! So here e come full circle with Genesis and the Psalms, God through his breath, i.e. His Spirit is renewing the creation through us!!!! But how? And the how is found in the words of Jesus before he breathed on them, he says, "As the Father has sent me, So I am sending you"!!!!

Here is one of the main focuses I believe we should be entertaining... we are breathed upon so we can be like God and be a sent people. The God we serve at the core is a sent God, God sent Jesus, and Jesus gave us the Holy Spirit and is now sending us into all of God's creation so we can renew the face of the earth!

How do we renew the face of the earth, I believe we follow the example of God in the beginning of Genesis. God did not need us to be a part of the creation, but he invited us to be in relationship with God! And then with the Holy Spirit we are to be also in relationship with the rest of the creation! It is RELATIONSHIPS that are to be the second part of our main focus.

And lastly, I believe that we have to allow God to breath his breath and Holy Spirit upon us! We need to be renewed so that we can be used by God to renew the earth. But, this is the hard part, because this is the part that requires all of us to think about others and not ourselves. It requires for us to give all of our lives to God so that He can renew the earth through us! This is the sacrifice of our lives, families, jobs, money, etc... that has to happen before we can move ourselves out of the way and allow God to breath on us. So here's the thing.. so many people want to know how to apply scripture to their lives and get frustrated on how to respond to sermons etc... OK so lets summarize:

To allow God to breath his Spirit into us so that we can be the renewal of the earth we must be:

1. A people that are completely sacrificial (we must allow God to breath his breath into us)
2. A Sent people (We are sent into the earth to bring about the renewal)
3. A people filled with relationships (We are to bring about the renewal through RELATIONSHIPS)

**We are a sacrificial, sent, relational people!**

Ok here is the Advertisement! I believe that the most effective way to be the people these three scriptures speak of in the world we live in today is Th3 Waters. No al lot of people still have no idea what Th3 Waters is...so let me explain.. Th3 Waters desires to renew the face of the earth by allow God to form us into sacrificial, sent, relational people!

That is all. Nothing More, nothing Less. So, what is my role in Th3 Waters and here in Florence UMC? **I need yall to see me as a Missionary in Residence** that is supported by you the Church in Florence. I am here to not only develop relationships with people that do not follow Jesus, but to encourage you to allow God to breath his Spirit into us so we all can be sent, and filled with relationships. I love you! And I love those that do not follow Jesus just as much... and the reality of the United Methodist church right now is that young adults are attending United Methodist Churches. There will be no United Methodist church after you die if the trend we are in continues. It make take a few years to limping along after the oldest two generations die, but this is the hard truth that we face today. And did you know that Florence UMC is being seen all over the United States as a church that is wiling to sacrifice and dream, and make a lot of mistakes to not let this occur in the future. Gary and I are speaking on average of 4-5 conferences each year telling what we are attempting to be and live through renewing the face of the earth.

But here is where you the people of Florence UMC come into play. The only way Th3 Waters will bring about this renewal of the earth is through relationships. And the only way we can do that is to slowly become sacrificial in our nature and be sent out develop relationships with others. We have not been given the breath of God just so we can enjoy it, but we have been given this holy breath so that God can bring about the same breath into the lives of others!

So, this is where Life Gatherings come into play. The life Gatherings are the place where we slowly learn how to become a sent people, a people that place their focus on relationships, and where we realize that we have become too selfish! It is a time to experience what it is like to live our lives aware of others 1<sup>st</sup> then ourselves. It is in these gatherings of people where life is lived in community. We say that this happens here in this time during Sunday, but it is just not happening as affectively as it is in a small gathering of people that truly ask each other every single week how can we help you? How can we celebrate life with you? How can we morn with you? How can we care for you through your divorce, while your spouse is away in the military?

I cannot express how much every person in this place needs this support and family that The Life Gatherings offer. You can ask anyone that is a part of the Life Gatherings, every single one of them were skeptical of it at first and even got frustrated, but now I can safely say that for the ones that have stayed in them, they did not even realize how much they needed it in their lives, and that the sacrifice to make time to be in one was and still is completely worth the cost and sacrifice of time. 1-2 hours a week! 1-2 hours.

And the idea is that each Life Gathering experiences the breath of God each week and slowly becomes a sweet sweet breath of God in the earth! And that each life Gathering slowly starts to grow so big that they must live out our calling to be sacrificial sent people

by developing relationships with others that don't even go to church here, and we ourselves start to slowly become the sweet sweet breath of God bring the Holy Spirit into the lives of others that are all alone, selfish, and have never experience the exhilaration of being sent, of having a purpose in life something other than for themselves.

What is it that is keeping you from joining a Life Gathering? All that it asks is for you to try one out for 5-7 weeks, that really is the minimum of time it takes to truly understand how Th3 Waters YOUR ministry that God has called you to be, is renewing the face of the World, by forming us into the sweet sweet breath mint of God! This world is offensive, the stench of the worlds breath has become something that God never intended, but He is calling you all right now to be sacrificial, make the time for God to form us into a people that are attractive, because we bring about the sweet sweet breath of the holy Spirit into their lives, and into this earth to renew it back to the way God intended for it to be. Please experience the life Gatherings and become the sacrificial, sent, relationship filled Breath mint of God! Bring life and renewal to the face of the Earth!

In the Name of the Father, The Son, and The Holy Spirit (breath of God) Amen!