

## Sermon for June 8, 2025 - Pentecost

Acts 2:1–21 (EHV)

**Theme: Pentecost reveals how the Holy Spirit works.**

- 1) He fills the Church with his presence and gifts.
- 2) He draws people to hear the Gospel.
- 3) He prepares people for the Last Day.

*<sup>1</sup> When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. <sup>2</sup> Suddenly a sound like the rushing of a violent wind came from heaven, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. <sup>3</sup> They saw divided tongues that were like fire resting on each one of them. <sup>4</sup> They were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, since the Spirit was giving them the ability to speak fluently. <sup>5</sup> Now there were godly Jewish men from every nation under heaven living in Jerusalem. <sup>6</sup> When this sound was heard, a crowd came together and was confused, because each one heard them speaking in his own language. <sup>7</sup> They were completely baffled and said to each other, “Look, are not all these men who are speaking Galileans? <sup>8</sup> Then how is it that each of us hears them speaking in his own native language? <sup>9</sup> Parthians, Medes, and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, and of Judea, Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, <sup>10</sup> Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt, and the parts of Libya around Cyrene; visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes; <sup>11</sup> Cretans and Arabs—we hear them declaring in our own languages the wonderful works of God.” <sup>12</sup> They were all amazed and perplexed. They kept saying to one another, “What does this mean?” <sup>13</sup> But others mocked them and said, “They are full of new wine.” <sup>14</sup> Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice, and spoke loudly and clearly to them: “Men of Judea, and all you residents of Jerusalem, understand this, and listen closely to my words. <sup>15</sup> These men are not drunk, as you suppose, for it is only the third hour of the day. <sup>16</sup> On the contrary, this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: <sup>17</sup> This is what God says will happen in the last days: I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh. Your sons and your daughters will prophesy. Your young men will see visions. Your old men will dream dreams. <sup>18</sup> Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy. <sup>19</sup> I will show wonders in the sky above, and signs on the earth below, blood and fire and a rising cloud of smoke. <sup>20</sup> The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and glorious day of the Lord. <sup>21</sup> And this will happen: Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.*

### Introduction

Electricity is amazing. Its importance is seen in modern life. And yet, because electricity is invisible, we often forget that it is there – affecting our lives in so many ways. The same can be said about the Holy Spirit. He is utterly amazing and powerful – affecting our lives in many important ways. But, because He is invisible, we often forget that He is there. And, just as a host of modern devices won't be able to fulfill the purposes for which they were designed unless

electricity flows through them, so also we (both as individual Christians and collectively as a Church) are unable to fulfill the purpose for which we were saved unless filled by the Holy Spirit.

Let us, therefore, take a closer look at the account of Pentecost in Acts 2 and consider how it reveals how the Holy Spirit works in our lives, under the theme: **Pentecost reveals how the Holy Spirit works.** 1) He fills the Church with his presence and gifts. 2) He draws people to hear the Gospel. 3) He prepares people for the Last Day.

### Part One: He fills the Church with his presence and gifts

Our sermon text takes place only 10 days after Jesus ascended into heaven. He told his disciples that they would be his witnesses in the world, but to wait until He gave them the great gift needed to carry out this work. So, in joyful obedience and hope, these first Christians waited for Jesus to fulfill his promise – meeting every day in the temple courts to praise and glorify God.<sup>i</sup>

*<sup>1</sup> When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. <sup>2</sup> Suddenly a sound like the rushing of a violent wind came from heaven, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting.*

The sound of the rushing wind reminds me of what Jesus told Nicodemus: *“The wind blows where it pleases. You hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.”*<sup>ii</sup>

But the sound of the wind wasn't the only way the invisible Spirit made his presence known to these first Christians. <sup>3</sup> *They saw divided tongues that were like fire resting on each one of them.*

This was in fulfillment of John the Baptist prophecy: *[The Christ] will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.*<sup>iii</sup>

But why would the Holy Spirit place tongues that looked like fire over these first Christians? What purpose did they serve? To proclaim God's presence with his people! You see, during major events in Old Testament history, the LORD often chose to take the form of a cloud or fire to proclaim his presence.<sup>iv</sup> The Holy Spirit did this same thing here: proclaiming his presence with both the church collectively and each believer individually, so that we might always have hope and joy in knowing that he is with us.

But the Holy Spirit didn't just make his presence known with the sound of wind and fire. He also gave believers something more intimate and personal. We read: <sup>4</sup> *They were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, since the Spirit was giving them the ability to speak fluently.*

The Holy Spirit gave himself to believers, and he continues to give the gift of himself today. The Bible is clear: when we were baptized, the Holy Spirit was poured into our hearts for the forgiveness of sins.<sup>v</sup> We have become his temple.<sup>vi</sup>

And just as the Holy Spirit blessed each believer in Jerusalem with the special gift of being able to speak a unique language to make his Gospel known, so the LORD has awakened a unique spiritual gift in each of us so that we might do the same. What gift has been given to you? The ability to speak another language? Perhaps. But it could also be the ability to show compassion, the gift of administration, the ability to teach others, a generous heart, the ability to pray, means to help others in need . . . the list can go on and on. The point is that the Holy Spirit has uniquely gifted each of us for a purpose, just as he gave each disciple at Pentecost the ability to fluently speak a specific foreign language. Just think, as each disciple praised God in the unique language the Holy Spirit gave them, there was a specific person in Jerusalem who heard it and was touched.

Similarly, God has uniquely gifted us with different talents to be used in the service of his Gospel.<sup>vii</sup> Each of our unique roles is important – tailored to reach specific people that God has in mind for us to reach.

## Part Two: He draws people to hear the Gospel.

We read:<sup>5</sup> *Now there were godly Jewish men from every nation under heaven living in Jerusalem.*  
<sup>6</sup> *When this sound was heard, a crowd came together and was confused, because each one heard them speaking in his own language.*

We can spend a lot of time and energy trying to figure out how to engage our community with the Gospel. The amazing thing is that the most effective opportunities are often provided by the Spirit himself – attracting people to hear his Gospel as believers simply use the gifts God has given them to praise his holy name! This is what happened at Pentecost. As the first Christians used the gifts the Holy Spirit gave them to praise the LORD, God made sure people took notice. The same is true for us: as we simply use the gifts the Holy Spirit has given us, God will make sure people notice. They will try to figure us out.

We read: <sup>7</sup> *They were completely baffled and said to each other, “Look, are not all these men who are speaking Galileans?”* <sup>8</sup> *Then how is it that each of us hears them speaking in his own native language?. . . declaring in our own languages the wonderful works of God.”* <sup>12</sup> *They were all amazed and perplexed. They kept saying to one another, “What does this mean?”* <sup>13</sup> *But others mocked them and said, “They are full of new wine.”*

It’s interesting to note that, even though each person heard the Gospel spoken in their unique language, they still didn’t understand it. They were confused and perplexed - some even going so far as to mock the believers. Why? Because, as the Bible says: *The man without the Spirit does*

*not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned.*<sup>viii</sup>

What happened at Pentecost serves as a picture of what happens with us. People certainly notice when we use the gifts God has given us in service of his Gospel. The problem is that they don't understand. Why do Christians condemn things as sin that society accepts as ok? Why do Christians pray for their enemies – forgiving people who hurt them deeply? Why do Christians claim to eat the body and blood of a person who lived thousands of years ago? If evolution is so widely accepted by science, why do Christians call it wrong? The list could go on and on as to how our message confuses and perplexes the people around us to the point that they even begin to mock it. This happened at Pentecost, and it still happens today. How should we respond? The same way Peter and the disciples did on the first Pentecost: by simply proclaiming God's Word and showing how it points to Christ.

Part Three: He prepares people for the Last Day.

*<sup>14</sup> Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice, and spoke loudly and clearly to them: "Men of Judea, and all you residents of Jerusalem, understand this, and listen closely to my words. <sup>15</sup> These men are not drunk, as you suppose, for it is only the third hour of the day. <sup>16</sup> On the contrary, this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: <sup>17</sup> This is what God says will happen in the last days: I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh. Your sons and your daughters will prophesy. Your young men will see visions. Your old men will dream dreams. <sup>18</sup> Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy. <sup>19</sup> I will show wonders in the sky above, and signs on the earth below, blood and fire and a rising cloud of smoke. <sup>20</sup> The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and glorious day of the Lord. <sup>21</sup> And this will happen: Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.*

Wow, there is a lot to learn in what Peter said: enough to fill many sermons. For today, however, let me simply point out this: Peter simply proclaimed to the crowd at Pentecost that God was fulfilling his promises. Judgment day is coming. The outpouring of the Holy Spirit that they witnessed testified to this fact. But the outpouring of the Holy Spirit did more than this. God poured out his Spirit on all believers – regardless of their race, gender, or position in life – so that they might know Jesus and the salvation He won for them. He gave special gifts to the people of his Church so that they might build each other up. And even though the gifts of dreams and visions seem primarily given to believers in the earthly Church, God nevertheless allows us to see the same vision and dreams they saw in the pages of Scripture. Through the Bible, He reveals himself to us – telling us what to expect as judgement day approaches. More importantly, he tells us how he saved us through Jesus.

Through the Bible, the Holy Spirit instructs us – leading us to repent of all sin and trust in Christ alone for salvation. And, having received salvation through faith in Jesus, the Holy Spirit equips

us to tell others about Him. He uses our simple confession of his Word to call others to repentance and faith.

And here is the amazing thing: as we make our simple confession of Christ - using the unique gifts God has given us to His glory - guess what happens? The Holy Spirit works through us. Like electricity flowing through the display of a smartphone, the Holy Spirit is the unseen power making our light shine<sup>ix</sup> – allowing people to see God through us, learn about his love, and move them to repent and be saved.

Remember this whenever you are tempted to give up your witness of Christ or feel bad because you aren't like another Christian to whom different gifts have been given. The Holy Spirit is with you. He has given you the exact gift he wants you to have to glorify his name. He will lead the very people to you that he intends to touch through your confession of Christ. And even though people will look at you confused and perplexed – not understanding why you believe what you do – continue to simply share the Gospel as the Holy Spirit has revealed it to you. Using the Word you witness, he will work repentance and faith in the hearts of those who listen so that they too might call on the LORD and be saved.

Yes, as the account of Pentecost teaches, the Holy Spirit is with you. Find joy in the knowledge of his presence. Amen.

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<sup>i</sup> Cf. Luke 24:53

<sup>ii</sup> John 3:8 EHV

<sup>iii</sup> Luke 1:6 EHV

<sup>iv</sup> Eg. God's covenant with Abram – (Genesis 15:17), Moses and the Burning Bush (Exodus 3:2ff), the Exodus (Exodus 13:21-22), Mount Sinai (Exodus 19:20), Dedication of the Temple (1 Kings 8:10-11), etc. . .

<sup>v</sup> Cf. Act 2:38-39

<sup>vi</sup> 1 Corinthians 3:14

<sup>vii</sup> 1 Corinthians 12:4ff

<sup>viii</sup> 1 Corinthians 2:14 NIV84

<sup>ix</sup> Cf Matthew 5:16