

Holy Spirit: Pentecost

To best understand the Holy Spirit, it is best that we look at one of the most impactful and lifechanging events the scripture gives us about the Holy Spirit

The reality is, the Holy Spirit is often misunderstood or miscommunicated in a way that brings confusion and perhaps fear. Part of the goal of this series is to give you knowledge and confidence to understand who the Holy Spirit is, and what He does

Last week, we talked about the personhood of the Holy Spirit and how the Holy Spirit is the third person of the trinity that is co-equal and co-eternal with God and Jesus yet distinct in personhood

But tonight, we are going to read and study one of the most profound and challenging stories the scripture gives us on the Holy Spirit

Turn to Acts 2:1-21

Pray

This story is what's known as "Pentecost"

The word **Pentecost** comes from the Greek *πεντηκοστή* (*pentēkostē*), meaning "fiftieth" 50 days after the Passover celebration (the Night Jesus was betrayed)

Context:

Jesus is betrayed by Judas, crucified and on the third day is risen

Jesus spends a couple weeks with His disciples and appears to hundreds of people after being resurrected

Jesus then takes His disciples to a mountain and gives them one final message. A promise that He would send the promise, the Holy Spirit to empower them to be witnesses to Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and to the ends of the earth

So, Jesus ascends and the disciples with many others head to the upper room to wait for the promised Holy Spirit

When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. ² Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. ³ They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest

on each of them. ⁴ All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.

⁵ Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven. ⁶ When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard their own language being spoken. ⁷ Utterly amazed, they asked: “Aren’t all these who are speaking Galileans? ⁸ **Then how is it that each of us hears them in our native language?** ⁹ Parthians, Medes and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, ¹⁰ Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome ¹¹ (both Jews and converts to Judaism); Cretans and Arabs—we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues!” ¹² Amazed and perplexed, they asked one another, “**What does this mean?**”

¹³ Some, however, made fun of them and said, “They have had too much wine.”

Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd: “Fellow Jews and all of you who live in Jerusalem, let me explain this to you; listen carefully to what I say. ¹⁵ These people are not drunk, as you suppose. It’s only nine in the morning! ¹⁶ No, this is what was spoken by the prophet **Joel**: ‘In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams.¹⁸ Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy.¹⁹ I will show wonders in the heavens above and signs on the earth below, blood and fire and billows of smoke. ²⁰ The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and glorious day of the Lord. ²¹ And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.

This moment was the event that launched the early church, it changed God’s relationship with humanity, and it fulfilled prophecy that is rooted in the Old Testament

The promise God made with Abraham in the Old Testament about making his descendants as numerous as the sand on seashore is finally made possible, the grafting in of every person regardless of ethnicity and background is now made possible, and no longer is the presence of God looked for in man-made temples, but now resides in the temples of every man and women

So often, we get caught up in the miraculous gift of speaking in tongues that was given in the upper room that we miss the real purpose of the Holy Spirit being poured out

Main Point: *The Holy Spirit was not given so that people would simply receive the gift of tongues. The Holy Spirit was given as a promise to empower the church to preach the gospel and to serve as evidence that Jesus is both Lord and Messiah (Savior)*

³³ Exalted to the right hand of God, he has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear.

³⁶ “Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Messiah.”

Three Important Connections Through Pentecost

1. The Holy Spirit Dwells in People

¹⁶ On the morning of the third day there was thunder and lightning, with a thick cloud over the mountain, and a very loud trumpet blast. Everyone in the camp trembled. ¹⁷ Then Moses led the people out of the camp to meet with God, and they stood at the foot of the mountain. ¹⁸ Mount Sinai was covered with smoke, because the LORD descended on it in fire. The smoke billowed up from it like smoke from a furnace, and the whole mountain trembled violently. ¹⁹ As the sound of the trumpet grew louder and louder, Moses spoke and the voice of God answered him.

Exodus 18:16-19

Luke, the author of the book of Acts is reminding those in the upper room that the fire serves as remembrance of God’ presence with the people

In the same way that God came down as fire with Moses on Mt. Siani and marked his dwelling place on the mountain, so he did with the Holy Spirit in Acts 2 as he marked His people as the new dwelling place

Following Gods encounter on the mountain with Moses, He gave Israel the 10 commandments. Following the Holy Spirit in Acts 2, God gave them His power to live it out and be his witness

2. The Holy Spirit Unifies all Nations Once Again

Now the whole world had one language and a common speech. ² As people moved eastward, they found a plain in Shinar and settled there.

³ They said to each other, “Come, let’s make bricks and bake them thoroughly.” They used brick instead of stone, and tar for mortar. ⁴ Then they said, “Come, let us build ourselves a city, with a tower that reaches to the heavens, so that we may make a name for ourselves; otherwise we will be scattered over the face of the whole earth.”

⁵ But the LORD came down to see the city and the tower the people were building. ⁶ The LORD said, “If as one people speaking the same language they have begun to do this, then

nothing they plan to do will be impossible for them. ⁷ Come, let us go down and confuse their language so they will not understand each other.”

⁸ So the LORD scattered them from there over all the earth, and they stopped building the city. ⁹ That is why it was called Babel—because there the LORD confused the language of the whole world. From there the LORD scattered them over the face of the whole earth.

Genesis 11

At Babel, this scattering was an act of judgment in response to disobedience, bringing incomprehension and fracture. At Pentecost, it's an act of blessing in response to obedience, bringing new understanding and unity.

Show Photo

At Babel, humanity was working its way up to heaven. At Pentecost, the Holy Spirit was sent down to humanity

“The outpouring of the Spirit upon the body manifests God’s self-sharing in welcoming all nations under heaven, through submitting His word to the form and sound of their ethnic tongue.”

Daniela C. Augustine

The people in the upper room receiving the gift of tongues served as a reversal of the tower of babel and its confusion, and reunited all nations under the new clarity and gift of tongues

Speaking in tongues in Acts 2 served as evidence that God was calling all nations back to himself to share in one language. Through speaking in tongues in Acts 2, all people can speak and all people can be understood just like the days before the Tower of Babel

“We cannot arrive to the final destination without the other; if we are to have a future, we have to reach it together. As we learn to live together in the organic oneness of Christ body, we are united to God’s communal life extending its hospitality to the rest of the world on the way to its final transfiguring into divine likeness.”

Simply put: The Spirit of God unifies us so that we can pursue of life of becoming like Jesus together. Not ignoring the differences of people and cultures, but just like Pentecost reunited the world, so would we walk in that same unity with one another.

⁸ Then how is it that each of us hears them in our native language?

3. The Holy Spirit Signals the Coming of Jesus Once Again

“And afterward,
I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy,

your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions. ²⁹ Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days. ³⁰ I will show wonders in the heavens and on the earth, blood and fire and billows of smoke. ³¹ The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD.

³² And everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved; for on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there will be deliverance, as the LORD has said, even among the survivors whom the LORD calls.

Joel was prophesying into the future that one day, the Spirit of God would be poured out and made available to all people

Acts 2 directly quotes from Joel as a fulfillment that now the Holy Spirit has been poured out and is available to all who believe

The Spirit being poured out put into motion the reality that Jesus one day will come back and the Holy Spirit ever since has been empowering Christians to preach the gospel and using men and women to proclaim the mysteries of God through dreams and visions

Since the moment the Holy Spirit was poured out, humanity entered in what's known as the "last days"

The goal of recognizing the "last days" that we are in is not to predict the day that Jesus will come back, but to live our lives with a unique sense of urgency. Which is why you and I have been empowered by the Holy Spirit, that we might help point people toward Jesus in ways never seen or done before

In Joel and in Acts it states that all who call on the name of the Lord will be saved

That is our mission as Christians, that we would be filled with the Spirit to lead others to a place of recognizing that they need Jesus

The Holy Spirit is only a partial image of what we will see and experience until we are with Jesus for eternity

My goal is that if you don't know Jesus yet, you would come to know Him and follow Him so that one day we can share His eternal presence together

Benediction:

11 And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies because of^[e] his Spirit who lives in you.**Romans 8:11**