

“On Which Side of Pentecost?”

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Acts 2

Introduction

The message of Pentecost is the same one which Christ communicated during the Feast of the Tabernacles (John 7:38-39). After the Ascension of Jesus (Acts 1:9-11) the disciples obediently followed the Lord's command to wait in Jerusalem. There in the Upper Room, with the 120 they waited to be clothed with power from on high – with the Holy Spirit Himself (Acts 1). The disciples expectantly awaited the outpouring of the Spirit. This morning we'll affirm four benefits that the Holy Spirit offers to us.

1. The Holy Spirit enflames the Church with the P_____ of Christ. (Acts 2:1- 3)

Significance of the name “Holy Spirit”

Significance of wind (vs. 2)

Significance of fire (vs. 3)

Primary purposes of the Holy Spirit

according to Acts 1:8 - witnessing about Christ

according to Titus 3:4-7 – applying the salvific work of Christ

2. The Holy Spirit enables the Church to P_____ Almighty God. (Acts 2:4-13)

Background of Pentecost (Leviticus 23:15-22)

The believers praised God for His wonders (vs. 11)

3. The Holy Spirit empowers the Church to P_____ the Gospel. (Acts 2:14-41)

Compare Peter's Gospel Message with The Four Spiritual Laws

- God loves you (vss. 17-21)
- We're separated from God because of our sin (vss. 22-24)
- God provided Jesus as the only way to bridge the chasm caused by sin (vss. 25-36)
- We must respond in faith (vss. 36-41)

4. The Holy Spirit establishes the Church with a fourfold P_____. (Acts 2:42-47)

- Word
- Prayer
- Fellowship
- Witnessing

Conclusion/Application:

Digging Deeper

I'm indebted to several sources for many of the following thought questions and insights.

- Pastor Gerald

Read 2:1-47 before you begin the questions and reflect on today's message. Imagine yourself as one of the believers gathered to celebrate the feast of Pentecost with no idea of what was coming. Or, put yourself in the crowd of Jews witnessing the bizarre events and Peter's speech. Ask God to bring this scene alive for you.

Key Terms in the passage:

- **Pentecost** (2:1). The fiftieth day after the Sabbath of Passover week (pente koste is Greek for "fiftieth day"). Pentecost is the name Greek-speaking Jews used for the Feast of Weeks (Leviticus 23:15-21; Deut. 16:9-12), the Feast of Harvest (Exodus 23:16), or the Day of Firstfruits (Numbers 28:26-31). On Pentecost, the Jews brought offerings of the firstfruits of the wheat harvest to the Temple to thank the Lord for it. In Jesus' time, Pentecost was associated with the renewal of the covenant made with Noah and then with Moses...; in second-century Judaism Pentecost was regarded as the day when the law was given at Sinai. Why was it appropriate that the events of Acts 2 occurred on Pentecost, the day when Jews celebrated the giving of the covenant under the Law of Moses? (Optional: See Jeremiah 31:31-34; Romans 7:6; 2 Cor. 3:6.)
- **Fire and Wind:** Metaphors and similes are figures of speech. They shed light on something by referring to it as something else in order to imply a comparison between the two. A metaphor compares by saying something is another ("You are the salt of the earth"). A simile uses the words like or as to show the comparison. In Acts 2:2-3, Luke describes the sound of the Spirit as "like the blowing of a violent wind" and His visible effect as "what seemed to be tongues of fire" ("tongues as of fire," in rsv and nasb). Wind (2 Samuel 22:16; Job 37:10; Ezekiel 37:9, 14; John 3:8) and fire (Exodus 3:2; Exodus 19:18; Luke 3:16) are common biblical symbols for the presence of God's Spirit. The Greek word *pneuma* and the Hebrew *ruach* mean both "wind" and "spirit." What is a practical application of these images for YOU as he describes the coming of the Holy Spirit?
- **Filled with the Holy Spirit** (2:4). Luke uses the word filled "when people are given an initial endowment of the Spirit to fit them for God's service" (Luke 1:15; Acts 9:17) "and also when they are inspired to make important utterances" (Acts 4:8, 31; Acts 13:9). Related words are used to describe the continuous process of being filled with the Spirit" (Acts 13:52; Ephes. 5:18) or the corresponding state of being full (Lk. 4:1; Acts 6:3, 5; Acts 7:55; Acts 11:24). These references indicate that a person already filled with the Spirit can receive a fresh filling for a specific task, or a continuous filling.
- **To be "baptized"** (At. 1:5; 11:16) with the Spirit is the same as the initial filling the disciples received at Pentecost. However, the recurring experience is always called filling, never baptism. According to Scripture, when is a Christian baptized in the Spirit? When is the Christian filled? Is this filling a continual process? How can a Christian be open to this filling? How can a Christian block this filling?

- **God-fearing Jews from every nation (2:5).** Devout Jews tried to get to Jerusalem for the three main feasts of the year: Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles (Dt. 16:16). Also, Jews who came from other parts of the world often moved to Judea in their old age in order to die in the promised land. Therefore, at Pentecost Jerusalem was full of Jews and proselytes (converts to Judaism) from all over the Mediterranean world and the Middle East. Most of them would have understood the Aramaic language (similar to Hebrew) spoken in Palestine and the Greek spoken all over the known world. However, each Jew also had a native language which almost no one from elsewhere was likely to know.
- **Christ (2:31).** This key word appears here for the first time in Acts. To Jews, it was a title: the Anointed One, the Messiah, the king and descendant of David promised in the Scriptures. Psalm 16, which Peter quoted in Acts 2:25-28, was already considered a prophecy of the Christ.
- **Lord... Lord (2:34).** The original Hebrew has different words. The first "Lord" is YHWH, the name of God, rendered "Lord" in the niv of Psalm 110:1. The Jews felt that YHWH was too holy to be pronounced, so they said Adon ("Lord") instead. The second "Lord" is Adon, which means "lord" or "master." The Hebrew of Psalm 110:1 makes it clear that the Lord (God) is speaking to David's Lord (the Messiah), but the Greek of Acts 2:34 uses the same word for both. Therefore, when Peter calls Jesus "Lord" in 2:36, it's not obvious whether he means that Jesus is just the Messiah or also God.
- **Repent (2:38).** "The word indicates a change of direction in a person's life rather than simply a mental change of attitude or a feeling of remorse; it signifies a turning away from a sinful and godless way of life. In one sense this is something of which man is incapable by himself, and therefore, although men can be commanded to repent, it can also be said that repentance is a gift of God (Acts 5:31; Acts 11:18; 2 Tim. 2:25)." Repentance "is an essential part of conversion."
- **Three thousand (2:41).** Many of those new believers may have returned the next day to other parts of the Roman world, taking the gospel with them.

Thought Questions:

Think through these questions in light of the four benefits we affirmed about the Holy Spirit in the morning's message:

1. Think through the four benefits we affirmed in today's message. Where are you resisting the prompting and guidance of the Holy Spirit? What can you do to be more open to the Spirit's work in your life?
2. How does God use you to witness to others?
3. When has God enabled you to do something that you didn't think you could do?

4. How can you cultivate sensitivity to the Holy Spirit? How can you be more open to seeing, hearing, and feeling the presence of the Holy Spirit in your prayer and Bible reading?
5. What can you do each day to invite the Holy Spirit to use you? What steps can you take this week to be better prepared for God's use?
6. What insights do you make from Peter's sermon?
 - a. How could the Jews have known that Jesus was a special person sent by God (2:22)?
 - b. How did Israel respond to Jesus (2:23)?
 - c. What was the crucial event of Jesus' career, and what did it prove (2:24, 36)? (Notice that the word therefore in 2:36 points to the conclusion of Peter's reasoning in 2:22-36.)
 - d. How did the Resurrection prove that Jesus is...Christ (2:25-33)? Lord (2:34-35)?
 - e. According to Peter, what does Jesus have to do with the miraculous speaking the Jews have heard (2:16, 33)?
7. The sermons in Acts suggest outlines we can follow in explaining the good news to others. Summarize what Peter asks the Jews to believe and do, and why they should do these things.
 - truths to believe (2:21-24, 31-33, 36, 39)
 - actions to do (2:21, 38)
 - reasons why (2:20-21, 38, 40)
8. How does Peter's sermon apply to you? (For instance, is there some promise or command addressed to all believers that you can act on more fully than you are? Does some truth about Jesus have implications for your attitudes and actions? How do you fall short with regard to your insight?)
9. What attracted unbelievers to the church (2:46, 47)? What do you suppose others find especially attractive about Grace? How can we become more attractive? How do the activities of the early church compare with the activities of your church?
10. How do you think Grace could be more like the early church? In what ways, if any, should Grace be different from the early church? Why?
11. When do you most enjoy spending time with other believers?
12. How is the celebration of Communion meaningful to you?
13. What "miracles" have you witnessed in your church fellowship?
14. What can you do to help your church be more like the early church?
15. How can your daily prayers help bring about spiritual renewal in your church fellowship?
16. What action can you take (including prayer) to begin putting insights gleaned from Acts 2 into practice this week?

Close your time in worship, praising the Triune God.