
CBC WEEKLY RESOURCES



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“Practical Power of Pentecost”

AUGUST 30, 2026
COMMUNITY BIBLE CHURCH
3645 Cashiers Rd, Highlands, NC 28741

SERMON RECAP

Pastor Gary's message reviewed the first half of Acts by asking a deeply personal question: "Am I teachable?" Before we evaluate a sermon, a Bible study, or even our church experience, we must ask whether our hearts are humble, moldable, and ready to receive what the Lord wants to give. The book of Acts is not merely "the Acts of the Apostles," but the ongoing work of the Holy Spirit through ordinary, flawed, available people.

The sermon reframed Pentecost as much more than a one-time discussion about tongues. Pentecost was the explosive arrival of the Spirit's power for the life and mission of the church. Yes, people spoke in languages they had not learned, but the greater and ongoing manifestations of Pentecost included bold witness, generosity, hospitality, spiritual gifts, endurance, reconciliation, repentance, devotion to fellowship, and separation from the world's patterns. The Spirit did not come merely to create a theological debate; He came to empower the church to live like Jesus and bear witness to Him.

Pastor Gary's pastoral heart was clear: do not grieve the Holy Spirit by ignoring the help, wisdom, power, and comfort He makes available. The Spirit wants to equip us for our calling, deepen our devotion, strengthen us in suffering, free us from trying to fix others, and form Christ in us. The invitation is practical and daily: seek the Lord, ask the Spirit to manifest His presence in us for the building up of the kingdom, and live with fresh dependence on Pentecost power today.

 STUDY GUIDE

Key Points

- The central question is not only “Was the teaching good?” but “Am I teachable?” Humility positions us to receive correction, comfort, direction, and transformation from the Lord.
- Acts is the story of the Holy Spirit empowering ordinary people. The apostles were flawed and fearful, but the Spirit made them bold witnesses of Jesus.
- Pentecost is far more than speaking in tongues. The ongoing fruit of Pentecost includes boldness, generosity, hospitality, spiritual gifts, devotion, endurance, repentance, reconciliation, and mission.
- We grieve the Spirit when we neglect His role in our lives. We are invited to ask Him for power, wisdom, gifts, endurance, and grace to build up Christ’s kingdom.

Key Scripture

Primary Sermon Text:

- Acts 1-15 — A review of the first half of Acts, especially the expansion of the early church through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Verses Mentioned or Quoted by Pastor Gary:

- Genesis 1:2 — The Spirit of God hovering over the waters at creation.
- Psalm 51:10-11 — David’s prayer: “Create in me a pure heart... do not... take your Holy Spirit from me.”
- Jeremiah 29:13 — “You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.”
- Matthew 3:11-12 — John the Baptist says Jesus will baptize with the Holy Spirit and fire.
- Matthew 3:16 — The Spirit descends like a dove at Jesus’ baptism.
- Matthew 6:33 — “Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness...”

- John 14:16-17 — Jesus promises another Advocate, the Spirit of truth.
- John 16:7 — Jesus says it is for our good that He goes away so the Advocate may come.
- Acts 1:8 — “You will receive power... and you will be my witnesses...”
- Acts 2:1-13 — Pentecost and the speaking in other tongues/languages.
- Acts 2:41 — About 3,000 people receive the word and are baptized.
- Acts 2:42 — Devotion to the apostles’ teaching, fellowship, breaking of bread, and prayers.
- Acts 2:44-45 — Believers share possessions and provide for those in need.
- Acts 4:4 — The number of believers grows to about 5,000 men.
- Acts 4:31-37 — Boldness, unity, generosity, and Barnabas’ example of giving.
- Acts 6:1-7 — The church organizes ministry to care for widows and protect the ministry of the Word.
- Acts 9:1-19 — Saul’s encounter with Jesus on the road to Damascus.
- Acts 15:36-41 — Paul, Barnabas, and John Mark experience conflict and separation.
- Acts 16:31 — “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household.”
- 1 Corinthians 14:1 — “Eagerly desire spiritual gifts...”
- Colossians 1:17 — Christ holds all things together.
- Ephesians 4:15 — Speaking the truth in love.
- Ephesians 4:30 — “Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God...”
- Hebrews 13:8 — Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever.
- 1 Peter 1:16 — “Be holy, because I am holy.”

Other Relevant Verses

- Romans 12:1-2 – General thematic tie. This passage reinforces Pastor Gary's call to be separated from worldly conformity and transformed by the renewing of our minds.
- Galatians 5:22-25 – General thematic tie. This passage expands on the visible manifestations of the Spirit's work in a believer's life: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, and self-control.
- 2 Timothy 1:6-7 – General thematic tie. This passage connects to the sermon's emphasis on spiritual gifts, boldness, and the Spirit's power rather than fear.



DEVOTIONAL MATERIAL

Day 1 – “Am I Teachable?”

Reflection Question

Where might pride, comfort, or spiritual familiarity be keeping me from receiving what the Lord wants to teach me?

Reading

- Jeremiah 29:13 – “You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.”
- Matthew 6:33 – “Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness...”

Thought

Jeremiah 29 was spoken to God’s people while they were in exile. They were displaced, humbled, and learning that seeking God was not a religious accessory but their lifeline. The promise was not that God could be found casually, but that He would be found by those who sought Him with the whole heart.

Jesus’ words in Matthew 6 come in the middle of teaching about anxiety, provision, and competing priorities. “Seek first” means the kingdom is not one concern among many; it is the organizing center of life.

Pastor Gary began with this posture: before asking whether a sermon is good, ask, “Am I teachable?” A teachable heart seeks God first. It does not come to Scripture merely to confirm what it already thinks. It comes ready to be corrected, encouraged, shaped, and sent.

Challenge

Before reading Scripture or attending worship this week, pause and ask:

- “Lord, what do You want to show me?”
- “Where do I need to be corrected?”
- “Where do I need to obey?”

Write down one area where you sense the Lord inviting you to become more teachable.

Day 2 — “Power to Be Witnesses”

Reflection Question

What fear, hesitation, or insecurity keeps me from speaking about Jesus to others?

Reading

- Acts 1:8 — “You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you...”
- Acts 2:41 — “So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls.”

Thought

Acts 1:8 is the mission statement of the book of Acts. Jesus tells His followers not to rush into ministry in their own strength. They must wait for power from the Holy Spirit. The mission would move outward: Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.

This is astonishing because the men Jesus commissions are not naturally impressive. Peter had denied Jesus three times. The disciples had been confused, fearful, and slow to understand. Yet at Pentecost, Peter stands and preaches Christ crucified and risen. Thousands respond.

Pastor Gary emphasized that this is one of the great manifestations of Pentecost: a fearful man became a bold witness. The question for us is not whether we can preach to thousands. The question is whether we will depend on the Spirit enough to share the gospel with one person.

Challenge

Identify one person in your life who needs encouragement, prayer, or a gospel conversation. Begin by praying for them daily. Ask the Holy Spirit for boldness, timing, humility, and love.

Day 3 – “The Fellowship of the Spirit”

Reflection Question

Am I devoted to the body of Christ, or do I treat Christian community as optional and disposable?

Reading

- Acts 2:42 – “They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.”
- Acts 2:44-45 – “All who believed were together and had all things in common...”

Thought

The early church was born into a world without church buildings, Christian bookstores, printed New Testaments, or centuries of Christian tradition. They had the apostles’ teaching, the presence of the Spirit, the breaking of bread, prayer, and one another.

Acts 2 describes a community marked by devotion. This was not casual attendance or consumer religion. The believers were learning a new family identity in Christ. They worshiped together, ate together, prayed together, and met needs together.

Pastor Gary highlighted devotedness as a manifestation of Pentecost. The Holy Spirit does not merely create private spiritual experiences; He forms a faithful people. He makes us pillars, servants, encouragers, burden-bearers, and members of one another.

Challenge

Take one concrete step toward deeper devotion to Christian community this week:

- Join or re-engage a small group.
- Serve in a ministry.
- Invite someone to a meal.
- Pray with another believer.
- Encourage someone who quietly serves faithfully.

Day 4 – “Do Not Grieve the Spirit”

Reflection Question

In what area of my life am I trying to operate without the wisdom, help, and power of the Holy Spirit?

Reading

- Ephesians 4:30 – “Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God...”
- John 14:16-17 – “He will give you another Helper... even the Spirit of truth...”

Thought

In John 14, Jesus prepares His disciples for His departure. He promises “another Helper,” meaning another Advocate, Comforter, Counselor, and Strengthener. The Spirit would not be a distant force but the personal presence of God with and in His people.

Ephesians 4 speaks to the daily life of the church: truth-telling, anger, forgiveness, speech, holiness, and love. In that context, Paul says not to grieve the Holy Spirit. The Spirit is grieved when God’s people resist His work, ignore His presence, or live in ways that contradict His holiness and love.

Pastor Gary gave a tender image: a parent grieves when a child refuses to come for wisdom, help, or counsel. In a similar way, we grieve the Spirit when we live independently from Him, as if His power and guidance are unnecessary.

Challenge

Pray through your day before it begins. Ask the Holy Spirit to guide your words, relationships, decisions, motives, and reactions. At the end of the day, review where you sensed His help and where you resisted Him.

Day 5 – “Pentecost for Ordinary Life”

Reflection Question

What spiritual gift, ministry, or calling might the Lord be asking me to recognize and steward more intentionally?

Reading

- 1 Corinthians 14:1 – “Pursue love, and earnestly desire the spiritual gifts...”
- Colossians 1:17 – “He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.”

Thought

The New Testament teaches that spiritual gifts are given for the building up of the body of Christ. They are not trophies of maturity or platforms for ego. They are Spirit-given capacities to serve others and strengthen the church.

In Corinth, spiritual gifts were sometimes misunderstood and misused. Paul corrects the church by putting love at the center. “Pursue love” comes before “earnestly desire spiritual gifts.” Gifts without love become noise. Gifts surrendered to Christ become ministry.

Pastor Gary encouraged believers to ask serious questions: How has the Spirit gifted me? What is my role in the kingdom? What ministry has God entrusted to me? Since Christ holds all things together, we can stop trying to control everything and instead faithfully offer what He has given us.

Challenge

Make a simple “ministry inventory” this week:

- What burdens has God placed on my heart?
- What gifts have others affirmed in me?
- Where am I already serving fruitfully?
- What need in the church or community could I help meet?

Then ask a mature believer or ministry leader to help you discern a faithful next step.

IV. SMALL GROUP RESOURCES

Opening

Welcome everyone and begin by inviting the group to settle their hearts before the Lord. Encourage a brief moment of silence, then ask someone to open with prayer using the following themes:

- Humility and teachability
- Awareness of the Holy Spirit's presence
- Willingness to be corrected, comforted, and sent
- Love for one another during discussion

Thematic Recap

This week's message reminded us that the book of Acts is not merely the story of remarkable apostles, but the story of the Holy Spirit empowering ordinary people. Pentecost was not limited to speaking in tongues; it unleashed boldness, generosity, devotion, endurance, reconciliation, and mission. The invitation for us is to stop neglecting the Spirit's help and to seek His power for everyday faithfulness.

Core Highlights

- The key question is: "Am I teachable?"
- The Holy Spirit empowers fearful people to become faithful witnesses.
- Pentecost produces visible fruit in community life: generosity, hospitality, devotion, and service.
- Spiritual gifts are given for kingdom purpose, not personal status.
- The Spirit is grieved when we ignore His presence, wisdom, and power.
- We are not called to fix people; we are called to love, serve, pray, and extend grace while God works.

Icebreaker

When have you seen an ordinary person make an extraordinary impact because they were faithful, generous, bold, or consistent?

Allow 5-15 minutes. Encourage practical stories rather than abstract answers.

Scripture Exploration

Passage 1: Acts 1:8 and Acts 2:41-42

Read together:

- Acts 1:8
- Acts 2:41-42

Discussion Prompts

1. What does Jesus say the Holy Spirit will empower His people to become?
2. Why is it important that the disciples had to wait for power before launching into mission?
3. What signs of transformation do you see in Acts 2 after Pentecost?
4. Pastor Gary emphasized that boldness is a manifestation of Pentecost. Where do you need Spirit-given boldness right now?

Passage 2: Acts 2:44-45 and Acts 4:31-37

Read together:

- Acts 2:44-45
- Acts 4:31-37

Discussion Prompts

1. What does Spirit-empowered generosity look like in these passages?
2. How does the early church challenge modern individualism and consumer Christianity?
3. What is the difference between guilt-driven giving and Spirit-led generosity?

4. How can our group or church grow in practical hospitality and care for one another?

Passage 3: John 14:16-17 and Ephesians 4:30

Read together:

- John 14:16-17
- Ephesians 4:30

Discussion Prompts

1. What names or descriptions are given for the Holy Spirit in John 14?
2. How does it change your view of the Spirit to think of Him as Helper, Advocate, and Spirit of truth?
3. According to the larger context of Ephesians 4, what kinds of attitudes or behaviors grieve the Spirit?
4. What would it look like to actively welcome the Spirit's help in your daily life?

Grand Synthesis Prompt

Looking at all three passages together, how does the Holy Spirit empower both personal transformation and communal witness?

Application: Growing in Personal and Communal Prayer

As a group, discuss practical next steps.

Personal Prayer Practices

- Begin each day by asking the Holy Spirit for guidance, boldness, wisdom, and love.
- Before difficult conversations, pause and ask for grace instead of control.
- Pray for one person who does not yet know Christ.
- Ask the Lord to reveal your spiritual gifts and how to use them.
- End the day with reflection: "Where did I cooperate with the Spirit? Where did I resist Him?"

Communal Prayer Practices

- Pray more specifically for Spirit-empowered witness in the church.
- Share needs honestly rather than generally.
- Pray for ministries, leaders, and servants in the church by name.
- Ask the Spirit to increase generosity, hospitality, and devotion in the group.
- Create space in group gatherings for listening prayer and Scripture-shaped encouragement.

Closing

Prayer Needs

Make space for people to share:

- Personal needs
- Family concerns
- Opportunities for witness
- Areas where they need boldness
- Places where they need endurance
- Ways they want to grow in dependence on the Holy Spirit

Closing Prayer Prompt

Invite someone to close by praying around these themes:

- Thank God for the gift of the Holy Spirit.
- Ask for teachable hearts.
- Ask for boldness to witness to Christ.
- Ask for deeper devotion to the church family.
- Ask for grace to stop trying to fix others and instead love them well.
- Ask the Spirit to manifest His presence for the building up of Christ's kingdom.

Leader Notes

- Create safety early. Remind the group that the goal is not to debate spiritual experiences but to seek biblical clarity and humble dependence on the Holy Spirit.
- Keep the focus practical. If discussion about Pentecost becomes abstract or overly doctrinal, gently bring it back to the sermon's question: "What fruit of the Spirit's work should be visible in our lives?"
- Honor different backgrounds. People may come from charismatic, non-charismatic, cautious, or wounded church experiences. Encourage humility, Scripture, and charity.
- Encourage participation without pressure. Some may be hesitant to talk about the Holy Spirit. Give people permission to process honestly.
- Watch for "fixing" language. Pastor Gary reminded us that our job is not to fix others. Encourage group members to speak with grace, patience, and personal ownership.
- End with hope. The same Spirit who empowered Peter, strengthened the early church, and transformed Saul is still active today. The goal is not shame over what we have lacked, but renewed dependence on what God freely gives.