

Today is Pentecost Sunday. *Pentekostos* means 50th. It was also called the Feast of Weeks (Lev 23:15-21, Deut 16:16). It was 7 weeks or 50 days from the Passover feast, when the grain harvesting began, ten days after the ascension of Jesus. It was also observed as the anniversary of the giving of the OC Law at Sinai, which was 50 days after the Exodus. So, at the celebration of the OC, the NC dawns. / Turn to the book of Acts (855). Let's consider together the gift of Pentecost, the meaning of Pentecost, and the result of Pentecost.¹

I. The Gift of Pentecost – 1:11 - They were all in a room and in a sort of theophany-type experience, the Lord sends the Spirit, fills them, and they speak in tongues. They have sound, sights, and strange speech.² They hear, see, and speak as the Lord sends the promised Spirit.

The sound comes *from* heaven. Back in ch. 1 the Lord Jesus Christ ascended *to* heaven **1:11**. Pentecost is the Ascended Lord Jesus acting by the Holy Spirit. The whole book of Acts is about the acts of the Risen Lord Jesus – **1:1**. Jesus is acting through the Spirit. Jesus sends the Spirit. John the Baptist had said that he would baptize with water but one was coming later, one who was mightier than John, would baptize with the Holy Spirit (Matt 3:11). That is happening now at Pentecost.

Jesus ascended into heaven (1:11) and now every nation *under* heaven (2:5) was gathered, because this King now has universal authority. He's the King of all nations. As John Stott puts it, "Nothing could have demonstrated more clearly than this the multi-racial, multi-national, multi-lingual nature of the kingdom of Christ."³ Pentecost is the dawning of a new age with a new King. / Due to the timing, there were devout Jews from all over in Jerusalem. The exiles had returned. They gathered together and were hearing people speak in their own language.

In v. 9-11, he lists several of these nations⁴ and this list alludes in abbreviated form to the Table of Nations from Genesis 10-11. Babel. Remember that? Humanity seeks to make a name for themselves so they build a tower, but God won't have it. He scatters them. They were forced to do what they should have done in obedience to God in Gen 1: be fruitful and fill the earth with the rule of God as image-bearers.

Pentecost is a reversal of Babel. Stott: At Babel, earth proudly tried to ascend to heaven but at Pentecost heaven humbly descends to earth.⁵ At Babel sinful humanity tried to avoid filling the earth and God judges them by confusing their language and scattering them throughout the earth. At Pentecost, God causes people from those same scattered nations to unite in Jerusalem so that they might receive the blessing of understanding different languages.⁶

Acts 2:6 says they were bewildered or confused (*syncheo*). This same word is also used in Gen 11:7: "Come, let us go down and there *confuse* their language, so that they may not understand one

¹ Keener: Proof (1-4), Peoples (5-13), Prophecy (14-21), Preaching (22-40), Power (41-47); Stott: event (1-13), explanation (14-41), effect (42-47).

² Stott, 62.

³ Stott, 68.

⁴ Starts Eastward and moves Westward.

⁵ Stott, 68.

⁶ Beale, *Temple*, 202.

another's speech."⁷ The Spirit is reversing the curse. The prophet Zephaniah said, "For at that time I will change the speech of the peoples to a pure speech, that all of them may call upon the name of the LORD and serve him with one accord" (Zeph 3:9). For a moment, mankind's divisions expressed through language were overcome. God's curse is being reversed. We get a glimpse of where God is taking the world: Eph 1:9-10: God is summing up all things in Christ. Remember the new song of Rev 5:9: by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation (7:9).

II. The Meaning of Pentecost (12-36) – we have two layers: the outpouring of the Spirit (13-21) and the enthronement of Jesus (22-36). A) The Outpouring of the Spirit – **12-15** - Peter is like, no they are not drunk – it's only 9 in the morning. Too early for that, although on a recent 6am flight, the dude next to me ordered two Crown Royals. There are always exceptions, but the fruit of the Spirit is self-control, not the loss of it. Peter address the crowd (**PIC**). He is witnessing. He is already fulfilling Jesus's promise **1:8**.

2:16-21 – Peter actually changes the first part of Joel. Joel says "it shall come to pass afterward," but Peter says "in the last days." This is intentional. The only other time in the Bible that we find this exact phrase is in Isa 2:2-3: "It shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the house of the LORD shall be established as the highest of the mountains, and shall be lifted up above the hills; and all the nations shall flow to it, and many peoples shall come, and say: "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob, that he may teach us his ways and that we may walk in his paths." For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem."

Isaiah is prophesying about the future temple, the end time mountain of the Lord that is fulfilled in Jesus – "destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up" – speaking about the temple of his body. But then the temple is found in the church and Pentecost is the launch of the church. God left the temple back in Ezekiel, the glory cloud departed and never returned – until now as the Spirit falls upon, not a place but a people, the community of the New Covenant.

So Peter is combining the visions of Isaiah 2 and Joel 2. God *is* rebuilding his temple. His presence has now returned. Pentecost is the fulfillment of these promises. And more. You see, there was a two-fold problem with the OC: they lacked full and final forgiveness of sins and they did not have the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. The cross takes care of the first problem and Pentecost is the solution to the second. In the OC, only select individuals had the Holy Spirit, usually prophets, priests, and kings and only temporarily – usually to accomplish some task. This was their problem. The people of God desperately needed the Spirit of God. Moses realized this. **Num 11:11, 16-17, 24-25, 29. Isa 32:15 44:2-3, Ezek 11:19-20 (36:26-27, 39:29).** / The Spirit comes at Pentecost, just like Joel prophesied and the Spirit makes us new. And he makes all the people of God new: all flesh, regardless of age, gender, or status.⁸

⁷ Acts 2:3 mentions divided tongues. This same word for divided (*diemerizo*) is used in Deut 32:8: "When the Most High gave to the nations their inheritance, when he *divided* mankind, he fixed the borders of the peoples according to the number of the sons of God." At Babel, the nations were disinherited. They were placed under the authority of the lesser gods. Ps 82 speaks of the divine council and ends with Ps 82:8: "Arise, O God, judge the earth; for you shall inherit all the nations." God is taking back the nations beginning with Pentecost.

⁸ Stott, 74. Prophecy Luther: the knowledge of God through Christ which the Spirit kindles and makes to burn through the gospel. Calvin: It signifies simply the rare and excellent gift of understanding. DGP says it is Spirit-directed ministry, 142.

B) The Enthronement of Jesus (22-36) – **22-23** – Jesus was attested to by miracles. His message was confirmed.⁹ Jesus was delivered up according to God’s definite plan and foreknowledge. The cross was planned before God created. Jesus is the lamb slain from before the creation of the world (Rev 13:8). God is sovereign over all things. But notice the balance here that Peter provides. God is sovereign and man is responsible. This Jesus was predestined to be crucified, but you lawless men crucified him. Who did it? God or lawless men? Yes.

24-31 – Through the resurrection, God ends the pain of death. Death is dead because of the death of Christ. It was impossible for death to hold him. / Then Peter quotes from Ps 16, which is ultimately about Jesus – not David because David *did* see corruption. He was buried and they could go visit his tomb. But David was a prophet and God promised him that one of his descendants would sit on the throne of David. Peter tells us this was fulfilled in the resurrection.

32-36 – God raised Jesus and exalted him at his right hand having received the promise of the Spirit he pours out the gift of the Spirit. Jesus is the Spirit indwelt Servant that Isaiah promised: Isa 11:1-2: “There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit. And the Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD.” Isa 42:1: “Behold my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen, in whom my soul delights; I have put my Spirit upon him; he will bring forth justice to the nations.” 61:1: “The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me to bring good news to the poor.” The bearer of the Spirit becomes the bestower of the Spirit. And take note, in Joel, it is YHWH who pours out the Spirit. In Acts, it is the Lord Jesus Christ.¹⁰

Again, David did not ascend, but he spoke of another Lord who would ascend, and he quotes Ps 110, God’s favorite verse, which we looked at last week. / Peter concludes his sermon saying let all of Israel know that God has made this Jesus both Lord and Christ, whom they crucified.¹¹ Jesus is Lord of the world. He is the risen and reigning Lord. He directs the affairs of the world and the Holy Spirit is the executive power. David was not raised from the dead and David was not placed on the throne. Jesus did both.

III. The Result of Pentecost (37-47) – There are two results of the pouring out of the Spirit and the exaltation of Jesus: salvation and a Spirit-filled community. **A) Salvation - 37-41** – Friend, I wonder if you have ever been cut to the heart? What does that mean? Convicted of sin. Conscience-stricken. What is the call? **21, 38**: Repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ.¹² You’ll be forgiven and be filled with the Spirit. What is the call? Here at the beginning of Acts, just like the beginning of the Gospels: repent. Repentance is “a radical reorientation of life with respect to Jesus.”¹³ It is centering our lives around God. Turn from sin and to Christ. **41, 44**. The promise is for those who believe. The call of the gospel is to repent, believe, then be baptized.

⁹ 2 Cor 12:12, Heb 2:4, Luke 11:20.

¹⁰ The pouring out of the Spirit is evidence that Jesus is reigning (therefore).

¹¹ Not adoptionism: Luke 1:31-35, 43, 2:11, 3:22. He is now exalted in reality and power what he already was by right, Stott, 77.

¹² Call upon YHWH in 2:21, not name of Jesus in 2:38. He did not say believe, but two sides of the same coin. Cf. v. 44.

¹³ Peterson, 154.

Those who received the Word were added that day, about three thousand souls. Incredible. The church grew from 120, to 3,120. What's fascinating is that way back in Exod 32, God instituted the old covenant, but things went south quickly. God had taken Israel out of Egypt but had yet to take the Egypt out of Israel. They were half-hearted and calf-hearted. Remember that? They grow tired of waiting on Moses so they build a calf out of their gold jewelry and give *it* credit for the Exodus. In response, do you know how many lost their lives due to God's judgment? Exodus 32:28b: "And that day about three thousand men of the people fell." Pentecost is reversing the curse and the OC is being replaced by the new and better covenant. / Other results:

B) Spirit-filled Community 42-47 – The Spirit creates a community and notice what they were doing. 5 areas: **1. Teaching 42a.** They were committed to learning about God.¹⁴ We find the apostles teaching in the NT. They were committed to being "a people of the book." John Stott says the Spirit opened a school that day in Jerusalem. He writes, "Anti-intellectualism and the fullness of the Spirit are mutually incompatible, because the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of truth. . . . The Spirit of God leads the people of God to submit to the Word of God."¹⁵ A Spirit-filled community prioritizes the book the Spirit wrote. They were ruled by God's Word.

2. Fellowship 42b. In other words, they were committed to one another. They were devoted to sharing and doing life together. Verse 46 says day by day. Committed to intentional Christian relationships. The local church is vital for a flourishing faith. / The early church did life together and they knew the needs of their community and met them. Families take care of one another. They valued people over property. They were in authentic community.

3. The Breaking of Bread - Some take this as the Lord's supper, and doubtless it often included that but v. 46 says day by day. Day by day and in their homes. The first Christians were known for their hospitality. They were eating together all the time, opening their homes to one another on the regular. Friends, this simply will not happen in our busy lives if we don't prioritize it and put it on the cal. / God has designed us so that something special happens when we break bread together. The dinner table is the most sacred spot in the house. Fellowship and breaking bread go hand in hand. Did you notice there is no "and" between fellowship and breaking of bread - because they go together. Deep fellowship happens *in* the breaking of bread.

Let me encourage you to redeem your meals. Look, you are already doing it, right? Most of us are already eating 21 times a week. Why not be intentionally Christian with that rhythm? Invite someone in and talk about Jesus and His Word. They were devoted to the breaking of bread together.

4. Prayer 42b – They believed God heard them and had the power to act. Prayer should be the church's life blood. Our Sunday evening prayer times are some of my favorite parts of our church's life. If you have not come, you are truly missing out. Be devoted to the prayers and come to our prayer meetings.

¹⁴ 11:25-26 18:11 19:9-10 20:7-12 20-21 28-32 28:30-31.

¹⁵ Stott, 82.

5. Demonstrating the Kingdom 43 – The apostles did signs and wonders and the community was in awe of God’s work in and among them. Now this looks different for us since we are not apostles. Their message was confirmed, authenticated, and testified to by signs and wonders. These were evidence of the in-breaking power of the kingdom. So, we demonstrate the incoming Kingdom in different ways, but we still do. We are an outpost of the kingdom and we show the watching world what it looks like to live under the rule of King Jesus. The church is a trailer of the new creation, a preview of what life is meant to be like. / The apostle’s teaching, fellowship, eating together, prayer, and demonstrating the kingdom.

I think one word in this passage is most important and most challenging to us: devoted. **42a.** The word (*proskarterountes*) means to occupy oneself diligently with something, to pay persistent attention to, to hold fast to something, or continually to be in. Constant in their attention.¹⁶ They were devoted to these things. Better, they were devoted to King Jesus and this is what a life devoted to King Jesus looks like: a life devoted to his body.

Devoted. Preoccupied. They were persistent in paying attention to what matters most. Single minded. They made Jesus and his body a high priority. I think us busy Americans need to hear this: they had to say no to other things in order to say yes to this. The secret of concentration is elimination. They had to say no to what is ultimately trivial to say yes to what is ultimate. They were gripped by Jesus and they ordered their lives accordingly. They budgeted their resources and they budgeted their time with the Kingdom of Christ in mind. Christian, can this word be used of you? Devoted?

So they were devoted to the apostle’s teaching, fellowship, eating, praying and demonstrating what the Kingdom looks like. Notice what the first Christians characterized by?

1. Glad Hearts 46 – Christians should be the gladdest people in the world. We deserve nothing but eternal condemnation, yet we are alive, breathing, our sins have been forgiven, the victory over evil has been accomplished on our behalf, our future is secure, the right man is in charge, and the best is yet to come. / The fruit of the Spirit is joy.

2. Generosity – Generous hearts. Giving hearts. Flip over a couple of pages to **4:32-35**. They had been gripped by the giving God and became givers in response. Again, they valued people over possessions.

3. Praise 47 - They were a people of praise. They worshipped together in the temple. For us that’s Sunday gathering. We come together and we sing loud. Those who know the goodness and grace of God are compelled to praise.

4. Multiplication – Healthy churches multiply. God is a missionary God who creates a missionary church. God sent his son who sent the Spirit who sends the church. Stott writes, “Those first Jerusalem Christians were not so preoccupied with learning, sharing, and worshipping, that they forgot about witnessing. For the Holy Spirit is a missionary Spirit who created a missionary church.”¹⁷ The book of

¹⁶ DGP, 160.

¹⁷ Stott, 86.

Acts is all about just that: the multiplication of disciples through the power of the Spirit through the witness of the missionary church. In Acts 8, Luke records that the church scatters all over and he says, “except the apostles”! The so-called professional Christians stay back and the ordinary believers go and spread the gospel all over the Roman empire.

Ordinary people – just like you! No special training, no seminary degrees. Just people passionate about Jesus. At the end of Acts 8, the first mission trip is taken by another ordinary dude: a layman named Philip. The church at Antioch which became a key hub for planting churches was founded by “some brothers and sisters.” Luke doesn’t even tell us their names because we wouldn’t know them! Here is how one historian puts it: “Nothing is more notable than the anonymity of these early missionaries. . . . Luke does not turn aside to mention the name of a single one of those pioneers who laid the foundation. Few, if any, of the great Churches were really founded by apostles. Peter and Paul may have organized the Church in Rome. They certainly did not found it.”¹⁸

They were a community committed to multiplication. The reason their fellowship was so tight is because they had a common mission, a mutual aim, a primary purpose. Acts 2:42 community is based on Acts 1:8 mission. This kind of Acts 2 community does not come about when your idle. It comes when you are on mission together. You ever been on a short-term mission trip? You go deep with the team, don’t you? That should be happening all the time, not just two weeks every three years! What if we viewed all of life as a ST mission trip? / Church, it is time for us to think about multiplying. The leadership has been praying, dreaming, and some scheming about planting a church. Would you join us in praying? Also, continue to give sacrificially so we’ll be able to.

Notice how Luke again highlights both the behavior of believers and the sovereignty of God for why the church grew. The *Lord added*. He is the one who draws people to Himself. But they also gained favor with all the people. The idea is having goodwill towards all the people. They were favorably disposed toward all the people. They had a gracious attitude and demeanor that led to gracious actions. / Pentecost creates a Spirit-filled community that is committed to teaching, fellowship, breaking of bread, praying, demonstrating the Kingdom, characterized by gladness, generosity, praise, and multiplication leading to church planting.

¹⁸ Steven Neill, *History of Christian Missions*, 22.