

Empowered to Make a Difference

Acts 2:1-13

Pentecost - 50th day after passover.

Agricultural Festival (Feast of Weeks) -> offering the first sheaf of wheat from the crop to God.

- A festival of thankfulness and a prayer requesting a healthy and numerous crop

50 days after passover the people arrived at Mt. Sinai and Moses received the law.

Pentecost - first fruits. Here is a way of life that will carry you into the purposes of God.

Like the sheaf (first fruits) -> Here is the sign of a great harvest to come. The people of God are filled with thanksgiving and live their lives in the hope of a healthy and numerous gathering of Jesus people.

Moses

Went up the mountain

Came down with the law

-> No longer carved on stones, but with the power of God written on human hearts.

Jesus

Ascended into heaven

Holy Spirit is coming down

Ezekiel 36:26 I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will remove your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh.

The gospel softens the hardest of hearts.

Romans 8:23 Not only that, but we ourselves who have the Spirit as the firstfruits—we also groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for adoption, the redemption of our bodies.

God's people are filled with the Holy Spirit.

- How will the mission of God continue?

It will continue through the bodies, hearts, minds, and lives of the followers of Jesus.

Jesus is enthroned and is embodied in God's sphere (heaven).

The Holy Spirit is being sent and is filling / pouring out in our sphere (earth).

Though the power of the Spirit we are participating in the transformation of the new earth.

The point is not to make the things of this earth irrelevant.

The point is to transform earth with the power of heaven.

We are to be the heralds (witnesses) and we are given the power of heaven, through the Holy Spirit, on earth to be new.

vs. 2-3, Wind and Fire

Wind - emblem of Deity. The Hebrew word is the same for wind and spirit.

Ezekiel's vision in chapter 37

1 The hand of the Lord was on me, and he brought me out by his Spirit and set me down in the middle of the valley; it was full of bones. **7** So I prophesied as I had been commanded. While I was prophesying, there was a noise, a rattling sound, and the bones came together, bone to bone. **9** He said to me, "Prophesy to the breath, prophesy, son of man. Say to it: This is what the Lord God says: Breath, come from the four winds and breathe into these slain so that they may live!" **10** So I prophesied as he commanded me; the breath entered them, and they came to life and stood on their feet, a vast army.

The sound of rushing wind! (Loud and noisy / quiet and soft) Both!

Fire - also a symbol of Deity.

- God's covenant with Abraham (a smoking fire pot and a flaming torch, Genesis 15:17).
- God speaks with Moses (a burning bush, Exodus 3:2).

- The dedication of Solomon's temple (fire descended from heaven, 2 Chronicles 7:1-3)
- **Hebrews 12:26-29** His voice shook the earth at that time, but now he has promised, **Yet once more I will shake not only the earth but also the heavens. 27** This expression, "Yet once more," indicates the removal of what can be shaken—that is, created things—so that what is not shaken might remain. **28** Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful. By it, we may serve God acceptably, with reverence and awe, **29** for our God is a consuming fire.
- **Luke 3:16-17** John answered them all, "I baptize you with water, but one who is more powerful than I am is coming. I am not worthy to untie the strap of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. **17** His winnowing shovel is in his hand to clear his threshing floor and gather the wheat into his barn, but the chaff he will burn with fire that never goes out."

Overcoming darkness!

vs. 4, Began to speak in different tongues, as the Spirit enabled them.

- There is no room for pride or jealousy. We are delighted with the gifts given to others in the same way we are delighted in the gifts given to us.

Luke 11:13 If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him?"

vs. 5-11, each one heard them speaking in his own language

Gift of tongues in this setting was a known language by hearer but not by speaker.

Genesis 12:3 I will bless those who bless you, I will curse anyone who treats you with contempt, and all the peoples on earth will be blessed through you.

God's promises happening in real time (Acts 1).

Side note: Tower of Babel (Genesis 11) -> Let's make a name for ourselves (arrogance and pride dominated their intentions).

Pentecost -> has overturned this curse.

Humanity will be able to hear the good news of what has happened in and through Jesus!

The point: In a space of great diversity, people are hearing the gospel in their own language.

The message of Jesus crosses cultural boundaries.

The church exists and thrives across cultural boundaries.

vs. 12, What does this mean?

- Do we as individuals and as churches have enough energy, enough Spirit driven new life, to make on-lookers consider any comment at all?
- Is anything happening that might make people think we are drunk at 8:45 or 11:15 this morning?
- Are we too worried we are acting (living) rightly that we are acting at all?

vs. 13, some sneered -> actively showing scorn and contempt

The Holy Spirit is active among God's people.

When people turn to Jesus they receive the Holy Spirit and they participate in the family of God.

The family of God is a Jesus centered community.

- Sacrificial
- Communal (sharing meals)
- Signs and wonders (tangible evidence of God's presence)
- The spreading of the good news (contagious).

The Spirit's activity is not something to be pondered in a museum, it is to be lived.

Pentecost isn't something that is simply studied and analyzed, it is experienced!

The gifts of the Spirit continue today.

Jesus remains exalted.

The mission continues to remain in progress.

The promise of the empowering Spirit is for all believers past and present.