

Jason Smith - Empowered to Testify

Acts 2:1–13

The Holy Spirit empowers believers to testify.

Ask God to empower you to be a witness.

Introduction

Good morning, church.

Have you ever been asked to teach something you didn't understand?

Imagine walking into a college classroom and being told, "Today you're teaching trigonometry." If you've never studied it, you'd be terrified. You might know a few terms, but you wouldn't have the confidence or understanding to explain it to anyone else.

Now consider something even more important.

How can we effectively tell others about Jesus if we have never experienced His transforming power for ourselves?

How can we testify about forgiveness if we have never embraced His forgiveness?

How can we talk about freedom if we are still trying to carry our chains alone?

The truth is that God never intended believers to witness in their own strength.

That is why Pentecost happened.

Acts chapter 2 records one of the most important moments in all of Christian history.

Scholar Ben Witherington writes that without the coming of the Spirit there would be no prophecy, no preaching, no mission, no conversions, and no worldwide Christian movement.

Pentecost is not a side story.

Pentecost is the ignition of the Church.

The Holy Spirit came so that ordinary people could become extraordinary witnesses for Jesus Christ.

Let us examine what happened and what it means for us today.

I. The Holy Spirit Arrived with Divine Power

Acts 2:1–2

"When the day of Pentecost arrived, they were all together in one place. And suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind."

Notice that Luke says the sound came **from heaven**.

This was not manufactured.

This was not emotional excitement.

This was not human enthusiasm.

This was a divine interruption.

The disciples had been waiting exactly as Jesus commanded.

They were praying.

They were united.

They were expectant.

And then heaven moved.

The sound was like a violent rushing wind.

The Greek word used for spirit, *pneuma*, can mean wind, breath, or spirit.

Throughout Scripture, wind often symbolizes God's life-giving presence.

Think about Ezekiel 37.

The valley was filled with dry bones.

God commanded the prophet to call for the breath.

When the breath came, dead bones became living people.

The same God who breathed life into dry bones was now breathing life into His Church.

Illustration

Many people open their homes during springtime to let fresh air circulate.

Sometimes when several doors are open, a powerful draft rushes through the house and slams a door shut.

It can startle everyone inside.

Imagine the upper room.

One moment quiet prayer.

The next moment heaven's wind rushing into the room.

The disciples must have been amazed, overwhelmed, and filled with holy excitement.

When God's Spirit moves, things change.

Dead hearts come alive.

Fear becomes faith.

Weakness becomes strength.

II. The Holy Spirit Filled Ordinary Believers

Acts 2:3–4

"And divided tongues as of fire appeared to them and rested on each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit."

Notice something beautiful.

The fire rested on **each one**.

Not just Peter.

Not just John.

Not just the future leaders.

Every believer present received the Spirit's empowering presence.

In the Old Testament, God's presence often appeared through fire.

Moses saw a burning bush.

Israel followed a pillar of fire.

Fire descended upon the tabernacle and temple.

Now the fire rests on God's people.

Why?

Because **believers themselves have become the dwelling place of God**.

The Holy Spirit is not merely around us.

He lives within us.

The word "filled" speaks of control and influence.

When a sail is filled with wind, it moves.

When a heart is filled with the Spirit, it becomes useful for God's purposes.

Jesus promised this would happen.

In Acts 1:8 He said:

"You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses."

Notice the order.

Power first.

Witness second.

God never asks us to witness without first providing power.

III. The Holy Spirit Enabled a Worldwide Witness

Acts 2:5–11

Jerusalem was filled with visitors from many nations.

Luke lists people from across the known world.

Parthians.

Medes.

Elamites.

Residents of Mesopotamia.

Egypt.

Rome.

Arabia.

And many others.

Scholar Mikeal Parsons notes that this list resembles the nations listed in Genesis 10.

In Genesis 11, humanity was divided at Babel because of sin.

Languages became barriers.

But at Pentecost, God begins reversing that division.

People from many nations hear the gospel in their own language.

This is not merely a miracle of speaking.

It is also a miracle of hearing.

Everyone hears the mighty works of God in a language they understand.

The message is clear:

The gospel is for every tribe.

Every tongue.

Every nation.

Every people group.

The Church was born with a global mission.

The Holy Spirit did not come simply to make believers feel blessed.

He came to make them effective witnesses.

The Spirit's power always points outward toward God's mission.

IV. The Holy Spirit Gives Us a Testimony Worth Sharing

Think again about witnessing.

Many Christians struggle because they think witnessing means having all the answers.

But witnessing is not primarily about having all the answers.

It is about telling what you have seen and experienced.

A witness in court simply tells what happened.

The Holy Spirit helps us experience Jesus personally.

He convicts us of sin.

He leads us to repentance.

He assures us of God's love.

He transforms our hearts.

And then He empowers us to tell others.

You don't need to know everything.

You simply need to know Jesus.

A person who has experienced God's grace can speak with authenticity that no argument can replace.

People may debate theology.

But they cannot deny a transformed life.

Story

Years ago, a man who had lived in addiction came to Christ.

He could not explain every doctrine.

He had never attended Bible college.

But when people asked what happened, he would simply say:

"I once woke up every morning looking for another drink. Now I wake up every morning thanking God for another day."

That testimony carried power.

Why?

Because the Holy Spirit had changed his life.

The strongest witness is often a transformed life.

Practical Application

How do we apply Pentecost today?

1. Ask God to fill you daily.

The same Spirit who came at Pentecost still empowers believers today.

Do not rely on your own strength.

Seek God's presence daily.

2. Be available.

The disciples were gathered, waiting, and obedient.

God often works through people who make themselves available.

3. Share your testimony.

You do not need a seminary degree to tell others what Jesus has done for you.

Tell your story.

Tell about His grace.

Tell about His forgiveness.

Tell about His faithfulness.

4. Expect God to work.

The Spirit still convicts hearts.

The Spirit still saves.

The Spirit still transforms lives.

We are responsible to witness.

God is responsible for the results.

Conclusion

Pentecost changed everything.

A frightened group of believers became bold witnesses.

A small gathering became a worldwide movement.

A waiting room became a launching pad for global mission.

And the difference was the Holy Spirit.

Church, the same Spirit who filled the upper room still empowers God's people today.

The world does not need more religious spectators.

The world needs Spirit-filled witnesses.

So ask yourself:

When was the last time I asked God to empower me for His mission?

When was the last time I prayed for boldness to speak about Jesus?

When was the last time I trusted the Holy Spirit to work through me?

Today, let us ask God to do again what He did at Pentecost.

Fill us.

Empower us.

Send us.

Because when the Spirit fills God's people, ordinary believers become extraordinary witnesses.

The Church advances not by human strength, but by Spirit-empowered testimony.