

SERMON TRANSCRIPT

07.19.2026 | The Promised Holy Spirit at Pentecost | Acts 2:1-41 | Dr. Ben Day, Senior Pastor

If you have a Bible this morning, let's go to Acts chapter 2. We're in Acts chapter 2 as we're still in the beginning part. We're going to study through the Book of Acts. This is our third week as we are studying the Book of Acts and we're considering the Word of God and the Spirit of God working in and through the early church. The Book of Acts tells the story, the Acts of the Apostles, but as I said a couple of weeks ago, it probably is better understood as the Acts of the Holy Spirit, how the Spirit and the Word built the early church.

The one thing that I just want to keep reminding us of as we begin this book and we'll remind us of as we study the Book of Acts is that my hope is that we would not just see Acts merely as history. Acts is not just the story of the early church, it is the story of the church. It's a story that is still being written. The same Spirit who came at Pentecost 2,000 years ago, the same Spirit who empowered those apostles to testify to the mighty works of God, the same Spirit who changed lives and saved thousands on that day, the same Spirit is still alive and still working today. The same Word that Peter stood in front of thousands and proclaimed, the same Word of God that changed lives and turned the whole world upside down, that same Word is still being preached and it is still transforming lives in our world today. So this is not just the story of the early church, it is the story of the church, meaning it is our story. It's one we want to understand our place in. What does it look like for us to be led by the Word and the Spirit to be the church of God today?

It's very important that we, I think, remind ourselves of that each time we come to the Book of Acts because it helps us think about the ways that we read and interpret Acts. A couple of times now over these first couple of weeks, Pastor Clark and myself have both kind of spoken to the ways that we want to read and understand and interpret Acts. Many times if you hear from Bible scholars or people that talk about how to read and study the Bible, they will talk about texts that are descriptive, meaning they describe what happened, and texts that are prescriptive, meaning they prescribe the things that should always happen. There's many texts in Scripture, parts of Scripture, that are descriptive, historical accounts telling us what happened.

Other parts of Scripture are prescriptive, rules, laws, commands that we are prescribed to follow. Many times when we come to a passage of Scripture, we have to ask ourselves, "Well, which one is it?" And certainly, I think when we just read the Book of Acts, starting from the beginning, we can tell that Dr. Luke, who wrote Acts, as we saw a couple of weeks ago, to Theophilus, this friend, this loved one of God, that he is seeking to give an orderly historical account of the Spirit and the Word working through the early church. Surely, Luke was not trying to say, "This is what always should happen," but rather, "Here is what happened." He's describing what the Spirit and the Word did through the early church, but at the same time, because it's not just Luke writing, but it is the Spirit of God writing through Luke. Because that same Spirit is still at work today, because that same Word is still being preached, because Jesus is still building His church, it's not just describing what has happened, but it is telling us the way God works to build His church.

And in that way, the Book of Acts is very instructive for us, and it is guiding for us as the people of God today to see the ways that we are supposed to continue to live as His church and carry out the mission that He has given us. What's important to consider as we come to today's passage, because what we find in Acts 2 is some very unique things happening. Especially at the beginning of this story and the end of this story, it's very unique circumstances that will not always happen. Some ways they will never be repeated, and other ways some of the things we might see might sometimes be repeated, but they don't always happen this way. But the center of this passage is a message that is proclaimed, a sermon that is preached, that explains all that is happening there at Pentecost, and at this message, the sermon is a central truth that never changes. It's a Word that we still need to hear today.

This helps us to understand as we think about the Book of Acts and how we understand these unique occurrences and how they apply to our lives. And so what I want to do is I want to walk through this passage. We have a long passage this morning. It's one that you can think about dividing up into different sermons, but being that it is really recounting one event and one sermon, I thought it was good to keep it together. But instead of doing what I normally do, which is reading through the whole passage first and then walking back through it, because it develops so well and because it's so long, we're just going to take it section by section and read along as we go. So what I've done is I've just kind of divided the

day of Pentecost that we read about here in Acts, chapter 2, in three parts. So I'll give you kind of the heading for the part, and then we'll read through it and walk through that section together. And the whole part of Pentecost that I want you to see first is these miraculous signs at Pentecost.

The first part of this story that I want us to see, the first part of our outline, if you'd like to fill in those blanks and follow along with us, is the miraculous signs at Pentecost. You know, sometimes we hear the word Pentecost, we think of it being a Christian holy day. Maybe sometimes you hear the word Pentecost, you might think of a certain denomination of Christianity. It's important to know that Pentecost was actually a Jewish holiday, a Jewish festival before it was a Christian one. Pentecost, it comes from the Greek word that means "fifty." And what it was, it was a Jewish festival that happened fifty days after Passover. It was known as the Feast of Weeks, and it was a festival in which people from all around Israel and even the surrounding regions, those people that had believed in the God of Israel, would travel to Jerusalem. It's why we see so many people gathered from so many places there that day, because they were there for this festival of Pentecost. And what would happen at Pentecost is they would have this festival and one of the main things that they remembered was how God had given His Word to His people hundreds and thousands of years ago through His prophet Moses. They remembered the Torah being given. And now on this Pentecost, a few days after Jesus had ascended back to heaven, God is going to give His Spirit. He is going to use this time to allow His Word to help them to understand what is happening.

So let's read the beginning part of what happens here in Acts chapter 2. I'll read the first few verses, we see these miraculous signs happening. Luke writes that in verse 1, "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, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. 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 and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance." So notice here some miraculous things are happening at this Pentecost. As the believers of the God of Israel are gathered, and particularly there are those who are there that are followers of Jesus, the Holy Spirit comes and He brings with Him these physical manifestations that the people would know that He is present there with His people.

Three miraculous signs happen. First, we hear that there is this sound of rushing wind that fills the whole room. This is like if you've ever been in the midst of a storm and you can just feel the wind pressing against you. A sound of rushing wind is heard throughout the whole room. Now in both Hebrew and in Greek, the word for spirit is a word that means breath or wind. So oftentimes whenever the Spirit appears, there is this wind that happens because it helps the people to know that He is present. This wind is the Spirit is loud. It is letting the people know the Holy Spirit has come. But it's not just in what they hear, it's in what they see. We read that what they saw were these tongues of fire that started to appear over those believers in Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit's presence was being shown to them by these pieces of fire that looked like tongues. Now fire is often used to signify the presence of God throughout the Bible. You think about that burning bush experience that Moses had when he was in the wilderness, that the presence of God was there burning that bush. Think about the fire that was there in the tabernacle or the temple. What is being signified here is that the presence of God is in this room and is now dwelling upon each one of these people. And this fire is taking the form of a tongue because that leads to the third sign. So you can hear the sound of a rushing wind. You can see the fire that rests upon the people. And then there is this speech that comes out of them. It says that the apostles, these believers in Jesus, we don't know for sure if it was just the 12 or if it was 120 that were gathered there, but it seems that those who were followers of Jesus were signified that they had received the Holy Spirit and the fact that they were speaking in strange tongues. And the people who are gathered there can understand the language that they are speaking.

Listen to how Luke continues in verse 5. He says, "Now they were dwelling in Jerusalem, Jews, devout men from every nation under heaven. And at this sound the multitude came together and they were bewildered, because each one was hearing them speak in his own language. And they were amazed and astonished, saying, "Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? And how is it that we hear each of us in his own native language? Parthians and Medes, Elamites and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya, belonging to Cyrene and visitors from Rome, both Jews and Proselytes, Cretans and Arabians. We hear them telling in our own tongues the mighty works of God. All were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, "What does this mean?" But others, mocking said, "They are filled with new wine." what miraculous things are happening and the way

that it's reaching the people. Luke gives us this description of all the people that have gathered for this festival of Pentecost. People from not just the nation of Israel, but the surrounding regions, reaching parts of Africa, Asia and to Europe.

What he's saying here is that the nations have gathered and they're all hearing these people who follow Jesus, testify of the mighty works of God, and they can all understand them even though they all speak different languages. The Bible scholars are kind of divided on what's happening here. Some speculate that maybe the apostles are speaking some heavenly language, and by a miracle of the Holy Spirit, everybody can understand that heavenly language. Others believe that the Holy Spirit is empowering the apostles to speak in languages that they did not know, so that the people who did know those languages could understand them. I tend to believe that's what's happening here. I believe the Spirit is filling and empowering these people of God to speak in languages that they had not studied, they had not learned, but to give a testament to the mighty works of God, to proclaim God's goodness and what he has done through Jesus in earthly languages so that all the people who are gathered there could hear them in their own language and believe and understand.

This is one of the first signs that what Jesus promised back in Acts chapter 1 is going to be fulfilled. He said, "You're going to take my gospel, you're going to be witnesses of me to the end of the earth." This is the nations, people from every tribe and language hearing the gospel proclaimed. This is a sign that the kingdom is not going to be restored to Israel, but the kingdom of God is going to go to all peoples and to all nations and spread throughout the whole world. It's happening right here, and this is what is significant. That God's Spirit has come to empower his people to carry out his mission to all peoples. This is the point that we want to make sure we understand and grasp, because these were miraculous signs and the signs are significant, but they are significant because they are pointing to the ultimate point. Sometimes people read this passage and other passages in the book of Acts, and they think that if you receive the Holy Spirit, it means you certainly will speak in tongues. Or if the Holy Spirit is present and working, then you will do miraculous things. There will be miraculous signs every time that the Holy Spirit is present. But that's not what Luke is trying to tell us here. He is telling us what happened, that there were miraculous signs showing the Spirit's presence, showing the Spirit's power amongst the people of God, but the whole point was not the signs. The whole point was what the signs were pointing to.

So many times throughout the Bible, especially in the New Testament, especially in Jesus' ministry, people got hung up on the signs. Do you remember when Jesus fed thousands of people with just a little bit of bread and fish? The people came and tracked him down across the sea, and they said, "Hey, can you give us more bread?" They got caught up on the sign of being fed physically, but Jesus said, "I didn't come to give you more bread. I came to show you that I am the bread of life." In the same way, the Spirit shows up in this miraculous way, not so that we would always look for those signs, but so that we would see what are the signs pointing to. And that is the message of Pentecost. Here's the second part of this story that we need to make sure we understand. It begins with these miraculous signs. The signs are amazing. The signs are so amazing that it leads the people to conclude, or at least some of the people to conclude, that these people must be drunk. It says they are sipping on new wine, the good stuff. It's the type of wine that's going to influence them in such a way to act in an abnormal way. These signs are present, but they're pointing to something. And what Peter does is he stands up, and he basically serves as a translator. It's kind of interesting. In some ways, they didn't need a translator that day, because the Spirit had empowered them to speak in tongues. But in other ways, Peter does serve as a translator because he helps the people to understand what is happening. He uses the Word of God to explain this act of God that is happening.

I don't know if you've ever been reliant upon a translator. Maybe if you've ever traveled to someplace where you didn't speak the language. I was in Taiwan with a team from our church earlier this year, and we relied on a couple of our members, really, one of our members to be a primary translator. And I would often sit by her at the church services. She would have to tell me what was going on. I could see what was going on, but I couldn't understand all that was happening or being said. In the same way, when the people gather here at Pentecost, they can see what's happening, but they don't quite understand it until Peter gets up, and he uses the Word of God to interpret this act of God to give them this important message. If I could summarize the message of Pentecost, I would just do it like this. That all people can know God intimately and proclaim God faithfully through the Holy Spirit because Jesus has died, risen, and now reigns as King.

The message of Pentecost, the whole point of these miraculous signs, the message that doesn't change that we still need to hear is that all people can know God intimately, proclaim God faithfully through the Holy Spirit because Jesus has died, he has risen, and he reigns as King. Let me show you that here in Peter's sermon. It says in verse 14, "But Peter, standing with the eleven, lifted up his voice and addressed them, men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you and give ear to my words, for these people are not drunk, as you suppose, since it is only the third hour of the day." I do kind of love that Peter's only argument here is timing. He doesn't say, "We're not people who do that. We don't ever drink wine." He just says, "It's only nine in the morning." If it was nine o'clock at night, I could see what you're saying. But it's nine a.m. like, be reasonable here. It's just an argument of timing. But then he explains from Scripture what is actually happening. He uses the Word of God. The Word that they were celebrating had been given to them hundreds and thousands of years before. He's now using that word to interpret what is happening here.

And so he'll quote from a number of Old Testament sources, starting with Joel. This is in verse 16, "But this is what was uttered through the prophet Joel. "And in the last days it shall be," God declares, "that I will pour out my spirit on all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams. Even on my male servants and female servants, in those days I will pour out my spirit, and they shall prophesy. And I will show wonders in the heavens, above and signs on the earth below, blood and fire and vapor of smoke. The sun shall be turned to darkness and the moon to blood, before the day of the Lord comes, the great and magnificent day. And it shall come to pass that everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved."

What Peter says is what was promised through Joel hundreds of years before is now being fulfilled in your midst. All these signs that you are witnessing, the wind that you are hearing, the tongues of fire that you're seeing, the fact that you can understand us in this strange language, he says all of it is a sign that God keeps his promises. That God had promised hundreds of years ago to pour out his spirit so that all people could know him intimately and proclaim him faithfully. Notice the emphasis here on all people, how from the prophecy of Joel, God declares he's going to pour out his spirit on all flesh. He talks about men and women. He talks about the young and the old. He talks about the lowly servants.

And the whole section ends with him saying, "And anyone who calls upon the name of the Lord may be saved." I used to have a pastor that would say, "And anyone, that means you." That all people, regardless of who you are, what you've done, can be saved because of what Jesus has done. As Peter will explain in just a minute. The whole point here is that all people can be saved from their sins, forgiven of their sins, and receive the Holy Spirit of God. This is why I described it as saying all people can know God intimately. Because it's not just about being forgiven of your sins or just avoiding eternal punishment in hell. What God is promising here is that his spirit, the third person of our triune God, would come and dwell in the people of God. That your body would become a temple of the Holy Spirit. That God's not just interested in this distant, you kind of knowing about him, but he wants to know you in a real intimate relationship. So much so that he puts his presence, his spirit, inside of you.

So many other religions can tell you about God, but only Christianity invites you to know God personally. So many other belief systems can tell you that God is great and God is good, but only Christianity invites you to taste and see that the Lord is good. He's giving his spirit to his people that they might know him intimately. His presence would be in their lives. But notice it's not just about knowing him intimately, but it's also about proclaiming him faithfully. Notice he says, "I will pour out my spirit on all these people and they will prophesy." Think about how amazing of a prophecy that is. To promise that all people, men and women, servants, old, young, all people, will not just know God, but will be able to speak about him faithfully. Prophets were such a unique role in the Old Testament, receiving a special word from God to be able to give to others. Now the promise is, because the Holy Spirit has come, all people can know God intimately and all people can proclaim him faithfully. It says here that they will have dreams and visions to understand me, that they will be able to speak of me.

Think about these apostles. We'll read in Acts chapter 4 that people viewed them as common and uneducated men. But yet they are equipped to speak in foreign languages. They are equipped to go to the nations, to stand before rulers, and to proclaim the good news of Jesus. Why? Because they've received the Holy Spirit. And guess what? If you've trusted in Jesus Christ, you have received that same Holy Spirit. The same power that came upon the apostles, that they might testify to the good works of God and be understood by all these people, that same power comes from the Holy Spirit and

he indwells you. Meaning you have that same power, both to know God intimately and to proclaim him faithfully. Yes, it doesn't always look in the same way that it did at Pentecost. You won't always speak in tongues. We won't always hear the sound of a rushing wind. But we have the same spirit. You have the same power. We can have that spirit. We can have that power. Because Jesus Christ has come. He's died. He has risen. He reigns as king. That's what Peter explains next. We're going to walk through his sermon pretty quickly. But basically what Peter does, he says, all of this can be fulfilled, the spirit being poured out, because of the fact that Jesus has come. This is what Peter says next in verse 22. He says, "Men of Israel, hear these words, Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs that God did through him in your midst, as you yourselves know." Meaning all these miraculous signs we see in the spirit, you saw them in Jesus. This Jesus, verse 23, delivered up according to the definite plan for knowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men.

Notice how Peter speaks of Jesus's death. He attributes it both to the sinfulness of man, but also the providence of God. He says, "It was wrong of us to kill an innocent man. Lawless people did such a terrible thing. But it was all according to the plan of God." Why did God plan this out? Why was it in God's providence that Jesus would be killed? So that everyone who would call upon the name of the Lord would be saved. We think about when Jesus died, it says that the veil, the curtain at the temple was torn. Why did that happen? It was symbolizing the fact that the barrier that separated us from God's presence was torn. It was no longer needed because our sins had been taken away. Now we could be united with the true and holy God. He says Jesus died to reconcile us to God.

According to God's plan, he died, but he did not stay dead. Continue reading in verse 24. God raised him up, loosing the pangs of death because it was not possible for him to be held by it. Death could not hold Jesus. Verse 25. Now he quotes from the Psalm, Psalm 16. David says concerning him, "I saw the Lord always before me, for he is at my right hand, that I might not be shaken. Therefore my heart was glad and my tongue rejoiced, my flesh also will dwell in hope. For you will not abandon my soul to Hades or let your holy one see corruption. You have made known to me the path of life. You will make me full of gladness with your presence." Centuries before, David had written a Psalm that proclaimed his hope in a resurrection. He says, "You're not going to let my soul be separated from you forever. No matter what my circumstances are, I can have joy and I can have hope because I know that one day I will dwell with God forever." And Peter says David was not just talking about himself because David is still dead.

Verse 32. This Jesus, God raised up and of that we are all witnesses. Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this that you yourselves are seeing and hearing. For David did not ascend to the heavens, but he himself says, "The Lord said to my Lord, Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies your footstool." David said, "I am the king, but I have a king." A king that is seated at the right hand of the Father. A king that reigns over, not just Israel, but over all. David was a great king, but he was not the ultimate king. Peter says Jesus is the ultimate king. Jesus has come, he has died to remove the barrier that separated you from God. He has raised from the dead to give you a hope of new life and resurrection. And now he reigns as king so that all who worship King Jesus would be saved from their sins. All who trust in Jesus as king will receive this Holy Spirit.

How does a holy God dwell with unholy people? He makes them holy people. What Peter is saying is this Spirit of God can be poured out on us, can dwell on us as the people of God because Jesus has come and he has saved us from our sins. He has taken our sin and our death, our shame upon him. He has borne them on his body, on the cross. He has removed our unholiness and given us his righteousness. He has given us new life and his resurrection. And now all those who believe in him and worship him as king receive this Holy Spirit as well. What you're seeing is a fulfillment of this. Verse 36, "Let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you have crucified." Peter says all these miraculous signs are all pointing to this great truth. God keeps his promises. God had promised to pour out his Spirit on his people. How could that promise be fulfilled? By Jesus coming and taking an unholy people and making them holy. But bearing their sin, removing the barrier so that God's presence might dwell on his people, but they might now know him intimately and proclaim him faithfully. Have you trusted in Jesus?

This is what Peter says should happen. The people respond to this message and we see the many that are saved at Pentecost. This is the last part of our passage I just want you to notice. The many that are saved at Pentecost. Peter, probably in more words than this, it says that he exhorted them with more words. I'll read in just a minute.

Show them that what they were seeing was an act of God. You have to understand it by the word of God to say this is the Spirit of God coming to the people. All those who trust in Jesus will be saved and will receive the same Holy Spirit. Verse 37, it says, "Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and they said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?" This is the response that we pray for when we tell people about Jesus and what he has done. They would say, "What should we do?" Notice that Luke says they respond this way because they were cut to the heart. What Luke means is that they were convicted of their sin. The Bible tells us that conviction of sin is a work of the Holy Spirit. Now notice, earlier in the passage, the Spirit worked and we saw it through rushing wind and fire and these strange tongues being spoken. But now as people are convicted of their sin, we don't see any evidence that the Holy Spirit is at work except for what happens inside them.

This is so important to notice because many times the Spirit will show up and there will be miraculous signs. There will be special visions and dreams or other miracles performed to show the Spirit's presence and power. But so many other times the Spirit will work in ways that we don't notice. We can't see physically. Sometimes the Spirit shows up and it's like a rushing wind that everybody can hear. But many other times the Spirit shows up like the breath in your lungs, almost undetectable, but still giving you life. Maybe even this morning, even though you don't see any fire in our building or hear the sound of rushing wind, maybe the Spirit is speaking to your heart. Do you hear Him? Is He bringing conviction of sin as He did for the people that day? Spirit helping you to see an area where you need to repent? Is He bringing comfort of God's grace and mercy? To assure you that you have been forgiven of your sins? To know that you are united to Jesus in faith? Is He calling you to obey? Is He leading you in a certain direction, leading you to share with someone this message of Jesus? How is the Spirit speaking to you this morning?

The Spirit was working the people's heart. They said, "What should we do?" So verse 38, Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off. Everyone whom the Lord our God calls to Himself." And with many other words, He bore witness and continued to exhort them saying, "Save yourselves from this crooked generation." Peter says, "You want to know how to respond? Repent and be baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus." To repent means to turn from your sins, to be baptized meant to profess your faith in Jesus Christ. It's not the act of baptism that brings forgiveness or brings salvation, but it's what baptism means. Baptism is to profess your faith in Jesus. He says, "If you will turn from your sins and trust in Christ, you will be forgiven of your sins." Which means if you have trusted in Jesus, you should be baptized. You should profess your faith in Jesus in that way. Because it's in Him and He alone that we can be forgiven. But He says, "Also, you will receive this promise, Holy Spirit." The Holy Spirit did not just come for us apostles, did not just come for the early church, it came to all who would believe. It says, "It came for all of you, to your children, to all those who are far off."

That's each one of us. No matter how far away from God you feel, this promise is true. That if you will turn from your sins and trust in Jesus, you will be forgiven of all of your sins. You will receive the Holy Spirit, meaning you can know God intimately, proclaim Him faithfully. And many responded, verse 41, "So those who received His word were baptized, and they were added that day about 3,000 souls." Now I told you, what happens at the beginning of this story and at the end of this story is not always what happens. Not every time that the gospel is preached, thousands of people get saved. It has happened throughout history. This isn't the only time where there's been a mass gathering of people that many have come to salvation. But so many times it's not going to be thousands, but it might just be one.

Remember the parable that Jesus told? The parable that talked about the lost sheep, the lost coin, the lost sons. How angels rejoice in heaven over one sinner who repents. What's really miraculous is not that many are saved, but really just that any are saved. We are all far off from God. We are all dead in our sins. It is only by the grace of God and the Spirit of God that we come to salvation in Jesus. So if you're here today and you've trusted in Jesus, you know Him intimately. Give thanks to God. It's a miracle not just that thousands get saved, but that you got saved. Would you use that Spirit that's inside of you to go out and testify to who Jesus is and what He has done? As the apostles did here, proclaim of the mighty works of God. Oh, it may not always look like being spoken in another language. It may not always hear the sound of rushing wind, but the same Spirit indwells you. He empowers you. He is still at work. He'll bring many more to salvation. Who will He use you to reach? Who will you share this good news with?