

Feast of Pentecost

Dr. Greg Mitchell

Acts 2:1-13

When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.

Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven. When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard their own language being spoken. Utterly amazed, they asked: “Aren’t all these who are speaking Galileans? Then how is it that each of us hears them in our native language? Parthians, Medes and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome (both Jews and converts to Judaism); Cretans and Arabs—we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues!” Amazed and perplexed, they asked one another, “What does this mean?”

Some, however, made fun of them and said, “They have had too much wine.”

The New International Version (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), Ac 2:1–13.

The Background

Whereas in Genesis 11, all the nations of the earth come together to make great the name of humanity and get dispersed in many languages, in Acts 2, all the nations of the earth come together to make great the name of God in many tongues but with one praise.

A group of people all speaking a heavenly language united everyone yet everyone heard the message in their own language.

Unity is built on one language of worship.

But there is a problem: The people of the earth have false identities that they allow to define who they are.

There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

The New International Version (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), Ga 3:28–29.

While certainly in that church there were Jews and Greeks, males & females, slaves & masters.



The church should be known for holding diversity and tension in the most powerful and unique ways. But the way we do that is not to juggle many identities, but to submit all identities to King Jesus.

Even Democracy Gets Messed Up

We all become lobbyists of our personal agenda and demand that the government caters to our personal agendas. We no longer bring our diversity to bless a greater good, but make the power accommodate our agendas.

All you're good for is advancing my personal concerns and identity. And if you don't do that, I'll vote you out and out someone else who will do that in.



Inside of society is tremendous fracturing. God loves diversity but we are manipulating powers to accommodate to us, rather than us worshipping something greater than ourselves.

High School Football

In Canada, they're into hockey. But maybe 5 parents will be watching their kids' hockey games. In Nashville, high school football is televised

In the USA, Pastor Greg finds it so remarkable that Americans have such a unique ability to join and worship something greater than ourselves — Football.

But less and less, Americans are not unifying around Jesus, but around false identities and politics. And Dr. Greg shares his concern

We still have Jews, Greeks, males, females, slaves and free. And diversity shouldn't be minimized but if it becomes an identity, it becomes a problem because it will then separate us from God and one another.



We can discern a false identity because it separates us from God and others.

The problem of Babel was using their unity to promote their false ways and make a name for themselves, a temporary agenda.

For he himself is our peace, who has made the two groups one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, by setting aside in his flesh the law with its commands and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new humanity out of the two, thus making peace, and in one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility

The New International Version (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), Eph 2:14–16.

If our identity is in Christ alone, then our diversity is what will unify us. In fact, we need that diversity because only then the fullness of God can be seen. So we celebrate diversity as it refracts and reflects our King and Savior.



The Church has a unique opportunity to declare what diversity should truly look like: Acknowledging uniqueness under a common banner.

How Do We Do This?

We must be willing to be mocked.

Speaking in tongues might be a way to open your mouth in faith and humiliating ourselves, speaking in a language that makes people think we're crazy.

The gifts of the Spirit are all given to benefit others. Tongues uniquely benefits God.



Will you look foolish or even a traitor in front of those who once defined you?

We become more of who we are when we submit our identities to Christ. We must forsake our old identities. Pentecost offers you a day to forsake what used to define you and make a new identity in Jesus.

The courage to have the identity in Christ is necessary, because you will lose friendships. Will you humble yourself and find your identity that isn't impressive to people in the contemporary culture and receive the Holy Spirit?

The infilling of the Holy Spirit doesn't just have to happen once, but it can happen many times.

Identity Theft

We all suffer from spiritual identity theft by the accuser. But we are called to receive a new identity.

But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him

who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

The New International Version (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), 1 Pe 2:9–10.

So will you receive the Holy Spirit and continually receive God's new identity for you?