



## First Baptist Church Selmer

SALT & LIGHT • "GET OUT OF THE HOUSE!" • ACTS 2:1-13 • 10/3/2021

### MAIN POINT

The sending of the Holy Spirit to the church was never intended to be a private party. God intends for His church to move beyond the walls of a building to reach the community around it.

### INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

**Name the top few Christian holidays and/or holy days in order of popularity. If you had to list them in order of importance, how would your list go? Explain.**

**Since Christians celebrate Jesus' coming to earth at Christmas, then why do you think the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost isn't a more recognized or celebrated day each year?**

**What do you already know about the Day of Pentecost?**

When we read the Scriptures, we have to understand that sometimes God does things for a specific time and place and people. What is described in Acts 2 was certainly one of those events. The Day of Pentecost marks the public beginning of the church, as well as the coming of the Holy Spirit Jesus promised in Acts 1. As unique as the events of that day were, the Day of Pentecost is still relevant to believers today.

### UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ ACTS 2:1-5.

**Look back at Acts 1:8,13-14. Why were the disciples all together in one place? What were they doing?**

Acts 1:8 records Jesus' sending message to His disciples. He told them to go, but He also told them to wait. The Spirit was exactly the one for whom they were waiting. Jesus knew a truth that is important for us to understand—our sending is to be rooted in and dependent upon the Holy Spirit's leading. The Spirit empowers us to live sent every day; apart from Him, our mission lacks purpose.

**Verses 2-4 describe the moment when the Holy Spirit descended on the Christians gathered for Pentecost. What stands out to you about Luke's description of this moment?**

**What did they hear? What did they see?**

**What do you think you would do if that moment happened during small group time today?**

The wind in verse 2 was not actual wind, but the sound of a violent wind, likely deafening and filling the whole house. The sight was like flames of fire that separated and rested on each person there. Both the sound of the wind and the flames of fire are common biblical allusions to God's presence. They were already commanded to be sent, but the disciples waited for God's presence to come upon them before going. This demonstrates the essential nature of the Holy Spirit in the lives of all believers. As awesome as it was, verses 2-3 would mean nothing without verse 4. The Holy Spirit came upon sent believers then—and comes to sent believers now—to empower us to share the gospel. The Spirit filled the disciples so that they could convey the gospel in every language it needed to be heard in that day.

**What are some of the obstacles in everyday life that keep you from experiencing the effects of the Spirit's power in your life? If any one of those obstacles was removed, how do you think your living sent might change?**

**What are some ways you have experienced the Holy Spirit's power in your life? What does the Holy Spirit's power have to do with living sent every day?**

The Spirit comes upon all believers and empowers them to live sent lives. In a very literal sense, the Holy Spirit brings us from death to life everlasting (Rom. 8:11). In a symbolic sense, the Holy Spirit brings us from death to life while serving Christ here on earth in the body. He prompts us to share the gospel. He gives us the words to speak. He fills us with the courage we need. He takes our words and penetrates the hearts of those listening. We are powerless to live out Christ's commands without Him.

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ ACTS 2:6-13.

**Verses 6-13 note the two ways people reacted to the Holy Spirit's appearance at Pentecost. How would you describe these two reactions?**

**What do these two very different reactions to God's Spirit reveal about the ways we can expect people to respond to us when we allow the Spirit to prompt and lead us on God's mission?**

What the Holy Spirit did in and among the believers at Pentecost was unexplainable. What the Holy Spirit wants to do in and through us will be unexplainable to some people, too. When we are empowered and sent by the Spirit, though, we know that we are sent for a purpose, and that purpose is not dependent on how people respond to us.

## APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

**The Spirit's movement at Pentecost was a miraculous and awe-inspiring event. What does the movement of the Spirit look like today? What does the Spirit's empowerment for mission look like today?**

**When you think about living sent, would you say that you rely upon the Spirit's prompting and leading?**

**Discuss some specific ways the Spirit helps us in the way we link together, in the way we learn, and in the way we live.**

## PRAYER

Thank God for His Holy Spirit. Invite Him to make you more aware of His presence and experience the glory of His goodness in your life every day.

## COMMENTARY

| ACTS 2:1-21

2:1-2. Throughout this book Luke records the togetherness the early Christians enjoyed. Here, at the beginning of everything, we find them all together. They heard a sound like the blowing of a violent wind, certainly an experience with which all of us can identify. The word for "wind" is pneuma, the same word Jesus used in talking about the Spirit and the wind with Nicodemus

(John 3:7-8). Wind filling the whole house reminds us of God's presence filling the temple in the Old Testament. Luke was probably not present for this event, but we can imagine that he heard his colleagues describe it scores of times, for it was a day they could never forget.

2:3. We need to be careful with the language of the text. The sound was not a wind but like a wind. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire. Apparently, the fire started as one and then separated and came upon them. Like wind, the Bible commonly associates fire with the presence of God, as Moses found out one day in the desert (Exod. 3:2).

2:4. A third physical phenomenon experienced on the Day of Pentecost was the use of different languages. Throughout Acts, Luke uses different verbs to describe the coming of the Spirit upon new believers. This first time was a unique event, never again repeated in exactly the same way. When we look at the entire New Testament teaching on the Holy Spirit, we see the word "baptism" associated with initial conversion and the word "filling" with ministry. The first seems to happen once without repetition; the second occurs with frequency as believers allow God's Spirit to produce powerful work through them.

2:5-6. Like Paul, Luke occasionally engages in deliberate exaggeration such as his suggestion that there were pious Jews residing in Jerusalem from every nation under heaven. Probably we should understand him to mean that people speaking many other languages were present on the Day of Pentecost and each heard the message in his or her own language or dialect. We might ask, if they resided in Jerusalem, wouldn't they have understood Aramaic, or at least Greek? Doubtless many of them did; but part of the miracle was God's ability to proclaim His message in multiple languages through uneducated people who spoke almost exclusively Aramaic and Greek. Some have suggested that the Feast of Pentecost might very well have attracted over two hundred thousand Jews from all over Palestine and the Mediterranean world. Nothing indicates that they heard the wind or saw the flames; but the sound of languages—perhaps dozens of them—captured their attention immediately.

2:7-11. The speakers amazed Jerusalem's visitors as much as did the language: "Are not all these men who are speaking Galileans?" After the introductory question raised by the bewildered guests, they identified fifteen language groups, roughly scattered from east to west, who heard the believers declaring the wonders of God in their own languages. Luke tells us they were bewildered and perplexed. Twice he used the word "amazed." Many of the disciples (all of the eleven) came from Galilee, but that label for the group does not necessarily mean that all 120 came from that province. Jesus was a Galilean, and His followers were therefore known by that group name. Luke's list of fifteen geographical locations was a group of nations or areas in which known Jewish populations existed and would likely have sent representative groups to the

Feast of Pentecost. Everyone there who spoke a language other than Greek or Aramaic heard the message of the Christians in that language—maybe fifteen languages, maybe fifty, maybe more. The languages differed; the message remained the same: the wonders of God.

2:12-13. Like most congregations, not everyone agreed that this event had significant meaning. Some simply mocked, “They have had too much wine” (v. 13). This word for wine (gleukos), used only here in the Bible, leaves no doubt of the mockers meaning. Peter’s explanation in the following verses says pointedly, “These men are not drunk, as you suppose” (v. 15).