

COVENANT — THE FIRST CHURCH

The Day of Pentecost

LESSON 02

JUNE 14, 2026

LESSON TEXT

Acts 2:1–18, 38–39

FOCUS VERSES

Acts 2:37–39

³⁷Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?

³⁸Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

³⁹For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.

TRUTH ABOUT COVENANT

Jesus inaugurated the new covenant when He poured out His Spirit.

TRUTH ABOUT COVENANT

I will respond to the Gospel by obeying.

COVENANT CONTEXT

After Jesus' promise to empower His people, He took another step closer in His covenant relationship with humanity when He filled His followers with His Holy Spirit. Upon preaching the gospel, a newly Spirit-filled apostle Peter preached to the crowd how they too could be in covenant relationship with Jesus: repentance, baptism in Jesus' name, and the infilling of His Spirit.

TEACHING OUTLINE

Icebreaker: What is your favorite holiday to celebrate with family and friends?

Teacher Tip: Connect the group's answers to the Jews' love for Jewish feasts such as the Feast of Pentecost.

Lesson Connection: Share the Lesson Connection.

I. THE DAY OF PENTECOST

A. Tarrying in Jerusalem (I)

DISCUSS: *Why is unity such an important component of the church? What does unity look like in the daily life of the church body?*

- B. The Outpouring of the Holy Spirit (V)
- C. I will tarry in prayer to be empowered by the Spirit.

DISCUSS: If you have ever “tarried” while waiting for a promise from God, what did that waiting period look like and feel like?

II. THE GOSPEL AND OUR RESPONSE

DISCUSS: What elements in Peter’s message were so convicting for the listeners that they evoked such a willing response?

- A. What Must We Do?
- B. The Generational Promise

DISCUSS: What are some recent testimonies you have heard of Acts 2:38 experiences around the world?

- C. I will follow the plan of salvation Peter preached in Acts 2:38.

DISCUSS: If you have responded to the gospel and been born again, what was that experience like for you? If not, why not respond and be born again today?

Internalizing the Message

PRAYER FOCUS

Lead the group in prayer and consider the following topics of focus:

- For God to fill us all with His Holy Spirit as we respond to the gospel through repentance and baptism
- For God to continue to pour out His Holy Spirit in our church and community, just like He did in Acts

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LESSON CONNECTION

An Apostolic chaplain walked onto the floor of the oncology ward in a suburban Florida hospital for another day of rounds. He loved his profession, visiting people in dire situations and sharing God’s comfort and peace with whomever would allow him. As was his custom, he visited the health unit coordinator—affectionately known as “the HUC”—to gather a list of patients and see who could use a visit. The HUC greeted the chaplain with a warm smile and was helpful as always, saying, “Room 12 could use a visit. She’s been very emotional and is always reading her Bible and praying.” The chaplain smiled and expressed thanks; he knew where to start.

As a chaplain employed by the hospital, he was not allowed to actively invite patients to church, but he was allowed to share his faith with anyone who would ask him. The chaplain stopped briefly at the door of room 12 to whisper a prayer: “Lord, help me be a witness to this patient today. Let your Holy Spirit guide me to be a witness.”

The patient sat in her bed, hunched over with her Bible in her hands. She greeted the chaplain with a smile and invited him to sit. She told him the tearful story of her battle with cancer and how her treatments had changed and developed over several years as the cancer grew and shrank and eventually bounced to different parts of her body. The road had been long and hard and she confessed to growing weary in the journey. “However,” she said, “since getting cancer, I’ve been closer to God than ever before. I’m reading my Bible and praying more than ever. I just

want to experience more of God.”

Inspired by her faith, the chaplain asked if he could pray and the patient consented. As the chaplain prayed, he felt the Holy Spirit course through His body, just like he felt every Sunday at church. He knew God’s presence was there. As he prayed with fervor and emotion, he suddenly heard someone speaking with tongues. *Who is that?* he wondered. After a few seconds, he realized with a shock it was him; he was the one speaking in tongues.

The chaplain quickly wrapped up the prayer. Knowing the hospital’s policy on proselytizing, visions of his imminent termination began to dance in his head. He could imagine nothing more than the patient reporting him and him quickly being fired. Little did the chaplain know, but he had nothing to fear—God was indeed leading this interaction.

The patient grabbed the chaplain’s hand. “Did you just speak with tongues?” she asked. When the chaplain said yes, tears filled the patient’s eyes. “I told you how I’ve been getting closer to God since being diagnosed with cancer. I’ve been reading and praying like never before. One day while praying, I suddenly began to speak in a language I did not understand. I wasn’t trying to, but it happened anyway. Oh, it felt so good. And ever since then, I’ve been praying for God to bring someone into my life to teach me about tongues.”

BIBLE LESSON

I. THE DAY OF PENTECOST

According to Deuteronomy 16:16–17, the Jews were expected to attend three major feasts in Jerusalem. The Feast of Passover, also known as the Feast of Unleavened Bread, celebrated the Hebrews’ deliverance from slavery in Egypt. The institution of the Feast of Passover is described in Exodus 12, Leviticus 23, and Deuteronomy 16. The Feast of Booths, also known as the Feast of Tabernacles, celebrated God’s miraculous provision for the Israelites while they wandered through the wilderness after leaving Egypt. The institution of the Feast of Booths is described in Leviticus 23 and Deuteronomy 16.

In between these two feasts was the Feast of Pentecost, also known as the Feast of Weeks, which occurred fifty days after the Feast of Passover. The institution of the Feast of Pentecost is described in Leviticus 23 and Deuteronomy 16. Pentecost celebrated the firstfruits of the harvest. On this particular celebration, Jesus’ followers would celebrate a new firstfruit—the initial outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon humanity.

A. Tarrying in Jerusalem

Before His ascension, Jesus instructed His disciples to wait in Jerusalem for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. (See Acts 1:4–5.) As Hebrews, they were already in Jerusalem for the Feast of Pentecost. Because of the crowd, Jesus’ followers would have initially blended in with all the others who had made their pilgrimage to Jerusalem for the feast.

(I) During the waiting period between Jesus’ ascension and the Day of Pentecost, the number of those who were willing to wait slowly dwindled. The apostle Paul stated that Jesus had appeared to over 500 individuals after His resurrection (I Corinthians 15:6), yet only 120 were present in the upper room (Acts 1:15). While some of the larger

crowd undoubtedly had reasons why they could not wait, they missed out on the initial outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Possibly they were not fully convinced of Jesus' message, even after witnessing Him resurrect and ascend. One might speculate that only after the number had decreased to 120 were they truly able to be "with one accord" (Acts 2:1).

***DISCUSS:** Why is unity such an important component of the church? What does unity look like in the daily life of the church body?*

B. The Outpouring of the Holy Spirit

The miraculous moment the Holy Spirit was poured out on the 120 was a moment none of them would ever forget. By all accounts, their gathering in the upper room seemed to be quite ordinary. They had already conducted the business of replacing Judas with Matthias, and they were continuing in daily, fervent prayer. The time was just past nine o'clock in the morning (Acts 2:15), and those gathered were sitting down (Acts 2:2).

As unremarkable as this moment might have appeared to onlookers, it was filled with such a spirit of unity and focus on God that God chose this moment to bless His followers with the greatest gift they would ever receive: His own indwelling Holy Spirit. A visible sign of fire accompanied this initial outpouring as well as the audible supernatural sign of speaking with other tongues, or languages. While the sign of fire was not repeated, the sign of tongues was, making speaking in tongues the normative sign for receiving the Holy Spirit. (See Acts 8:17; 10:46; 19:6.) The demonstration was so spectacular that thousands of people outside the upper room heard and were amazed.

(V) This outpouring marked the beginning of the new covenant God had always wanted to share with His people. In Peter's sermon, he connected this event to prophecy from Joel 2:28–32, indicating the same God of the prophets was responsible for this event as well. Now, just as David's "tongue was glad" (Acts 2:26) upon witnessing the Lord, those present at Pentecost would experience a gladness like never before as they spoke with other tongues.

C. I will tarry in prayer to be empowered by the Spirit.

As believers who desire to experience God in the same way the New Testament church did, the upper-room experience provides a helpful template for us to follow. Just as those believers gathered together regularly in unified prayer, we can expect God's Spirit to be poured out when we seek Him in the same way. Additionally, we need to purpose within ourselves to be willing to "tarry," which means "to linger in expectation" (*Merriam-Webster*). The 120 had a promise from Jesus that they would receive power when they were baptized with the Holy Ghost (Acts 1:5, 8). Many of the people who witnessed Jesus after His resurrection did not tarry in the upper room; they faltered in their faith, being unwilling to linger. The faithful followers who excitedly awaited the outpouring of God's Spirit likely would have waited longer if the Lord had required it. In following their example, we must continue daily in prayer, gathering together with fellow believers with an unwavering expectation that God will pour out the Holy Spirit upon all who desire Him.

***DISCUSS:** If you have ever "tarried" while waiting for a promise from God, what did that waiting*

period look like and feel like?

II. THE GOSPEL AND OUR RESPONSE

Some have erroneously argued that the tongues spoken on the Day of Pentecost were just to witness to the diverse crowd gathered for Pentecost. However, this argument is not consistent with the remainder of the Book of Acts. When believers spoke with tongues in Acts 10:46 and 19:6, all who were present had been talking with each other in the same common language. Additionally, while all who were gathered on the Day of Pentecost came from around the known world and spoke many different languages, they were all Jews gathered together for a common Jewish feast. When Peter preached, he did not do so in an unknown language but presumably in Greek or Aramaic; everyone present understood his words, and they were driven to respond.

The content of Peter's sermon demanded a response. Peter demonstrated in certain, convicting terms that Jesus was the promised Messiah, but his audience crucified Him. Three days later the Spirit of God Himself raised Jesus from the grave and Jesus ascended with all power and glory. Peter demonstrated that Jesus' life and ministry and the current outpouring of the Holy Spirit marked a new closeness in God's covenant relationship with humanity, which King David and the prophet Joel foretold. These faithful Jews gathered for the Feast of Pentecost would have been familiar with Hebrew Scripture and were immediately persuaded by Peter's words. They were so convicted at the conclusion of Peter's sermon that they cried out in unity: "What shall we do?" (Acts 2:37).

***DISCUSS:** What elements in Peter's message were so convicting for the listeners that they evoked such a willing response?*

A. What Must We Do?

On the Day of Pentecost, Peter stood up and preached what we now refer to as the gospel. The gospel is the story of the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The gospel has already been completed. However, the gospel cannot exist in a vacuum, as if it were another mundane page in a history book. The gospel demands our response. We cannot encounter the message of what Jesus has done for us without choosing to embrace or reject the gospel.

The hearers of Peter's sermon felt compelled to respond, which naturally comes from hearing the gospel message. They could not hear the gospel and do nothing. Peter, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit who now dwelt within him, preached the now-famous words: "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost" (Acts 2:38). Peter not only succinctly described the gospel, but also summarized the proper response to the gospel.

B. The Generational Promise

For those of us living in the twenty-first century, we can be comforted knowing that not only was Acts 2:38 recorded in God's Word, but verse 39 was as well. Peter instructed his followers on the proper response to the gospel, and he prophesied that this promise was not for that day only, but for all believers around the world and for generations to come. The phrase "afar off" can refer both to generations in the distant future and also those who were geographically distanced from Jerusalem.

As today's believers, we can read this passage with hope and comfort. No matter how long ago the events of Acts occurred and no matter how far away we may live from Jerusalem, we still have the opportunity to respond. The promise was not just for one day or the early days of the church; the promise is for us as well.

DISCUSS: *What are some recent testimonies you have heard of Acts 2:38 experiences around the world?*

C. I will follow the plan of salvation Peter preached in Acts 2:38.

Now that we have read the events of Acts 1 and 2, we stand alongside the hearers of Peter's sermon and must also decide what our response will be to the gospel message of Jesus Christ. We also are compelled to ask, "What shall we do?" Will we reject Jesus' saving work, or will we respond by repenting, submitting to baptism, and allowing ourselves to be filled with God's Spirit?

If we choose to respond positively to the gospel, we must begin with repentance. We must abandon our sinful lifestyles and make an ongoing and concerted effort to flee from sin. While repentance can occur in a moment, repentance is also a lifestyle. We wake every day and choose to turn away from sin and toward Christ. We must also be baptized by immersion in water with the name of Jesus called over us. This is the only way believers were baptized in the Book of Acts. (See Acts 8:16; 10:48; 19:5.) We are baptized in Jesus' name because His is the only name that can save us (Acts 4:12). When we are baptized, our sins are washed away, and we become new creations in Jesus Christ (Romans 6:3–4).

Finally, we have an assurance that when we respond in faith to the gospel, God will fill us with His Holy Spirit with the sign of speaking in tongues. Some have been filled before they were baptized, such as Cornelius and his household (Acts 10:44–48), showing speaking in tongues as the normative sign of receiving the Holy Spirit seen all throughout the Book of Acts. Speaking in tongues cannot be taught, nor should it be intimidating for a new believer. The Holy Spirit is God's free gift to us and every hungry heart for God should be experiencing the outpouring of His wonderful, life-changing gift.

DISCUSS: *If you have responded to the gospel and been born again, what was that experience like for you? If not, why not respond and be born again today?*

Teacher Option: *Tell the story below or share one of your own to illustrate how God leads us to teach His Word to others who are hungry for Him. The following story may be a continuation of the Lesson Connection or a stand-alone story.*

INTERNALIZING THE MESSAGE

The Apostolic chaplain sat by the cancer patient in the little hospital room, stunned by her revelation. The chaplain had prayed for God to give him an opportunity to witness to her but did not expect for the opportunity to happen like this. God had taken control of his tongue and allowed him to speak with tongues, which served as the answer to the patient's prayer. She had prayed for someone to teach her about tongues, and God had sent the only Apostolic chaplain in the hospital—which employed almost a dozen chaplains—to her hospital room on an otherwise ordinary

Tuesday morning. Inspired, the chaplain opened his Bible and turned to the Book of Acts. The remainder of their visit was a Bible study on Acts, showing how the New Testament believers responded to the gospel message of Jesus Christ through repentance from sin, baptism in Jesus' name, and receiving the Holy Spirit with the sign of tongues.

Later, the chaplain reflected on that instance and praised God for demonstrating that He was still filling faithful believers who reached out to Him in faith. In Acts 2, the 120 did not know they would speak with tongues. Instead, they faithfully prayed and sought more of God, ready to receive the Holy Spirit in whatever manner He chose to give. Similarly, this patient knew nothing about tongues but knew she wanted more of God. In response to her faith, God filled her with His Holy Spirit with the sign of tongues. In further response to her faith, God orchestrated a miraculous encounter with an Apostolic minister who would further expound to her the beautiful blessing of God's Holy Spirit.

True stories like this one remind us that God is unchanging and the promise of Acts 2:38 is still in full effect today. We can be recipients of God's Holy Spirit and fully expect others to receive God's Holy Spirit as He continues to pour out this wonderful blessing upon humanity. Missionaries have told stories of saints in access-challenged nations receiving the Holy Spirit with the sign of tongues even though the Bible was outlawed and Christianity was illegal. Pastors have told stories of hungry souls who came to their church with no knowledge of God or the Bible, knowing only that they felt compelled to enter in and receive what God had for them.

We can now be filled with unwavering confidence, that as it was in the first century, so it can be in our church and our community. Lord, let Your Holy Spirit fall here just like on the Day of Pentecost!