

**Message of the Early Church:  
The Outpouring of the Holy Spirit  
Act 2:1-21**

Intro: If I turn two pages past my sermon from the Gospel of John last week, I will be in The Book of the Acts of the Apostles. I have not preached two messages so close together in the text since starting the Year of the Message.

Acts is the only systematic accounting of what happened to the Twelve Apostles after the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus.

Scholars have suggested that a better name for the book would be the “Acts of the Holy Spirit.” The history of the early church is launched with an accounting of the Day of Pentecost in Jerusalem when the Holy Spirit came in power and 3,000 people were saved and baptized as believers in the Lord Jesus.

These two events—the crucifixion and Spirit outpouring--are hard-wired, not only in the canon, but also in Christian history and theology. Without the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus, you would not have the coming of the Holy Spirit. Jesus told his disciples in John 14:18, “I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.” Jesus was promising his own personal presence with the disciples with the coming of the Holy Spirit.

Jesus said in John 16:7, “It is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you.”

Luke begins the Book of Acts with a promise. Just before his ascension, Jesus told the disciples, “You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth” (Acts 1:8).

\*\*\*Pastors endorsing political candidates last Sunday. I’d rather have the Holy Spirit on my side than 10,000 politicians.

There are three social confessions that we make. They are social rather than individual because all believers lay claim to them and are responsible for them.

**I. We are the Witnesses**-- *But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth” (Acts 1:8).*

A. We have the calling. *You will be my witnesses*. Jesus selected the Twelve so that he could be with them, send them out to preach, and give them power to heal. They were his designated representatives in the world.

We have received that calling as believers. Every believer is called to be a witness. I will talk about this witness in more depth on October 19 when we look at the Book of Romans.

B. We have the power. *You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you*. This is an enabling power for witnessing in our world. That power involves language, attitude, and behavior. Our entire being is enabled through the Spirit to speak to the world.

C. We have the language. The enabling of the tongue is part of the manifestation of the Holy

Spirit. The pride and self-worship of the people who built the Tower of Babel prompted God to send a confusion of languages that divided the nations. The outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost was a reversal of that fracture, a coming together by people from many languages and cultures. Sin divided the human family. The Holy Spirit reunited the human family.

**II. We have the Spirit.** *All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them (Acts 2:4).*

A. We feel the wind. *A sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting (Acts 2:2).* The word for “wind” is related to the word for “spirit” both in Hebrew and in Greek. D Jesus said, *the wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit (John 3:8).* In these verses the words translated “wind” and “Spirit” are identical.

B. We see the flame. *John the Baptist answered them all, “I baptize you with water. But one more powerful than I will come, the thongs of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire (Luke 3:16).*

Jesus is the Spirit Baptizer. We cannot baptize people with the Spirit. Only Jesus can do this. Spirit baptism is a baptism of fire. It is the power of God poured out freely upon the human spirit.

Not everyone can discern the Spirit’s flame. For some people it is invisible. They know that life is more than the sum of its parts, but they cannot discern the work of the Spirit.

These flames are evidence of God’s refining Spirit. The Spirit is HOLY. God is in the business of making us holy as he is holy. He accomplishes this through the refining work of the Spirit.

C. We declare the wonders. *We hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues! (Acts 2:11).*

1. We are not embarrassed by the cross of Christ though it is foolishness to the Greeks and a stumbling block to Jews. We declare the wonder of the cross.
2. We are given the words to speak. Jesus said, *Whenever you are arrested and brought to trial, do not worry beforehand about what to say. Just say whatever is given you at the time, for it is not you speaking, but the Holy Spirit (Mark 13:11).*
3. We speak to the WORLD. The Jews had not become the missionary people that their divine calling required of them. Instead they remained separated from Gentiles, unable and unwilling to see that the promises of God were for all people.

Perhaps some people would have followed Jesus as the Messiah of the Jews even without the gift of the Holy Spirit. But the coming of the Holy Spirit was the event which pushed the church to its comprehensive identity and mission, first in Jerusalem with Jews gathered from around the Roman Empire, then in Samaria through the preaching of Philip, and finally in the home of Cornelius when the Spirit came upon Gentile believers.

Jesus is the Savior of the world, not just of the Jews.

And his coming is the fulfillment of Old Testament prophesy just as Peter said on the Day of Pentecost, "This is what was spoken by the prophet Joel" (Acts 2:16).

God gave birth to the church through the outpouring of his Spirit.

**III. We know the Explanation.** *Amazed and perplexed, they asked one another, "What does this mean?" (Acts 2:12). Let me explain this to you; listen carefully to what I say (Acts 2:14).*

A. The world wants to know what is going on with the church. They are amazed sometimes, and sometimes they are perplexed. Often their perplexity is because we are involved outside of the Spirit's enabling power. We are doing things in the flesh, and that confuses them.

But when we hit our stride, when we are in the Spirit, we are bearing witness to our Lord and we are changing our world. And they want to know why we are doing it. Pastor Peter assumed that this would happen. *But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, 16 keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander (1 Peter 3:15-16).*

B. Our explanation is always Christ-centered. Peter quotes the Old Testament prophet Joel as a "hook" for his Jewish hearers. Then he goes right to Jesus (Acts 2:22).

C. Our explanation is always a call to REPENT AND BELIEVE. *Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38).*