

The Spirit Arrives

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[0 : 00] If anyone was, people who were here last Sunday will remember we got to church, not bad for five and a half years so far, to forget my manuscript, one Sunday.

So got to church, hey, where's my binder? I know, it's sitting by the front door. So Michelle and Connor went right back around, and so we were at this point of the service, and they still weren't here.

So I was going to stretch it out, hug more, you know, shake more hands, tell each other what you had for breakfast, stretch it out.

Welcome here for this Sunday, May 19th, 2024. It is the Victoria Day long weekend. My name is Kent Dixon, and it's my joy to be the pastor here. We're continuing in our sermon series, Acts to All the World, and through this series, we're exploring the New Testament book of?

Thank you. Everyone's been listening. Awesome. Last week, we took a close look at Acts 1, verses 12 to 26, and we saw what Jesus did as people waited for the promise of the Holy Spirit, what his disciples did, what the apostles did.

[1 : 15] After Jesus' ascension, they gathered together, they prayed together, and they did some important church business, as we recognized last week. With the death of Judas Iscariot, the apostles recognized that an important vacancy needed to be filled, and they sought God's will, ultimately seeking Matthias to replace Judas.

So, quick sidetrack. Have you ever noticed, it's not there now, have you ever noticed the different colored cloths that are draped on the cross in our sanctuary?

We drape a black cloth on the cross on Good Friday to remind us of Jesus' death and sacrifice.

Then we drape a white cloth beginning on Easter Sunday that stays there Sunday after Sunday as a reminder of Jesus' resurrection.

And it stays there until we recognize Christ's ascension. What is not on the cross this morning? So, does anyone know the event that happened 10 days after Christ's ascension?

The event is called Pentecost. I heard someone brave whisper it slightly under their breath. But what happened on that day? Well, we're going to look at it this morning.

[2 : 36] Our sermon this morning is titled, The Spirit Arrives. And our passage for this morning is Acts 2, verses 1 to 21. So, if you want to turn there, Acts 2, verses 1 to 21, and I will read it as well.

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, they 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 languages being spoken.

Utterly amazed, they asked, aren't all these who were speaking Galileans? Then how is it that each of us hears them in our native language? Parthians, Medes, Elamites, residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene.

[3 : 54] Visitors from Rome, both Jews and converts to Judaism. Cretans and Arabs. We hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own languages.

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.

Then Peter stood up with the eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd. Fellow Jews and all of you who live in Jerusalem, let me explain this to you. Listen carefully to what I say. These people are not drunk, as you suppose. It's only nine in the morning. No, this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel. In the last days, God says, I will pour out my spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy. Your young men will see visions. Your old men will dream dreams. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my spirit in those days. [4 : 5 6] And they will prophesy. I will show wonders in the heavens above and signs on the earth below. Blood and fire and billows of smoke. The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and glorious day of the Lord.

And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. Some amens. That's good. Everybody? Amen. That's an amen-worthy statement.

Will be saved. So in Acts 2, we read about some very significant events that all happened on the same day. Is that a shocking thing to you when we consider?

So keep that in mind. This all happened on one day. The outpouring of the Spirit, the first gospel sermon, and the beginning of the Lord's Church all happened on one day.

So this morning, we're going to be looking at the circumstances and the significance of the arrival of, of the outpouring of, the Holy Spirit.

[6 : 0 4] Let's begin with the circumstances. So we know the day itself was called, as we've already recognized, Pentecost. As we read in Acts 2, verse 1, when the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place.

Exodus 34, verse 22 says, Celebrate the festival of weeks with the first fruits of the wheat harvest and the festival of ingathering at the turn of the year.

Known as, I'm going to do my best, Shavuot in Hebrew. Pentecost is referred to as the feast of weeks in the Old Testament.

And it's the celebration of the wheat harvest. And due to its timing after Passover, Pentecost means 50 in Greek. As we considered when we talked about the ascension of Jesus a few weeks ago in this series, Jesus had ascended to heaven just 10 days before this day, Pentecost.

So going back, you see all of those highlights there. So if you're taking notes, this is your last dance. Two, one, gone. So going back to Acts 2, verse 1, we recognize they were all together in one place.

[7 : 1 9] So does they here refer to the group of 120 disciples we know were gathered from our sermon last week? Or was they referring specifically to the 12 apostles?

Good questions. So we can reasonably assume that they here refer specifically to the apostles. Because the most recent they, we find before this, is used in reference to the apostles casting lots to choose Matthias as the new apostle.

So if they referred to the 120 disciples who had gathered, as we considered last week, would it be very likely, now imagine your concept of a first century Jerusalem home.

This is not a palace, not a mansion. Would it be very likely that 132 people, that's 12 apostles, plus 120 disciples, if you have to take off your shoes and socks, that they were gathered in one house? Probably not likely. So that's one way of looking at it. And in Acts 2, verse 6, someone observes, aren't all these who are speaking Galileans?

[8 : 3 1] So as we've considered before in our identification of the apostles specifically, and hopefully you remember this, they were all men of Galilee, scripture says.

So if the apostles, it was the apostles specifically then who were from Galilee, and other disciples were from all over the region, right? So that narrows it down for us that the they we're referring to here is the apostles.

So now that we know the who of the event, let's consider the what. So what happened on this day? Let's look at Acts 2, verses 2 to 3.

Acts 2, 2 and 3, which says, 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.

Now, I've probably shared this before over the years, but I love storms.

[9 : 3 9] Love them. And often, the windier, the better. It must be the fact that I am English, Scottish, and Irish. I come genetically from an island, stormy island.

So give me a blustery, thundery, stormy, tempestuous day. 100%. Over a clear sky, no breeze, sunny day?

Almost every time. Almost every time. Especially when it's hotter than about 22. Again, burn easily, right? But I would be terrified if I experienced an indoor windstorm like we're hearing happened here.

I don't think it was just a gentle summer breeze, do you? People describe tornadoes, maybe you've heard this before, describe tornadoes when they experience them too close for comfort, quite likely, as sounding like a freight train.

So we read that there was an intense sound that accompanied this event. For this wind and this sound to have come from heaven suddenly and entered a home where a small group of people were gathered?

[10:54] Terrifying. Terrifying. So we also read that tongues of fire separated. So presumably there was a large ball of fire that appeared because scripture tells us these tongues of fire split.

They split off and came to rest on each of them. And we generally perceive this event if you see illustrations and different drawings and interpretations we generally perceive this as being like flames that hovered over each person's head.

Have you ever considered this? This little passage and as I said all this happens in one day this little passage just goes by so quickly. It's just we read it and it's gone.

But do we land on this at all? Do we consider it? And the description of it as I say passes by quickly. But there's a lot of power and punch packed in here.

This would have been a truly breathtaking and even terrifying event. But wait there's more.

Continuing in Acts 2 verses 4 to 11 2 4 to 11 we read all of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.

[12:11] 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 said aren't all these who are speaking Galileans? Then how is it that each of us hears them in our native language? You memorized all this so just say these with me. Parthians, Medes, Elamites, residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and 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.

These everyday men from Galilee, granted they were apostles, were filled with the Holy Spirit as Jesus had promised and they began to speak in foreign languages.

Now I know a little German, I took German in university, my French pronunciation is okay, but to suddenly be able to speak another language fluently so that a native speaker can understand you? Wow, power of God. So there's a depth and breadth of countries and cultures and languages that were suddenly being represented and spoken there and people noticed.

[13:40] These men were declaring the wonders of God in ways that a broad range of people were able to hear and understand. Everyone heard these men speaking in their own languages talk about a miracle of epic proportions.

So you watch the United Nations when they gather. Do you notice the headsets that everyone's wearing? It's because all of these delegates, most of them, need a translator to translate what the speaker is saying into their native language.

Not in this case. God was showing his power in breaking down language barriers so that all people who were there regardless of gender or race or nationality or origin or other factors could hear and learn the inclusive truth of God's plan for humanity.

The family of God, my friends, is open to all people. But how is this perceived by others who observed it? Well, people who heard the apostles speaking around them, some people were amazed, some people understood, but as we read in Acts 2, verses 12, amazed and perplexed, they asked one another, what does this mean?

They heard it, but they didn't all get it. And not everyone who witnessed the event was positive about it, as we read in Acts 2, verse 13. Some, however, made fun of them and said, they have had too much wine.

[15:14] That seems to be human nature sometimes, doesn't it? That we ridicule or mock, certainly distrust, something that we may not understand. And it's actually quite sad.

Fortunately, Peter makes a good point in Acts 2, verses 14 and 15, because he points out it's too early for them to be drunk. Now, maybe Peter's not that creative, but that's what he's getting at, right, is that this is not what's going on here, folks.

That's not the reason for what has happened. So the circumstances of the Spirit's outpouring were definitely miraculous, but what was the significance of this event?

Well, the Holy Spirit's arrival was proclaimed by John the Baptist in Matthew 3, verse 11, when he said, I baptize you with water for repentance, but after me comes one who is more powerful than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry.

He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire. Continuing in Matthew 3, verse 12, John the Baptist says, his winnowing fork is in his hand and he will clear his threshing floor, gathering his wheat into the barn and burning up the chaff with unquenchable fire.

[16:36] So commentators suggest that John's statements not only foretold the coming of the Holy Spirit in the forms of tongues of fire, but also the work of the Holy Spirit in bringing God's judgment on those who refuse to repent.

The Bible's clear that everyone will one day either be baptized by the Holy Spirit or later by the fire of his judgment. So Jesus also told his apostles that this was coming, that the Holy Spirit would come to fulfill many roles, and we've considered them, and to give them power to be his witnesses. And then Peter explained it. He reminds everyone who is listening, even people who have mocked the apostles for being drunk, that these events were foretold by the prophet Joel in Joel 2, verses 28 to 32.

Joel's prophecy there was specific, that God would pour out his Spirit on all people, that it would be a time of judgment, definitely, but also a time of salvation and blessing.

So let's look at Acts 2, verse 32 to 36. Acts 2, 32 to 36, which says, God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of it.

[18:00] Exalted to the right hand of God, he has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit, and has poured out what you now see and hear. For David did not ascend to heaven, and yet he said, the Lord said to my Lord, sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet.

Therefore, let all Israel be assured of this, God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Messiah.

Not only did Joel prophesy the coming of the Holy Spirit, but he also spoke of the coming of a descendant of David who would be the Messiah. So with these important reminders, Peter was saying that the people who had witnessed these events and saw and heard what they had seen and heard was also evidence of Jesus' resurrection and his exaltation to the right hand of the Father.

The significance of Pentecost echoes forward in time into the teaching and preaching of others as well. Let's take some Paul time together.

Let's look at Titus 3, verses 3-7. Titus 3, 3-7, where Paul says, at one time we too were foolish, disobedient, deceived, and enslaved by all kinds of passions and pleasures.

[19:31] We lived in malice and envy, being hated and hating one another. But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, he saved us.

Not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through, hear this, the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior.

Why? So that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs, having the hope of eternal life. Paul is clear that the blessings we have available to us through the Spirit are made possible by Jesus.

Remember how we've considered this poured out language before, in relation to the Spirit. Do you see it there again? Did you hear it there? An idea of thirst being quenched, abundance, relief, satisfaction, and blessing.

John 3, verse 5, in that passage, Jesus was clear of the important role of the Spirit when he said, very truly I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the Spirit.

[20:59] People are only saved through the washing of regeneration and through the renewing of the Spirit. Back to Paul. Let's hear the words of Paul as he emphasized the role and significance of the coming of the Holy Spirit over and over.

I'll give you a few little examples. 1 Corinthians 6, verse 11. I hear mad flipping so I'll wait for a second. 1 Corinthians 6, verses 6, chapter 6, verse 11.

But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

We are saved through the washing and regeneration of the Spirit. We're hearing this again. Who is at work within everyone who declares Jesus as Lord and who seeks to follow him.

1 Corinthians 12, verse 13. Just a little hop, skip, and a jump. For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body, whether Jews or Gentiles, slaves or free.

[22 : 08] And we were all given the one Spirit to drink. Friends, we're all baptized into one body, the church, both locally here and globally.

Both now, I love this about the church and what it means. not just now, not just in the future. We are connected to this original church that we're talking about.

There's a legacy of faith. That's a phrase I used when I spoke at my mother's funeral. I come from a legacy of faith. But we all come from a legacy of faith.

If we declare Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior. John 7, verses 37 to 39. On the last and greatest day of the festival, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink.

Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them. By this, he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive.

[23 : 17] Up to that time, the Spirit had not been given since Jesus had not yet been glorified. So we're reminded here that Jesus promised the Holy Spirit.

He promised the Spirit would come to be with his disciples when he left. And at Pentecost, the Spirit came. Big time.

And he has been with us ever since. Do you recognize that? That this one-day event, action-packed, one-day event, when the Holy Spirit came to be with God's people.

He never left. My friends, Jesus made a way for us. It's by the grace of Christ that we are saved and restored in a relationship with God the Father.

And as we've heard, we are now literal heirs of eternal life. So, what have we learned this morning? What's the takeaway?

[24 : 21] With the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, prophecy was fulfilled. The promises of Joel and John the Baptist and Jesus that the Spirit would come were fulfilled.

God again kept his promise to his people. It proved that Jesus rose from the dead and had been exalted to the right hand of the Father.

That was the condition of the Spirit coming. So, we have confirmation that happened. And as Joel and John both foretold, a time of judgment and salvation was at hand.

With the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, some benefits were temporary, serving to reveal and confirm God's promises made to us in Scripture.

But as we've recognized, the Spirit never left. These other benefits we have will endure. The offer of salvation and sanctification to all who obey and follow Jesus.

[25 : 30] That's the promise. But for now, remember what Peter said to the people who had witnessed the events on that day. We read it in Acts 2 verses 38 and 39.

This is a bit of a teaser for next week. Then Peter said to them, repent and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins.

And you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit for the promises to you and your children and to all who are far off as many as the Lord our God will call.

Acts 2 verse 41 says, those who accepted his message were baptized and about 3,000 were added to their number that day.

This morning as you hear this message, where are you at in your journey with Jesus? Whether you've followed him for days or years or decades, remember that he is always close to you.

[26 : 41] He chose you specifically. and he has a wonderful plan for your life. Thank him for his sacrifice and his love and care.

Surrender your will and your plans to him as you hear me say over and over. Ask him to lead and guide you and your life will never be the same.

Amen.