

Pentecost

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[0:00] I invite you to open your Bibles to Acts chapter 2. It's on page 1081 of your pew Bible. It would be good for you to have your Bible in hand because I'll be referencing other passages in the Bible.

You're welcome to open along as well as we dive in this morning. Let us pray. Amen. Oh, Holy Spirit, water the hearts of those who hear your word, that seeds sown in weakness may be raised in power.

Cause us, as we hear your word, to behold you here in the light of special faith, which you freely give to all whom you raise from death to life.

We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen. Today is the Feast of Pentecost in the church here. I know that one of the most important ones in our minds and imagination is, of course, Easter Sunday. But I would suggest that Easter, last week Ascension, Sunday, and today are equally of importance in the church here.

[1:24] And Feasts of the church here that is worth celebrating. And what I mean by celebrating is not just coming to church. Of course you come to church in those days. But celebrating. Having a feast when you get home.

Be mindful as the people of God. The great gift God has given us as his people. And Pentecost is one of those days. It's the day the Holy Spirit coming at Pentecost.

I mean, it was a big deal. To use our common sort of language. Pentecost was a big deal.

It is a big deal. And it was and is both in the manner that the Holy Spirit came and in the lasting impact it has for the church.

The question we need to ask ourselves is, what does this account of Pentecost in Acts 2 mean? What does it mean?

[2:19] The question is often being answered wrongly, you know. As when we think of the day of Pentecost. There's an association with the second impartation of the Holy Spirit.

There's a kind of teaching that says the Holy Spirit comes, you get saved, and then you receive the Holy Spirit after you've received salvation.

There's the first stage of born again and then second stage of being Spirit-filled. But the event of the Pentecost is often seen as the example. It's also seen as an example of a higher level of Christianity.

And let me say clearly now, that is both a wrong view of the Holy Spirit and a wrong reading of Acts chapter 2.

What happened at Pentecost is far more earth-shattering than that. We see this by looking at the immediate context of the events concerning Jesus.

[3:22] The immediate context that we have to have in mind is the farewell discourse. We've been going through that in the Gospel of John. From John chapter 13 to 17.

John, Jesus rather, in his farewell discourse has been promising. You know, we have ascension in view and we have Pentecost in view in those Gospel readings. Christ our Lord, before he went to the cross, has already prophesied and told us what would happen.

And then promised that he will not leave us, but that he will send a Comforter, Paraclete, to us.

In the third person of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit. And we have, in the immediate view of this event of Pentecost also, the death, the resurrection and the ascension of Jesus Christ.

That is, that had preceded it. And we see also, within the context of Pentecost, we also have to look even further back. We have to see the fulfillment of God's promises in the Old Testament.

[4:30] Coming to realization at Pentecost. And Peter has this in mind when he quotes the prophet Joel. In Joel chapter 2, verse 28 to 29.

We have it, we read it in the acclamation this morning. At the beginning of our Lord's Day service. This is Joel 2, 28 and 29. The prophet Joel says this.

It shall come to pass afterward that I will pour out my spirit on all flesh. And your sons and your daughters shall prophesy. Your old men shall dream dreams and your young men shall see visions. Even on the male and female servants in those days I will pour out my spirit. That's the Lord through the prophet Joel.

And Peter wants us to see that this prophecy is being fulfilled at Pentecost. Now, before we go further, I think there are some clarifying points to help us better understand this text.

[5 : 35] And this event of Pentecost. If you've noticed in Acts 2, what happened is given in great detail.

But those details are meant to be descriptive. Keep in mind that qualification. They're meant to be descriptive for the church.

Not prescriptive. What do I mean by that? First, let's talk about what it's not. It's not prescriptive.

The detailed event at Pentecost is not meant to be the pattern by which all Christians will get the Holy Spirit.

We believe that when we come to faith in Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit comes. We are, just like at Pentecost, we are indwelt with the Holy Spirit.

He comes and takes residence in us. That's the promise of Christ our Lord. We see that in John 17. But, it doesn't come in the way it came at Pentecost.

[6 : 45] Not everybody that gets the Holy Spirit gets the sound of a mighty rushing wind and what appears to be tongues of fire upon our heads. That's why, I mean, it's not prescriptive.

The accounts that we have in Acts 2 is not prescriptive. In fact, it's not prescriptive also in the fact that it comes after salvation, after conversion rather.

It comes at the moment you receive Jesus Christ, you get the Holy Spirit. That is the promise of our Lord Jesus Christ. But it is descriptive.

And this is what I mean by it is descriptive. And to say that it's descriptive doesn't mean that it's just a story that we should just read and just, you know, as you read any other story, historical event.

To say it's descriptive doesn't mean that it doesn't have an importance for us, or bare importance to our very life as Christians in Christ. There are many passages in the Bible that are descriptive but that have great importance for us and for our walk with the Lord.

[7 : 50] I'll give you an example of the crucifixion of our Lord. Do you think that has an importance for your life as Christians? Do you think it bears importance? But is it prescriptive?

No, it is descriptive. It describes the great event of salvation, our Lord Jesus Christ going to the cross, dying for our sins, redeeming us, saving us, rescuing us.

It has the most importance for your life as Christians. To say that something is descriptive doesn't mean it's devoid of meaning or importance. And so that's what I want us to see here in Pentecost. It is descriptive, but it has great importance for you and for me as Christians.

I want to suggest also to us that the best way to understand what is going on in this story is not to put ourselves in the shoes of the 120 disciples in the upper room.

Do you know that's, if you read earlier in Luke 24 and then in Acts 1, the people that were in that room were 120 disciples of Jesus praying. And they were the ones that tongues of fire appeared to on their heads.

[8 : 59] But as we read that, we shouldn't put ourselves in their shoes. Rather, we should put ourselves in the shoes of the crowd in Jerusalem who observed and were first confused and then perplexed by the event that is taking place.

We ought to put ourselves in their shoes. And secondly, as we look at this story, we need to be fascinated. Fascinated more with the gift giver than the gifts that are given.

Oftentimes, as Christians, because we have, our hearts are idol factories, we tend to be more fascinated with the gifts than the gift giver.

We get preoccupied with the gifts. And oftentimes, even in the church, Pentecost has often been a preoccupation with the gifts rather than the Lord, our risen and ascended King who poured out the gifts to us.

And what that looks like is that then we become, we have an inordinate fascination with the gift of tongues rather than with Jesus who gives gifts. And then we build wrong theology around it.

[10:15] So, two things. Put ourselves in the shoes of the crowd in Jerusalem. And secondly, as we look at this story, let us be fascinated with what our gift giver, our Lord and risen King is doing in this text.

And if we put ourselves in the shoes of the crowd, the question we must be asking is the same question they were asking as they witnessed the event.

Look there in Acts 2 verse 12. Luke tells us that they were amazed and perplexed. Perplexed means they were baffled.

They were flummoxed. And they were saying to one another, what does this mean? So that's the question that we must have as well.

So what does this mean? First, we must see as Peter points out to us that this isn't a drunken spectacle. As some of them thought when they first saw it, the allegation is ridiculous on its face, isn't it?

[11:25] It's easily refuted. Apostle Peter tells them, guys, it's 9 a.m. in the morning. We're not drunk.

It's 9 a.m. in the morning. That's what it means in the third hour of the day. And secondly, as we know, you might not know, but some of you might know, drunk people don't gain language skills. They certainly don't clearly proclaim the gospel in different languages. Drunkenness tends to make you lose whatever language skill you already have. So that's not what's going on here.

They're not drunk. That's, so let's lay that aside. We've seen that in the text. It's not a drunken spectacle. But there are things for us to see here. There are dramatic parallels between what's happening at Pentecost and the Old Testament Jewish observance.

that parallels. By the way, do you know that Pentecost, this Feast of Pentecost is a shared feast day? What I mean by shared feast day is that Jewish people also are celebrating a holy day on this day.

[12:39] It is, it is, the Pentecost really just means 50. 50 in Greek meaning 50 days after Passover. We see in Leviticus 23, God, through Moses, God, through Moses, told his people that they should count the days from Passover and on the 50th day they should observe this Feast of Shavuot or the Feast of Weeks it's called.

And it's called weeks because it's seven weeks after Passover. They're meant to count the days from Passover. And as they count those days leading on to Passover and the Feast of Weeks they're meant to be reminded of the great event of salvation that happened at Passover.

You all know what happened at Passover, right? In the Old Testament Christ, God, God in judgment came to Egypt but passed over his people. And we know the parallel of that great Passover event for us as Christians is Christ's death, crucifixion on the cross as the Lamb who was slain for us and for our salvation.

And so we're meant to count the days and we, like them, should count from the event of the Passover as Christians. As we count the days to Pentecost these 50 days we're meant to count it and within these 50 days what happened?

We've known that Christ rose from the dead first fruits from among the dead and not only did He rise He appeared to many within the first 40 days of these 50 days appeared to many and I think Paul tells us that He appeared to more than 500 in total at a time of His disciples.

[14:31] And then as we remember last week Ascension Sunday which is really actually 10 days before which is Thursday previous we remember that Christ what do we say rose bodily ascended as our risen and ascended King to take His rightful place at the right hand of the Father with all authority and power He is risen and He is ascended and He promised there when He did that He promised to His disciples to go where?

To go to Jerusalem to go to await this event of Pentecost. and this is what's going to so we see the parallel of the Old Testament view of the 50 days from Passover it's also we see that parallel in the New Testament.

Passover or rather Pentecost is one of the three main feast holy days of the Jewish people. And so you might be wondering why there were so many people in Jerusalem in the Acts account.

If it's 50 days after Passover many people as we see there as Brian expertly read all those difficult names for us you see those people from Mesopotamia Parthians Elamites Cappadocia Frigia all of those places all surrounding Jerusalem different nations Gentile areas distance from Jerusalem Jews and Proselytes came in Jerusalem guided in Jerusalem from all these different regions most

of them would have been here since Passover because it doesn't make sense to make a month's journey back then to come back but they're required to be Jewish men are required to make a pilgrimage to Jerusalem on these high holy days Passover being one and Pentecost Shavuot being the other so it will be necessary for them to be present in Jerusalem at the temple in the holy city so that's where there were many people already gathered

Jerusalem will have been a bustling filled city at this time many more people than is normally contained in that city will be there between Passover and Pentecost and so that's what's going on it's one of the three major feasts it's also another parallel is that Pentecost is the festival of first fruits it's a festival of the wheat harvest festival where they bring the first fruits of their harvest as offerings to the Lord thirdly and this is really important for us to see this parallel Pentecost or Shavuot is a law giving festival Jews saw it as a birthday festival what do I mean by birthday festival it's the they believed 50 days from Passover the Jews the original first Pentecost or Shavuot was at Mount Sinai and what happened in Mount Sinai

[17 : 37] God gave the law to Israel so 50 days after Passover and deliverance in Egypt so the significance of this Pentecost is it's a law giving festival God gave the law to his people so we ought to see that significance we ought to see from Exodus 19 at the depiction of God giving the law and if you see look at Exodus 19 the description there is that there's a fire that came on the mountain and smoke filled the mountain and the base of the mountain and the people were afraid and there was loud wind and rushing wind of earthquakes do you see the parallels with Pentecost it's not altogether the same but there is a parallel God comes as fire upon the mountain what happened at Pentecost there was the sound by the way we ought to be mindful of even the description here it says it's the sound of a mighty rushing wind didn't say it's a mighty rushing wind that's part of the perplexity that gripped the people they heard the sound of a mighty rushing wind you can imagine they were all rushed outside it wasn't the speaking of the different languages and tongues that brought them all out from where they were it's the sound of the mighty rushing wind that they heard it going through this house and they came out and then they saw the disciples speaking in tongues and in many tongues but it's the sound that's key to know and that's part of the perplexity they came they saw and there's nothing bowled over it's not an earthquake it's not a tornado but they heard the sound and it is appearance of fire as tongues of fire upon the head of the 120 assembled in the upper room but they were not consumed they remind you of another time when there was a fire and there was no consumption when Moses when he saw the Lord when he saw the fire burning in the bush and the bush wasn't consumed here is the presence of

God that's what we're meant to think as we read this that's what Luke wants us to see God descending divine presence in the third person of the trinity being here and he comes and the other thing I want us to see about the significance of this is that when we say that it's a law-giving thing I want us to think of Jeremiah 31 why is Pentecost a law-giving fulfillment of really a second law-giving event in the first law-giving event God made a covenant with his people he established the nation of Israel he birthed them as a nation at at Monsanai they were they were they were Israel but not really a nation yet until the law was given at Monsanai and they were birthed as a nation they were not just a collection of descendants of the patriarchs they are now God has made a covenant with them as a nation as his own people through the law-giving that he gives and the covenant he makes there remember what happens when God gave that law do you remember the event when Moses descends from

Monsanai anyone what was going on with the people of Israel when Moses descended they were worshipping other gods and what did God do in punishment of disobeying his law that he has given and written he came down in judgment upon them and three thousand three thousand souls were lost in judgment before God relented in mercy now we see here we see Monsanai that's Monsanai the old covenant the first law-giving Monsanai Jerusalem the second law-giving event and how then probably the question you're asking is how is the Holy Spirit coming a law-giving event we ought to talk to talk to prophet Jeremiah about that then if you look at Jeremiah 31 this is the Old Testament prophets have always been pointing to this great event that would happen we read it in Joel Jeremiah talks about it too in Jeremiah 31 verse 31 to 33 it talks about behold the days are coming declares the Lord when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt my covenant that they broke that's Monsana in view though I was their husband declares the Lord look at that language husband language I was the

husband because the Lord but they broke it verse 33 for this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days declares the Lord I would put my law within them and I will write it on their hearts and I will be their God and they shall be my people that's what's going on at Pentecost God faithful and true is fulfilling his promise to his people at Pentecost putting the law within us writing it on our hearts promising that he will be our God and we are his people that's why Pentecost as we rightly see it as the church is the birth of the church just like the first event in Mount Sinai was the birth of the nation of Israel as a nation Pentecost is the birth of the church as the people of God the law at Sinai what does the law at Sinai what did it do it revealed sin sin which condemns us because we could not keep it that's what Jeremiah says they broke it and they continue to break it and led to even at Mount Sinai 3,000 dying but here at

[24:20] Pentecost the second law given was the law of the spirit which reveals the savior who redeems us and what does that lead to if you jump to the end of Acts 2 after the sermon of Peter 3,000 comes to life who made alive brought from dead to life it's a great reversal and a great fulfillment and I want us to see that parallel that's the meaning of what Pentecost is God has come and instituted a new covenant with us we see the miracles and what of the wonder of the languages they spoke in tongues I hope that as you read Acts you recognize that these are not just sort of gibberish language they were speaking these were actual languages what are these people saying as they saw them they first thought they were drunk and then they listened further and were like wait this guy is telling me about he's saying the gospel he's proclaiming

Jesus crucified risen and ascended in Arabic this guy is speaking my language from Cappadocia this guy is speaking Phrygian and Libyan and Cyrene that's the miracle and this is one of the things that would have been made apparent to the people as they saw it it's probably the perplexity was that they believed Jews believed it's tradition that they believed that when God gave the law to Moses God gave it and spoke it to Moses in the 70 languages of the nations it's a tradition but it's a tradition they would have held to and so as they saw this going on seeing what looks like God appearing they would have been thinking of all of that this is a Lord giving event they would have been thinking of Mount Sinai and so that question what is the meaning of this has a lot of meaning but as we said this is clearly what happened at Pentecost is clearly a one-off what I mean by that is as you clarify it's a one-off that is descriptive the Holy

Spirit is still being poured out still today for all they hear the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit brings into salvation life in Christ those who are poured out to them but the way it happens at Pentecost is a one-off meaning in its soul so that it can evoke all of these Old Testament shadows that are now being fulfilled at Pentecost and so I want to again remind us that the thing that we need to be fascinated with as we think about it is the giver and what the giver of the gifts is doing at this event and might I ask you as we look in verse 14 to 21 as Peter stood up with the eleven and he lifted up his voice and addressed this men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem and all those who have come from all the nations gather there he says to them in verse 17 and in the last days it shall be

God declares and he quotes Joel the prophet Joel I will pour out my spirit on all flesh your sons and your daughters shall prophesy your young men shall see visions and your old men shall dream dreams even on male servants and female servants in those days I will pour out my spirit and they shall prophesy and he goes on I will show wonders in heavens and above and signs on the earth below blood and fire and vapor of smoke evoking Mount Sinai and also looking ahead to the judgment day of the Lord the sun shall be turned to darkness the moon to blood before the day of the Lord comes the great and magnificent days but even before that day great day magnificent day comes we are in the last days this is what Peter is telling us we day and along with us are in these last days these are the last days moment times when we talk about the last days we think of revelation and what is to come we live brothers and sisters in

Christ in the last days from Christ's ascension and the pouring out of the Holy Spirit upon the church till the second coming are the last days and so when you read your Bible and you read those words the last days you ought to think I am in the last days and the events and the promises of the last days are ours the warnings of the last days are also ours lastly I want to say to us as we think about this event and what it means to us that it's meant to comfort us I don't know if you came to church expecting a sermon on the Holy Spirit and you know being filled with the Holy Spirit and being able to do mighty things well if that's what you're expecting it's here in Acts 2 that's what you see here in Acts 2 believers some who are already being quaking and hiding in fear and trepidation and now

out before the nations proclaiming boldly without fear and boldness the salvation of the
[30 : 17] Lord that's what's happening that's what the Holy Spirit does so if you are in Christ the Spirit erased Christ from the dead, that dwells in the hearts of the apostles at Pentecost, dwells in you.

God has come to make his own in you. Have you wondered about the tongues of fire upon them? Where else has been tongues of fire in the Old Testament? On Manzanai? And then the pillar of fire left Manzanai and followed them. And where does it reside when they follow them? On top of the tabernacle. This is where, to signify, this is where God dwells. But what happened at Pentecost? No longer did God dwell in the temple of Jerusalem. We already know what happened at Jesus' death and resurrection. The curtain was torn into two. But now at Pentecost, God is telling us, I have come, as Jesus promised in the farewell discourse, to make my home and my temple in your hearts.

[31 : 34] You, if you are in Christ, you are the temple of the living God. Christ dwells in you. God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit have come to make their home in you.

That's the significance of that fire coming upon these 120. And that's the significance of what it means when we are in dwell with the Holy Spirit. It's a comfort for us. It's not meant to be foreboding as in Manzanai. It's meant to tell us that this is life-giving. The Spirit of Christ is a life-giving Spirit.

And if you have it, you have life. The first deposit of eternal life and eternity with God. That's how Apostle Paul puts it.

Do you want the comfort of the Spirit then? Do you want the power of the Spirit? Do you want the purifying of the Spirit? Well then, come to Jesus.

[32 : 38] Come to Jesus. Because He is the giver of the Spirit. It is only through Christ that you can have the Holy Spirit. And He gives all these things by His Spirit and more and much more.

This is what it means to be in Christ. It's to have the comfort of the Spirit. To have the power of the Spirit. To have the Holy Spirit purifying us. Convicting you of sin when you fall. Bringing you to repentance and sorrow over your sin. And turning back to Christ as your Savior and Redeemer. When you do that, that is the work of the Holy Spirit in you. Dead people are not convicted of sin. It's only those who will be made alive in Christ by the Spirit. Do you ever feel like you don't have the boldness to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ? Well, here is Acts 2 telling you. You have the Holy Spirit in you. And He will speak through you. And look at what's going on.

[33 : 47] The effects of the Holy Spirit indwelling is that then the disciples went out. How is the Holy Spirit's power displayed? It is in the proclamation of the good news of the gospel.

That is how the Spirit still works in us today. And so what should be our response? It should be the response of the crowd.

That should be our response as well. Repent, as Peter tells us in verse 37 to 41. Repent and be baptized. Repent.

If you're here today and you're not yet in Christ. Repent and be baptized. First, the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Which comes at the point of repentance and acceptance of Jesus Christ as your Lord. And be baptized. Identified in the water of baptism with God's people. If you're not yet baptized. You will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

[34 : 50] And Peter says this promise. This promise is not just for the 120 in that room. What did Peter say in his sermon? This promise is for all.

In fulfillment of the prophet Joel. This promise is for the sons and the daughters. The parents and the children and the grandchildren. The male servants. And those who are far off.

This promise is for all. Those who come to Jesus. And as those who are removed. Souls are being added.

To the people of God. I want to end. With a Pentecost blessing. And as I pray this prayer.

Will you just say amen. As the people of God. In response. May the spirit. Who overed over the waters. When the world was created.

[35 : 50] Breathe into you. The life he gives. Amen. Amen. May the spirit. Who overshadowed the virgin. When the eternal son.

Came among us. Make you joyful. In the service of the Lord. Amen. Amen. May the spirit. Who set the church on fire. On the day of Pentecost.

Bring the world alive. With the love of the risen Christ. Amen. In the name of the father. And of the son. And of the Holy Spirit.