

Power and Pentecost

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[0 : 00] Our text this morning as we hear once again from the living God in his word is Acts. Acts chapter 2 verses 1 to 21.

The risen soon to be ascended Lord Jesus Christ said it was coming. In verse 8 of chapter 1. But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you and you shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem and to the end of the earth.

You shall receive power. Power to witness. To herald. To announce that this world has a king. Even now enthroned. Even now ruling the earth. Even now the one to whom all people and rulers must give account. Acts chapter 1. The ascension.

Was the declaration that Jesus the Messiah is Lord of the world. The king now enthroned. And the king who will return to establish once and for all.

[1 : 12] His rescuing. Ransoming. Restoring sovereignty over all creation. So that in the end. John says in Revelation. The kingdom of this world.

Has become the kingdom of our Lord. And of his Messiah. And he shall reign forever and ever. Amen. We say at the ascension.

And as we wait. For that final joining together of heaven and earth. And we wait for the return of the king. And pray for his kingdom to come.

Even now. With the ascension filling the horizon in our rear view mirror. We go into the world. To witness to the truth.

That Jesus is already reigning. Is already in charge of this world. All authority says our Lord at the end of Matthew's gospel.

[2 : 07] Has been given to me in heaven and on earth. Therefore. Go. And make disciples of all nations. When Jesus returns.

He will complete the work of transformative justice. Promised by the prophets. Longed for by the disciples. And the people of God. But the good news we celebrate today. And to which we bear witness.

Is not just that it's coming. But that it's already begun. Never mind the sneers of the skeptics. The scorn of the powerful. We celebrate today.

That Jesus is the king. And especially today. Because today. Is Pentecost. And at Pentecost. We discover. That the Lord Jesus. Exalted in heaven. Pours out. The power. The power. He promised. And the power.

[3 : 05] We need. To go forth. Into the world. And announce him. As king. We're in Acts chapter 2. This morning. And here comes.

The power. You have your Bible open. To Acts 2. We begin there. In verse 1. When the day of Pentecost. Had come.

Luke says. They were all together. In one place. The day of Pentecost. Had come. For most of us. The term Pentecost. Itself. Just means the events. That happened. In Acts 2. It's easy to forget. That Luke's original readers. And those gathered. That day.

Would have had something else. Already in mind. We're in Jerusalem. And for the first century Jew. Pentecost. Was the 50th day. The 50th day.

[3 : 59] After Passover. Pente. Means five. Pente. Kanta. Means 50. In Greek. This is. Pentecost. 50 days.

After the Passover. It was in the Jewish calendar. An agricultural. Festival day. The day when farmers. Brought the first. Sheaf of wheat.

From the crop. And offered it to God. Partly a sign of gratitude. Partly with a prayer. That the rest of the crop. Would be gathered in. But for the Jew.

There was a deeper. Level of meaning. The Passover. And the Pentecost. Were not just. Agricultural. Festivals. They were also days. That echoed. With the greatest story. In the collective memory. Of the Jewish people. The story. Of the exodus. From Egypt. When God fulfilled. His promises. To Abraham. By rescuing. His people.

[4 : 55] Passover. As you know. Marked the time. When the lambs. Were sacrificed. And the Israelites. First born. Were saved. And that very night. Went off. And began the journey. That would take them. Through the Red Sea.

And into the Sinai. What you might not realize. Is that it was. Fifty days later. Fifty days. After Passover.

That they came. To Mount Sinai. And the giving. Of the law. In other words. As attested. By sources. In the second century. B.C. And later.

To the Jew. In the first century. Pentecost. Wasn't just. About first fruits. Just about the sheaf. Which says. The harvest. Has begun. It was also.

About God. Giving to his. Redeemed people. The way. Of life. By which they now. Carry out. His purposes. And so. There is a world.

[5 : 49] Of significance. Implied. When Luke says. The day of Pentecost. Had come. It would be the day. When the apostles. Filled with the spirit. Would bear powerful witness. To Jesus. And his resurrection.

And three thousand. Would be converted. Luke says. Like a sheaf of wheat. Offered as a sign. Of the great harvest. To come. It would also be a day. When 50 days.

After he died. As the Passover lamb. The ascended. Lord Jesus. In heaven. Would pour out. The Holy Spirit. Not delivering. An old covenant.

Law. Carved on stone. But granting. The new covenant. Power. To live. In keeping. With the law. Now written. On our hearts. This was the promise. Of the prophets. Who spoke.

Of the coming. Of the spirit. To transform. And indwell us. With the power. Of God. To live. As his people. The power. To live. As we were always.

[6 : 43] Meant. To live. To live. Lives. On fire. With the love. Of God. For the world. It all happened. Luke says. On the day.

Of Pentecost. And suddenly. Verse two. Suddenly. A sound. Came from heaven. Like the rush. Of a mighty wind. And it filled. All the house. Where they were sitting. And there appeared. To them tongues. As of fire. Distributed. And resting. On each one of them.

And they were all. Filled. With the Holy Spirit. The moment came. And it came. Suddenly.

Luke says. For the free spirit. Of God. Will move. As he wills. And often. Unexpectedly. Among us. And suddenly. The spirit.

[7 : 39] Was poured out. And the event. Was heard. And it was seen. The presence of God. Perceived with the senses. Heard. As the sound. Of a storm. Wind.

Surrounding them. Filling the house. Where they sat. Where they sat. Praying. Worshipping. Waiting. Enveloping them. Seen. In tongues of fire. In the sky. A spreading fire. Divided into bits of flame.

For each person. Resting on each one. Picture it. Hear it. In your mind. The mighty wind. The blazing fire. Both signs.

Of the presence of God. In the history of Israel. This was the unmistakable experience. Of God's presence. Now with them. The association. Of heavenly glory. In the presence.

Of the spirit. It is the divine presence. Come powerfully. To earth. To indwell. God's people. No doubt. That the apostles.

[8 : 34] And those with them. Felt in that moment. A blend of terror. And astonishment. And joy. We could hardly describe. As the fire. Began to burn.

In their hearts. And in their mouths. And the sound of the wind. Surrounded. And enveloped them. The signs. They knew them. The signs of God's power. With them. And in them.

This was what they were promised. Luke says explicitly. What it meant. Verse 4. And they were all. Filled with the Holy Spirit. Filled with the Holy Spirit.

It is a phrase. That is important. To Luke. In the book of Acts. It is not the only time. He uses it. A quick survey. Suggests. There is something. Luke has in mind.

In Acts 4. Verse 8. Peter is being filled. With the Spirit. Allows him. To address the crowd. And proclaim. The name of Jesus Christ. In whom alone. Salvation. Is found.

[9 : 32] In verse 31. Of that chapter. The community. Itself. Is filled. With the Spirit. And Luke says. They then. Filled with the Spirit. Continued to speak. The word of God.

With boldness. In chapter 6. Verse 3. Those who were chosen. To help the widows. Are full of the Spirit. Luke says. In chapter 9.

Verse 17. Paul is promised. The filling of the Spirit. As he is commissioned. And three verses later. Luke says. He immediately proclaimed. Jesus. In the synagogues. Saying.

He is the Son of God. In chapter 13. Verse 9. Paul is said. To have the filling. Of the Spirit. And in verse 52. Of that chapter.

The whole community. Is full of joy. And the Spirit. As Paul's message. Goes out. To the Gentiles. And meets rejection. From the Jews. My conclusion. Is this. That when Luke.

[10 : 26] Uses the phrase. To be filled. With the Spirit. It is in Acts. Fundamentally related. To the proclamation. Of the gospel. And the equipping.

For Christ's mission. In the world. In Acts. The Spirit. Fills. For service. And to speak. The message. Of God. It is. In other words.

Exactly. The power. To do. What Jesus. Told them. To do. And even here. At Pentecost. Itself. That is precisely. The point. Look again.

At verse 4. They were all filled. With the Holy Spirit. And they began. To speak. They began. To speak. In other tongues. As the Spirit.

Gave them utterance. Their being filled. Led to speech. Speech. Given by the Spirit. And spoken. Luke says. In other tongues. But he doesn't.

[11 : 23] Leave us. To wonder. What they were saying. Follow along. In verse 5. Now there were dwelling. In Jerusalem. Jews. Devout men. From every nation. Under heaven. And at this sound. The multitude.

Came together. And they were bewildered. Because each one. Heard them. Speaking. In his own language. They were bewildered.

But not because. They couldn't. Understand. These other tongues. But precisely. Because they could. Understand. Them. They didn't. Need to switch. Languages.

Or worry. About translation. By the power. Of God. Each one. Heard them. Speaking. In his own. Language. So what's the message?

It's here. That we begin. To pick up. On the fact. That this phenomenon. Strange. Though it may seem. To most of us. Highlights. Something. Highlights.

[12 : 18] Something. Very central. To the narrative. Of acts. Even at this point. Early in the book. You know it. Because you've studied. The whole book. The whole question. In acts. One. You remember. Was how God.

Would fulfill. The promise. To extend. His kingdom. His saving. Sovereign rule. Not only in Israel. But through Israel. To the whole world. To reach the rest.

Of the world. How it was. That God. Would fulfill. The promises. Of the prophets. And the promise. To Abraham. As far back. As Genesis. Chapter 12. When God said.

In you. And in your family. All the families. Of the earth. Shall be blessed. It was an ancient promise. You'll recall. That follows. Immediately. Upon a chapter. That had very much. To do. With languages. A chapter. Of confusion.

[13 : 11] Of languages. The tower. Of Babel. In Genesis. 11. When the Lord. Judged. An arrogant people. By confusing. Their languages.

So as to disrupt. The society. Hell bent. On living. Without reference. To their creator. And now. I think Luke. Means to imply. With the day. Of Pentecost.

This curse. Is overturned. With the day. Of Pentecost. God signals. That his promises. To Abraham. Are being fulfilled. And now. The whole human race.

Is to be addressed. With the good news. Of what has happened. In and through. Jesus. Luke says. What they heard. Verse 11. Puts it. In their own words.

We heard them. Telling. In our own tongues. The mighty works. Of God. Literally. The greatneses. Of God. The great. Things.

[14 : 04] God has done. The great. Things. God has done. When the context. Of Acts 2. That means. One thing. It means.

The dramatic. And extraordinary. Things. That God. Had done. In and through. The once crucified. Now resurrected. And ascended. Lord Jesus. Their Messiah.

They are witnessing. As Peter says. In Acts 10. This is the word. Which God sent. To Israel. Preaching. Good news. Of peace. By Jesus Christ. Lord. Of all. It's exactly. What they've been promised. You shall receive. Power. When the Holy Spirit. Has come upon you. And you shall be. My witnesses. Witnesses. To me. In Jerusalem. And to the ends. Of the earth. So just. Who's there. That first day. In Jerusalem. Luke says it.

[14:57] In verse 5. Men. From every. Nation. Under heaven. From Parthia. And Mesopotamia. In the north. And the east. To Rome.

In the west. To Egypt. And Arabia. In the south. Luke's point. Isn't to give. A comprehensive list. Of where every. Last person. Was from. In Jerusalem. That day. But to splash.

Across the page. At the beginning. Of the narrative. Of Acts. This first indication. Of the promises. Being fulfilled. That God's salvation. Is to go. To the end. Of the earth. To all.

The known world. And it starts. Right here. In Jerusalem. With Jews. And proselytes. From the far corners. Of the known world. Pentecost.

Is the church. Filled with the spirit. To carry out the task. Our Lord has given us. To be witnesses. To the ends of the earth. Witnesses. To the fact. That he is king. And lord of the world.

[15:49] We are commanded. To testify. As Peter says. In Acts 10. To testify. To the world. That he is the one. Ordained by God. To be judge.

Of the living. And the dead. The one. Through whom. Comes. The forgiveness. Of sins. Today. Is Pentecost.

And today. As we round out. Our study. In Acts. We celebrate. The power. Of heaven. Come. To earth. Or.

As Paul puts it. The immeasurable. Greatness. Of his power. In us. Who believe. In us. Who believe. Brothers. And sisters.

The very power. You see. Displayed. In Acts. Two. Is ours. Mine. And yours. And ours. All together.

[16:45] Because the same spirit. That filled the apostles. In the early church. In Acts. Is in us. And will fill us. Will equip us.

For the same task. Do we know. This power. Do you know. This power. I'm not asking.

If you've heard. The same wind. And you've seen. The same fire. Maybe you have. God moves. Mysteriously. God does.

As he pleases. And the spirit. Could. At this very moment. Do exactly. What he did. On that day. But alongside.

Acts. Two. You know. All of Acts. Alongside. Acts. Two. There are many. Times. Later. Just as there are. Many times. In the life. Of the church. Today. When the spirit. Also. Works. Softly.

[17:41] And secretly. Transforming. Lives. And situations. With no wind. And no fire. But all the power. And some. Suppose. That that's the norm.

And that the noise. And the force. And the fire. That's just the exception. And there are others. Who suppose. That without the noise. And the fire. And especially.

Without the speaking. In tongues. That something. Is seriously lacking. Or deficient. Well. On my read of Acts. We dare not. Draw. Either.

Conclusion. But however. It manifests itself. Whether in wind. And fire. Or in quiet. Movements.

Of transformation. The question. Stands. Do we know. This power. Have we. Asked. For this power.

[18:36] Jesus. For. For. Jesus. Says. That God. Stands. Ready. To give. The Holy Spirit. To those. Who ask him. So. Ask. For it. Ask.

To be filled. With the spirit. Spirit. And never doubt. That God. Grants. The request. But having asked.

Be prepared. Because whether there's wind. And fire. Or not. One thing. Is certain. The power. Of the spirit.

Is the power. To live. To live. As witnesses. In the world. And it means. First of all. That we speak. It means.

That we speak. The mighty works. Of God. It means. That we speak. As witnesses. To the

ascended. Lord. About truth. In our reading. From John. This morning. Jesus. Called the spirit.

[19:34] The spirit. Of truth. Who would lead us. Into all. Truth. Truth. In light. Of the ascension. Is truth. About a world. In rebellion. It's truth.

About a king. Who rules it. And loves it. And will come again. To redeem it. But just as Jesus. Ominously warns. In John. And we know well.

From the study of acts. Telling the truth. Is not safe. Again. And again. In acts. And beginning. Right here. At Pentecost. In fact.

In verse 13. Alongside. The great success. And conviction. We see. We find opposition. Incredulity. Scoffing. And sneering. At the apostles. For what they say.

And do. And there will be plenty. Today. Who declare. We waste our time. We talk. Incomprehensive. Nonsense. And it will lead.

[20 : 28] As Jesus warns. As acts. Teaches us. To confrontation. With those. Who presume. That they own. The truth. And who back up. Their claim. With force.

But if. We know the power. Of the spirit. It cannot be helped. Because truth. Is what happens. When the spirit. Comes to fill.

And empower. The followers. Of the risen. And ascended. Lord. Jesus Christ. And then we'll find. Something else. Is happening.

In acts. The work of the spirit. Produces. Not only. Truth. Tellers. Always. Truth. Tellers. But also. Truth. Livers. Truth.

Doers. Look. No further. Than the end. Of acts. Two. And you see. That as the early. Christians. Went about. Announcing. Jesus. As Lord. And the gospel. Transformed. Hearts.

[21 : 24] And lives. Around them. They saw. And invested. Themselves. In communities. Communities. That formed. That gave. Allegiance. To Jesus. And celebrated.

His lordship. In the midst. Of the Roman Empire. Communities. With problems. To be sure. Just read. Paul's letters. But communities. Which were. Not least.

Communities. Of mutual. Love. And support. In which people. Welcomed. One another. Across. Boundaries. Of race. And gender. And class. And looked out. For one another's needs.

And took special care. Of the poor. Communities. In short. That were empowered. By the spirit. And commanded. To love. One another. By this. Jesus says. Will all people.

Know. That you are my disciples. If you have love. For one another. On Pentecost. And as we round out. Our time. In Acts. Let us hear. Paul. Afresh.

[22 : 18] When he writes. And says. In Ephesians. To one of the churches. We learned of. In Acts. That this mission. Of binding. Together. In love. A surprised. New.

Family. Of God. Was. Itself. A direct. Sign. To the powers. Of the world. That God.

Was God. That Jesus Christ. Was Lord. And that the time. Had come. For the world's. Present. Rulers. To be confronted. With their rightful. Master.

Even as we are. Empowered. By the spirit. To speak. Truth. Acts. Reminds us. That the witness. Of the church. Consists also. In living. It. It consists.

In living. Within the world. According to the rule. Of the ascended. Lord. Living in faith. And hope. And love. Putting into practice. The generous. Self-giving. Love. At the core.

[23 : 11] Of Jesus's message. Demonstrating. A different way. To be human. A way of charity. And chastity. Of patience. And prudence. Of joy.

And justice. And showing. That it works. That it's life. Giving. That it's creative. And cheerful. And colorful. Because the whole life.

Of the church. You cannot read Paul's letters. And not see this. That the whole life. Of the church. The church established. In acts. Is the setting. Within which. The church speaks.

With genuine conviction. Of the rule. Of the crucified. Resurrected. And ascended. Lord. Jesus Christ. Jesus declares.

That when the spirit. Comes. He will prove. The whole world. Wrong. About sin. Righteousness. And judgment. That he will call. The world. To account. The message.

[24 : 08] Of Pentecost. Is that the spirit. Does just that. Through you. And through me. And through us. And through our speaking.

Yes. But please God. Let it be speech. That matches our common life. Our witnessing life. Our struggles. For holiness. And unity. Our peacemaking.

And health giving lives. Which demonstrate. That the gospel. Doesn't make us. Boorish. And withdrawn. And awkward. In the world. The gospel. Makes us. And acts.

Reminds us. That we are. Community builders. Joy bringers. Culture makers. Homemakers. Wisdom bringers. In the world. This is to witness. To the world.

So this Pentecost. May the spirit. Sweep. Through our lives. Sweep. Through our hearts. Sweep. Through our imaginations.

[25 : 05] As we go out. And live. And speak. And proclaim. And breathe. And pray. His kingdom. In the world. Over which. He has been. Enthroned forever.

And now lives. And reigns. With the father. And the spirit. One God. World. Without end. Amen. And orada.

Amen.