

2-A. The Day of Pentecost

Acts 2:1-41

When the day of Pentecost arrived, the disciples were all together in one place. And suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. And divided tongues like fire appeared to them and rested on each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.

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. And they were amazed and astonished, saying, "Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? How is it that each of us hears him in his own native language telling the mighty words of God? And all were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, What does this mean? But others, mocking, said, "They are filled with new wine."

Peter then stood up and addressed the crowd that had gathered there in Jerusalem, saying, "They are not drunk! It is just the third hour of the morning." He then explained that this miraculous outpouring of the Holy Spirit was the fulfilment of Joel's prophecy when he declared that at the last days God would pour out His Spirit on all people. It would be a time when "everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." Peter said to them, "God had made Jesus, whom you crucified, to be both Lord and Messiah." He also told them that God raised him up from the dead. And that they were all witnesses.

Now when the people heard this they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?" Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself."

So those who received his word were baptized, about 3,000 people that day.

INTRODUCTION: Ask a Pre-story question to the whole group or to discuss in pairs.

- Think of a time in your life that you have tried to minister or do something out of your own strength and did not rely on the Holy Spirit. Why do you think you did this? What was the result?

THE STORY: Tell the story and learn it together as a group through many repetitions.

POST-STORY DISCUSSION: Lead a discussion guided by these questions:

OUTLINE VERSION (for teacher to use when teaching)

Details: What happened? To see what truths we can learn.

- **It was the Jewish Day of Pentecost. Does anyone know what this day meant to the Jews of that day? Why would it be significant that the coming of the Holy Spirit on the church came that day?**
 - An Old Testament harvest festival and a celebration of the giving of the Law to Moses
- **Where were the believers on the Day of Pentecost after Jesus ascended to heaven? What happened?**
 - **What could these observations teach us about the Holy Spirit and how we experience His presence in our lives?**
- **Where do we observe the appearance of fire in the Old Testament? Considering these instances, why do you think God used fire to represent the Holy Spirit in this story?**
- **What did the disciples begin to do when they were filled with the Holy Spirit?**
- **No translator was needed and all languages were represented. Why is it important? How does it point back to something that went wrong in the Old Testament and show how Christ redeems?**
- **What did all the other Jews gathered in Jerusalem do when they heard this? What can we learn from their response?**
- **What did Peter do? How has he been changed? What has caused this change?**
- **What did he tell the crowd? List the things he said.**
 - **What truths do we learn from what Peter said?**
- **What was the people's response? What does this teach us about salvation? Or about evangelism?**

- **How did Peter answer them? Break down what he says and see what each part teaches us:**
- **3,000 souls received Peter's message and were baptized. What does this teach us about the work of the Spirit through the Word?**

Summary: What do we learn here from the early church? What commandments or examples to follow are found in this story. Which ones still apply to us today?

- **All believers receive the Holy Spirit.**
- At Pentecost people who had already been believers received the Spirit in a separate event from their salvation. **Does this mean that receiving (being baptized in) the Spirit is always a separate event from trusting Christ and receiving water baptism? Are there other Scriptures that can help us consider this?**
- When they received the Holy Spirit, they began speaking in other languages. **Does this mean we should expect anyone who receives the Spirit to speak in tongues? What does this teach about “tongues” as ecstatic languages?**
- **Repent and be baptized**, each one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins!
- The 3000 people believed and were immediately baptized after Peter told them, “Repent and be baptized.” **Does this mean that baptism should occur immediately upon belief? Or does it mean that a person is not truly saved until the moment he is baptized?**
- **Preach the Gospel to unbelievers**, just as Peter did.
- **Be empowered by the Spirit.** Depend on him!

General Application: (discuss with whole group)

- **How can this passage encourage us in evangelism?**

Personal Application:

- **Is there a person that God is calling you to share the truth of the Gospel with? Pray to the Holy Spirit to help you and to start working to soften their heart to receive the Gospel.**

FULL VERSION (for teacher to use for study in preparation)

Let's look at the details that we observe describing what happened in the story in order to see what truths we can learn.

- **It was the Jewish Day of Pentecost. Does anyone know what this day meant to the Jews of that day? Why would it be significant that the coming of the Holy Spirit on the church came that day?**
 - An Old Testament harvest festival and a celebration of the giving of the Law to Moses
 - Harvest Festival: Also known as the Feast of Weeks or Feast of Firstfruits, it was a harvest festival that celebrated the end of the barley harvest and the beginning of the wheat harvest.
 - Giving of the Law: It also commemorated the giving of the Ten Commandments by God to Moses on Mount Sinai, which was considered a celebration of the covenant between God and Israel.
 - It occurred 50 days after the Passover.
 - This story occurred 50 days after Jesus' resurrection
 - NT Significance: "The Spirit's coming is in continuity of God's purpose in giving of the law and yet ... the Spirit's coming signals the essential difference between the Jewish faith and commitment to Jesus...the former is Law-centered and Law-directed, the latter is Christ-centered and Spirit-directed."
- **Where were the believers on the Day of Pentecost after Jesus ascended to heaven? What happened?**
 - They were gathered together.
 - Suddenly a sound like a mighty rushing wind came down from heaven and filled the house.
 - Divided tongues like fire rested on each one of them.
 - They were filled with the Holy Spirit.
 - They begin speaking in different known languages.
 - **What could these observations teach us about the Holy Spirit and how we experience His presence in our lives?**
 - The Spirit was only present with believers in Jesus Christ.
 - They were gathered in prayer, expecting and hoping for the Spirit to come as Jesus had promised.
 - The Spirit comes from heaven, i.e. from God
 - Like wind, can't see it, is everywhere, is powerful.
 - Empowers people to speak God's truths and worship him.
- **Where do we observe the appearance of fire in the Old Testament? Considering these instances, why do you think God used fire to represent the Holy Spirit in this story?**
 - The pillar of fire that guided the Israelites and provided light for them.
 - God appeared as a flame of fire in Abraham's sacrifice. (Gen 15:17)
 - God appeared as fire in the burning bush (Exod. 3:16).
 - Fire appeared in the tabernacle shining as God's presence with his people.

- In the story of the Pentecost, the **flames represent the Presence of God** dwelling on and in each individual believer.
 - **Read these two Scriptures - Hebrews 12:29, 1 Cor. 6:19. How do they help our understanding of this truth? -**
 - God himself is described as a consuming fire. Fire purifies and cleanses sin.
 - Our bodies are “temples” or dwelling places for the Spirit, whom we've received from God.
- **What did the disciples begin to do when they were filled with the Holy Spirit?**
 - They began to speak in other tongues or languages. We observe that other people could understand them talking in their own language. This shows us that the tongues the apostles were talking about were known languages spoken by others.
- **No translator was needed and all languages were represented. Why is it important? How does it point back to something that went wrong in the Old Testament and show how Christ redeems?**
 - Gospel for all nations. The Spirit and the truth are available to all peoples and cultures.
 - Christ, through his spirit, is able to reverse the confused languages and division that occurred at the Tower of Babel. Jesus is the Curse Reverser!
- **What did all the other Jews gathered in Jerusalem do when they heard this? What can we learn from their response?**
 - They were astonished and confused to hear the Galileans speaking in their own native tongue. They did not understand what was happening.
 - Some were mocking.
 - Some hearts are softened to the Spirit's work. Others are hardened and resist.
- **What did Peter do? How has he been changed? What has caused this change?**
 - He now shows no fear of man and what they can do to him. He is bold and courageous and speaks about what he has seen and heard and observed. Peter is a different person now that he has **been filled with the Holy Spirit**. Just weeks before this he was denying Christ and now he is proclaiming Christ.
- **What did he tell the crowd? List the things he said.**
 - Not drunk but filled with the Spirit.
 - This Spirit outpouring fulfills prophecies of Joel about last days.
 - “All who call on the name of the Lord will be saved.”
 - Basics of the Gospel: Jesus, God-man, affirmed by miracles, killed by sinful men, raised from dead - as witnessed by many, is Lord and Messiah.
 - We are all to blame for Jesus' death. He died because of our sin.

- **What truths do we learn from what Peter said?**
 - God is fulfilling His purposes.
 - The Spirit is poured out on all believers.
 - Jesus accomplished this salvation through all that he did and all that happened to him - his sinless and righteous life, his crucifixion, and his resurrection. We know it is true because we saw it!
 - God's salvation is available for any who will call to Him through Jesus.

- **What was the people's response? What does this teach us about salvation? Or about evangelism?**
 - **They were “cut to the heart.” “What shall we do?” What do these words teach us about the working of God's salvation in people?**
 - It is painful because it involves an honest look at sin and guilt.
 - It begins in the heart. Begins with giving up on ourselves and crying out for help in desperation.
 - The proclamation of God's word is important to help people understand and come to know Christ.
 - The Spirit is at work in people's hearts to convict them of sin and begin drawing them to Christ even before they are saved.

- **How did Peter answer them? Break down what he says and see what each part teaches us:**
 - Repent - confess and turn away from your sinful ways of believing, speaking, and acting
 - Be baptized - be washed clean, identify yourself with (publicly), believe/trust in , pledge allegiance to
 - Every one of you - each individual must respond to God's call
 - In the name of Jesus Christ - Jesus is the right object of our faith, our only hope, the source of our salvation.
 - For the forgiveness of sins - the promise of being made right with God, of a new relationship
 - You will receive the gift - it is not something we can earn. We receive - an act of trust
 - of the Holy Spirit - God the Spirit, the Helper, advocate that Jesus talked about in John 14. For every believer, received at the point of salvation.
 - The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off (Gentiles), all whom the Lord will call to himself (See Ephesians 2:11-13)

- **3,000 souls received Peter's message and were baptized. What does this teach us about the work of the Spirit through the Word?**
 - God was using this outpouring of the Spirit to start Christ's church with power, laying a foundation through heart change and through significant numbers of people responding to the Gospel.
 - The preaching of the message of the Gospel is a vital part of people being saved. People are saved as they believe and identify themselves with Jesus.

[OPTIONAL TEACHING] What does baptism in the name of Christ (or the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) mean? Why is it important?

- It is a sign and seal of God's promise to save us and make us part of his covenant people.
- It is a sign standing for a believer:
 - being cleansed and forgiven for his sins (Acts 2:38)
 - being regenerated (made new - born again) by the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 12:13)
 - being buried and raised together with Christ (Rom 6:4; Col 2:12)
 - being indwelt by the Holy Spirit - (1 Cor 12:13)
 - being adopted into the family of God (Gal 3:26,27)
 - being sanctified by the Holy Spirit (Col 2:6,7,11,12)

Summary: What do we learn here from the early church? What commandments or examples to follow are found in this story. Which ones still apply to us today?

- **Believers receive the Holy Spirit.** Peter says of those who repent and are baptized, "You will receive the Holy Spirit."
 - This is a **promise to all who believe for all time.**
 - He continues, "The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call." Everyone who is called by the Lord and saved has the Holy Spirit.
- At Pentecost people who had already been believers received the Spirit in a separate event from their salvation. **Does this mean that receiving (being baptized in) the Spirit is always a separate event from trusting Christ and receiving water baptism? Are there other Scriptures that can help us consider this?**
 - No, Peter promises the listeners that when they repent and are baptized they will receive the spirit at that time and that's what happened. It was not a separate event.
 - Ephesians 1:13 - *In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit*
 - Note: We will say several times in Acts that people believed and were baptized but Spirit was not poured out on them at first. We will address this more in Lesson 10
- When they received the Holy Spirit, they began speaking in other languages. - **Does this mean we should expect anyone who receives the Spirit to speak in tongues? What does this teach about "tongues" as ecstatic languages?**
 - 1 Corinthians 12:4-11 teaches that gifts of the Spirit are distributed differently to each believer. This includes the gift of speaking in tongues.
 - The tongues here in Acts 2 are definitely real known human languages that people can understand, not ecstatic utterances.
- **Repent and be baptized,** each one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins!

- This command **applies to each convicted sinner for all times.**
- The 3000 people believed and were immediately baptized after Peter told them, “Repent and be baptized.” **Does this mean that baptism should occur immediately upon belief? Or does it mean that a person is not truly saved until the moment he is baptized?**
 - Peter's command is for people convicted of sin to repent and be baptized in Jesus name to receive the forgiveness of our sins and the Holy Spirit. Elsewhere in Scripture are commands to be baptised.
 - Nowhere does it command specifically when baptism must happen.
 - Anyone who repents of their sin and trusts in Jesus is saved, even if baptism comes later. We are baptized out of obedience to God's commands, not to gain our salvation!
- **Preach the Gospel to unbelievers**, just as Peter did.
 - Yes, we are always called to preach the word of God, call people to repentance and faith for the forgiveness of sins, and call people to baptism.
- **Be empowered by the Spirit.** Depend on him!
 - This will always be true.

General Application: (discuss with whole group)

- **How can this passage encourage us in evangelism?**
 - It is the Spirit who works in hearts to call people to Christ.
 - My solid identity as a child of God can give me security and confidence to stand up and testify for him
 - Our evangelism must be based on the Word of God as rooted in the whole of the Old Testament as well as the New Testament.

Personal Application:

- **Is there a person that God is calling you to share the truth of the Gospel with? Pray to the Holy Spirit to help you and to start working to soften their heart to receive the Gospel.**