

Scripture Reading:

Acts 2:1 "When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.

2 And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting.

3 Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, & one sat upon each of them.

4 And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. 5 And there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men, from every nation under heaven. 6 And when this sound occurred, the multitude came together, and were confused, because everyone heard them speak in his own language. 7 Then they were all amazed and marveled, saying to one another, "Look, are not all these who speak Galileans? 8 And how is it that we hear, each in our own language in which we were born? 9 Parthians and Medes and Elamites, those dwelling in Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, 10 Phry-gia and Pam-phy-lia, Egypt and the parts of Libya adjoining Cyrene, visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, 11 Cretans and Arabs--we hear them speaking in our own tongues the wonderful works of God." 12 So they were all amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, "Whatever could this mean?" 13 Others mocking said, "They are full of new wine." ...

41 Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them. 42 And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers. 43 Then fear came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles. 44 Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common, 45 and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need. 46 So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, 47 praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.

"The Spirit Filled Church"

Our reading this morning was the book-ends of the 2nd Chapter of the Book of Acts. It is worth noting that before and after the coming of the Promised Comforter and Peter's great sermon on the day of Pentecost, that the brethren were gathered together and of one accord.

- As we are warned in Hebrews, we are not to forsake the gathering together of the Saints!

With the importance of the coming of the Holy Spirit and the power of Peter's first sermon we will spend a number of weeks studying this important chapter which Lord-willing will take us to the Advent season for this year.

We saw last week by looking back to the Prophet Ezekiel the BIG picture of what happens with the coming of the Spirit

- Those who were dead, really dead are brought back to life...
- Remember all those dead bones in the valley?
- Remember how God made sure that the Prophet saw just how dead these bones really were!

There was a great noise, as we saw in our text this morning, and God's people are brought back to life:

- The bones came together, muscle and flesh were added and covered with skin and then the Spirit of God, referred to as the Breath, came to give them life.

The Apostle John describes this for us in Revelation 20 as he is shown the great millennial Kingdom of the Church of Christ:

Revelation 20:4 “And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. Then I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received his mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. 5 But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. 6 Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years”

- **The dry bones came to life!**
- **We see the same truth when Jesus demonstrates that He is the resurrection and the life to Mary at the grave of His friend Lazarus**

I want us to keep these pictures in the back of our minds as we study this important chapter over the next few weeks... It is the picture of what happened here to the Nation of Israel. It is a picture of what happens as the Gentiles are brought into the Church and the Kingdom of Jesus spreads to all the earth.

- **Always remember, we have as much to do with obtaining our salvation as those bones did in coming back together or Lazarus had with coming out of the tomb!**

That is the BIG picture of what happens on this important day and next week we will see Peter explain how the Prophet Joel also foretold of the events of this day...

- **How God would pour out His Spirit on all flesh and that all who call on the name of the Lord will be saved.**

Lord willing in two weeks we will consider the first great sermon given to us in the Book of Acts...

- **We will see Peter declare that Messiah has come and that the nation of Israel has been judged and found wanting.**
- **There we will see really BAD news for God’s chosen people**

Then the following week we will see great GOOD news for God’s people:

- **Peter declares that the promise of the covenant of salvation is unto them and to their children**

Finally in the rest of November, we will consider the FAR reach of the covenant, pictured for us in Ezekiel’s great vision of the Temple and then see what this chapter teaches us about the one Holy Catholic Church and the communion of the Saints, as we confess in the Apostle’s creed.

So now that we have an overview of where we are going, this morning I want us to consider what happened here at Pentecost and what being a Spirit-filled Church means today.

We saw last week that Luke tells us this is an important time: The promised Comforter is come. The coming and outpouring and filling of the Holy Spirit has been often greatly neglected or greatly abused down through Church history...

- **We will avoid both if we keep in mind the simple things we are given in Luke’s account.**

What we see revealed in the first few verses of this chapter are three physical events

- These are important events that are given for specific purposes.
- There is a great noise
- There are tongues of fire
- There are various languages spoken

First the great noise from heaven...

- We are told it is like a mighty rushing wind, which is a image often used to represent the Spirit
- But please notice that verse six says “when this sound occurred, the multitude came together”

As we have studied, Jesus gave us many good and sufficient proofs and witnesses regarding His resurrection: A resurrection we are now called to be witnesses of ourselves!

- This great truth is given to and confirmed to the Church
- As we pointed out, Jesus did not announce His resurrection to all of Jerusalem from a mountain top or even at the Temple

Now with the coming of the Spirit we see a VERY public event!

- It comes with a great noise that draws a great crowd
- It comes on the Day of Pentecost when we are told “there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men, from every nation under heaven! Nations that were listed in our text.

Jesus had gone to Jerusalem to be the sacrifice for sin at His appointed time... And now fifty days later the Holy Spirit has come at His appointed time as the promised Comforter: The baptism of fire promised by John the Baptist...

- Yes there is a good reason the Spirit appeared as tongues of fire!

But we should notice that the second event described is given to the Church as evidence that the Spirit has come and to remind them about what Jesus had taught...

- Jesus explained to His disciples at the last Supper the importance of the coming of the Spirit of God:

John 16:7 “Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you.
8 And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment:
9 of sin, because they do not believe in Me; 10 of righteousness, because I go to My Father and you see Me no more; 11 of judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged. 12 I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. 13 However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come. 14 He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you.”

As we said last week, the Spirit's mission is to glorify the Son!

- He will convict those in the world of sin when they do not believe the Son
- He will convince us of our righteousness because He will remind us that Jesus, our advocate sits at the right hand of the Father
- He will remind Saint and rebel alike that Jesus is coming as the judge of all the world because He has defeated the great enemy Satan

We can take great comfort from what Jesus taught about the Spirit:

- He will lead us into ALL truth
- He will glorify the Son, declaring to us ALL that we have in Jesus!

Having this comfort is a sure sign of a Spirit filled church!

It is not based on experiences or what is in it for us...

It is knowing that Jesus has sent the promised Comforter!

- This sign of fiery tongues was given to the church to confirm that the Spirit had come as Jesus promised and John prophesized.

We will see the same sign again when the Gospel is taken to the Samaritans

We will see the same sign again when the Gospel is taken to the Gentiles

We will see the same sign one final time when the disciples of John receive the fullness of the Gospel, reminding us that God has only one Covenant of Salvation that saved BOTH Old Testament & New Testament Saints.

So, in these early verses we have a mighty noise that is VERY public and the Spirit's appearance to the Saints as tongues of fire...

Finally we see the giving of tongues, where the Disciples speak in other languages:

- BUT we must note that this is NOT what has caused all the commotion in the 20th Century and other times in Church history.
- It is NOT the speaking in tongues discussed by Paul in his Epistle to the Corinthians or a private prayer language
- No, what we see next is another very public witness that the Comforter has come

The disciples are given the gift of languages so that they can speak in the various languages that would be understood by those many Jews who had gathered from the many nations.

We should also note that this was NOT necessary for them to communicate the wonderful works of God." ... Peter will shortly give a sermon in a common language that is understood by all present.

The Disciples could have spoken about the 'wonderful works of God' in this same common language.

- As we will see next week, the ability of the disciples to speak in many tongues, unknown to them, is given as evidence that the promised Spirit of God has come.
- The prophesy given to Joel has been fulfilled.

So we have three physical events that happen and NONE of them have anything related to what we see in the Charismatic movement today...

- **No one was slain in the Spirit**
- **No one spoke in an unknown language**
- **No one started laughing**
- **AND certainly no one started barking or rolling in the aisles**

My point is not to criticize the Charismatics, but to offer a challenge for us to rightly understand what it means to be a Spirit filled Church. The bottom-line is this:

- **It is NOT our job to prove that the Spirit has come, which has led to many of these so-called evidences or revivals**
- **It is our job to BELIEVE that the Spirit has come and that He fills each and every believer who comes to Christ for salvation**
- **It is our job to believe that the Spirit has come to glorify the Son and to convict the world of sin, righteousness and judgment**

We must understand that this coming of the Spirit changes things individually and corporately:

- **The Spirit changes how we live as Saints in Christ's Church**
- **The Spirit then uses these changed lives to fill the whole earth with the Kingdom of Jesus!**

Now here is the rub:

- **There are two things we as American Christians have struggled with for the past couple of hundred years...**

-- We have lost our faith in the big picture!

We no longer believe that the Spirit who came as the great promised comforter is going to fill the earth with the Kingdom of Jesus

-- We struggle to obey the simple commands we are given

The Spirit is not looking to put on a show, or to have us put on a show... He is looking for obedience and that obedience comes in little packages

The evidence a Spirit-filled Church is shown by the obedience that Paul calls us to in Ephesians...

- **Which incidentally comes right after his discussion of Church unity that we have considered over the past two weeks!**

Listen to what the Apostle to the Gentiles tells the Ephesians in chapter five of his epistle:

“Therefore be imitators of God as dear children. 2 And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma.”

- **Jesus HAS come to save His people from their sins, and this is going to change how we live**
- **Those who are in Christ live for Him and not for the world...**

3 “But fornication and all uncleanness or covetousness, let it not even be named among you, as is fitting for saints;”

- **Paul is not just talking about the BIG sins like adultery or murder...**

4 “neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor coarse jesting,”

- **Funny how the Internet keeps coming to mind as I read these verses... In the old days we would have thought of the backyard fences or water coolers, but the principle is the same!**
- **Remember those three fingers if you think I am preaching at you!**

Paul says to avoid, “foolish talking, and coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks.”

- **Remember, the Spirit has come to judge as well as to comfort and thus Paul continues to warn the Saints...**

5 “For this you know, that no fornicator, unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. 6 Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience.”

- **Luke has reminded us about what happened to Judas and we see scoffers saying the Disciples are drunk in the text this morning... These warning must be heeded!**

7 “Therefore do not be partakers with them. 8 For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord.”

- **Jesus has forgiven the sins of His people and now the Spirit is come to empower them to live as we are called...**

“Walk as children of light 9 (for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth), 10 finding out what is acceptable to the Lord. 11 And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them. 12 For it is shameful even to speak of those things which are done by them in secret. 13 But all things that are exposed are made manifest by the light, for whatever makes manifest is light. 14 Therefore He says: "Awake, you who sleep, Arise from the dead, And Christ will give you light."”

- **Paul calls us to new life and then warns us against wallowing in the wasteland of the world...**

15 “See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, 16 redeeming the time, because the days are evil.”

- **The 21st Century brings a whole new meaning to redeeming the time when you consider how MUCH of our time is consumed by all of our time saving gadgets**

Just as the “paperless world” we were promised with the advent of computers has brought a record use of paper in recent years, so our time is lost in SO many ways today at the hands of ‘time-saving’ gadgets...

- **Checking just a few E-mails**
- **Playing just one more video game**
- **Chatting with “friends” on the Internet rather than talking with real people in our home**
- **So much “fast food” and convenience that we don’t have time to have family meals together**

I could go on and on, but I think you get the picture AND we must not fall off the other cliff and become legalistic with such things or even give up things like the Internet that can be so valuable...

- **Instead we must follow Paul’s timeless admonition to the Saints:**

17 “Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is.”

- **And how do we come to understand what the will of the Lord is?**
- **We need to understand what happened here at Pentecost...**

18 “And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit,”

Paul makes the perfect comparison!

- **Don’t go the way of drunkenness in the world, but rather chose the intoxicating life offered by the Spirit!**

-- It is not a choice between enjoying the good life on the one hand and dull religion on the other, as our recent Family Camp and Harvest Party would certainly demonstrate

-- It is a choice between the despair of the world which they try to drown out with drugs and busyness and the abundant life offered by Jesus!

18 “And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit,”

19 speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord, 20 giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, 21 submitting to one another in the fear of God.”

- **And thus Paul introduces all of the basic commands for wives & husbands, parents & children, slaves and master that we know so well!**
- **This is the Spirit-filled Church!**

A Spirit-filled Church full of Saints who obey in the little things, and enjoy life to the fullest

And with this simple obedience, we become an important part of the Spirit’s work to glorify the Son by filling the earth with His Kingdom!

- **This is the story of the Book of Acts...**

May we learn these lessons well!

Communion Meditation: Acts 2:

“46 So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, 47 praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.”