

Plugged Into The Power Source
Sunday, May 20, 2018
North East United Methodist Church
Rev. Dr. Drew M. Christian

When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. 2 And suddenly there came from heaven a noise like a violent rushing wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. 3 And there appeared to them tongues as of fire distributing themselves, and they rested on each one of them. 4 And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit was giving them utterance.

5 Now there were Jews living in Jerusalem, devout men from every nation under heaven. 6 And when this sound occurred, the crowd came together, and were bewildered because each one of them was hearing them speak in his own language. 7 They were amazed and astonished, saying, "Why, are not all these who are speaking Galileans? 8 And how is it that we each hear them in our own language to which we were born? 9 Parthians and Medes and Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, 10 Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the districts of Libya around Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, 11 Cretans and Arabs—we hear them in our own tongues speaking of the mighty deeds of God."

-Acts 2:1-11 NASB

Acts 2: 1-4 (NLT) – “*On the day of Pentecost all the believers were meeting together in one place. Suddenly, there was a sound from heaven like the roaring of a mighty windstorm, and it filled the house where they were sitting. Then, what looked like flames or tongues of fire appeared and settled on each of them. And everyone present was filled with the Holy Spirit and began speaking in other languages, as the Holy Spirit gave them this ability.*”

Ten days earlier, Jesus had appeared to His disciples and told them to wait...to wait in Jerusalem...to wait and soon the Holy Spirit would come and fill them with power from heaven.

Acts 1:4-5 - "*Gathering them together, He commanded them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait for what the Father had promised, 'Which,' He said, 'you heard of from Me; for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.'"*

Then Jesus led the disciples to Bethany where they saw Him ascend to heaven.

Acts 1:8 - "...but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth."

And then we read, Acts 1:9 - **"And after He had said these things, He was lifted up while they were looking on, and a cloud received Him out of their sight."**



Luke reports that the disciples then returned to the city as Christ had commanded and over the next week were in the Temple continually praising God, worshipping, singing, lifting their hearts in prayer.

Then...Acts 2:1 - **"When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place."**

There were three great Jewish festivals which every male Jew living within twenty miles of Jerusalem had to participate in. These were the Passover, Pentecost, and the Feast of Tabernacles. Pentecost means "*the Fiftieth*"...Pentecost fell on the fiftieth day after the Passover...The feast was significant because it commemorated God giving the law, the Ten Commandments, to Moses on Mount Sinai. It was also a time when two loaves, the first fruits of the harvest, were offered in gratitude to God for the safe gathering of the harvest. It was a day when the law stated, Leviticus 23:21, people should be off from their everyday work so the streets of Jerusalem would be crowded.

People from throughout...from Mesopotamia, Asia, Egypt, Rome, and Judea...many would travel to Jerusalem for this celebration...this remembrance...this annual pilgrimage...

Jesus' followers have gathered in Jerusalem...they have gone there to do as Jesus asked...to wait...to *"wait for what the Father had promised"*...There are about 120 persons gathered together...both men and women...

And in that moment, the same wind that blew in the beginning...Genesis 1:1-2 - *"In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters."*...the same wind of God that blew in the beginning blows in a mighty way on the day of Pentecost...God is still creating...

Vs. 2-4 - "And suddenly there came from heaven a noise like a violent rushing wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. And there appeared to them tongues as of fire distributing themselves, and they rested on each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit was giving them utterance..."



V. 3 - "And there appeared to them tongues..."

The Holy Spirit appears in the shape of *"tongues"* challenging us to Speak Out About God. *"Tongues"* represent speech and it was after the Holy Spirit descended upon the disciples and Peter that the Word was spoken to an international audience in Jerusalem at the time of the annual festival...also reminding us that when we stand to speak God will give us the words...



Having denied he even knew Jesus just a few weeks before, Peter now stood up, in front of the very men who had condemned Jesus to death, and spoke boldly...Perhaps at that moment, Peter remembered Jesus' words, Luke 21:15 (NKJV), "*for I will give you a mouth and wisdom which all your adversaries will not be able to contradict or resist.*" Filled with the Holy Spirit, Peter spoke without fear...He spoke of Christ, spoke of judgment and salvation, sin and forgiveness, death and resurrection...He shouted that God had invaded...Jesus was the Messiah.

V. 3 - "*And there appeared to them tongues as of fire distributing themselves, and they rested on each one of them.*"



And why did the Holy Spirit appear in the form of "*tongues of fire*"...Fire has a purifying presence; it burns away the undesirable elements of our lives...There is so much within us...bad habits, unbelief, addictions, anger, bitterness, selfishness, idols...so many things that need to be "burned away" that we might be open to receive the Holy Spirit...that we might be free to serve others, to build the kingdom, to impact the world for Christ...

V. 4 - *"And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit..."*

The disciples...Jesus' followers...men and women...filled with God's Holy Spirit...begin to speak the languages of the many people visiting Jerusalem that day...telling them about the glories of God in their own languages...

V. 4 - *"And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues..."*

V. 6-8 - *"And when this sound occurred, the crowd came together, and were bewildered because each one of them was hearing them speak in his own language. They were amazed and astonished, saying, 'Why, are not all these who are speaking Galileans? And how is it that we each hear them in our own language to which we were born?'"*

Suddenly the church is born...where strangers just stood, a community is created...the Spirit of God blows and the message of Christ goes out and people are unified as one...united in love...barriers are broken...the message of God's love through Jesus Christ is translated for all...including you and I...including our children...our neighbors...for those who live near and far...including those who are very different from us...It is the Spirit of God that does this...



Over three thousand accept Christ in the streets of Jerusalem that day...

Perhaps the question that we should ask today is: If we are not seeing strangers becoming friends...if we are not seeing barriers broken...if we are not seeing God's message of love through Jesus Christ going out, changing lives...if we are not surrounded by people very different from us who have been brought into our lives through the same Spirit that blew

upon the disciples that first Pentecost...if there are people in our community who do not understand the message of salvation, the message of Christ's love...if we are not experiencing the Spirit of God in our lives...if we are not speaking boldly for Christ like Peter did in the streets of Jerusalem...perhaps the question that we should ask today is: Why?

Do we really want to experience Pentecost in our lives? Do we really want the Holy Spirit in our lives?

Perhaps we are content with the way our lives are...

Jim Cymbala, in his book, Fresh Power, writes, *"Some of us apparently are of the opinion that we are basically doing okay in our spiritual life and church life. We don't sense any urgent need for a deeper work of the Holy Spirit. The truth is, we are not really thirsty for the water of the Spirit. There is no sense of discontent, of wanting, of need."*

In other words, we are comfortable where we are...we don't understand what is possible...what we are missing...

A second reason we may not be experiencing a modern-day Pentecost, is that we are too filled with things of this world...there is no room for the Holy Spirit in our lives...

The famous evangelist D.L Moody said, *"I believe firmly that the moment our hearts are emptied of pride and selfishness and ambition and everything that is contrary to God's law, the Holy Spirit will fill every corner of our hearts. But if we are full of pride and conceit and ambition and the world, there is no room for the Spirit of God. We must be emptied before we can be filled."*

Or perhaps we have failed to realize that...you and I...we have failed to realize that we are *"leaky vessels"*...

D.L. Moody once preached in New York and said, *"God has got a good many children who have just barely got life (they have accepted Christ), but have no power for service...A great many think because they have been filled once, they are going to be full for all time after, but O, my friends, we*

are leaky vessels, and have to be kept right under the fountain all the time in order to keep full...Let us keep near Him."

Perhaps you and I are not experiencing Pentecost today because we are either content with where we are and not realizing where we could be...or we are too full of the things of this world to allow any room for the Holy Spirit...or we have failed to recognize that if we are to live, filled with God's Spirit, we must remain connected for we are indeed "*leaky vessels*"...

If you have accepted Christ, you have received the Holy Spirit; the Holy Spirit lives within you. Romans 8:11 states, **“The Spirit of God, who raised Jesus from the dead, lives in you. And just as he raised Christ from the dead, he will give life to your mortal body by this same Spirit living within you.”**

If you have accepted Christ, you have been given a new nature. There are still old habits to break and at times because of those habits and our involvement in the world, we do not hear the Holy Spirit within us...we may not hear God’s “*still small voice*” guiding us...but nonetheless it is there...

The Bible tells us that the Holy Spirit is ready to help us...

- To Be joined with Christ
- To Become more like Christ
- To Unite Christians
- To Have strength for extraordinary tasks
- To Understand the Bible
- To Help us pray
- To Help us worship
- To Produce fruit in and through our lives
- To Discern false teaching
- To Give us spiritual gifts to use to impact others
- To Guide us away from temptation and wrong places
- To Change the World

For the Holy Spirit to help us with these things in our lives, we must allow the Spirit to fill us, use us, work through us...we must be connected, staying close to God for we are indeed "*leaky vessels*"...pushing the world aside, we must tap daily into the Holy Spirit by...

1. **Developing the Gifts of the Holy Spirit.** God directs His followers in I Corinthians 12:31 to "*earnestly desire and zealously cultivate*" the gifts of the Holy Spirit. These are wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, piety, and fear of the Lord. We must work to develop these gifts.
2. **Praying Daily.** Spend time with God in quiet prayer and ask Him to send the Holy Spirit upon you. Confess, repent, cry out, desire after God.
3. **Fellowshipping with Other Believers.** The Lord says in Matthew 18:20, "*For where two or more or gathered in my name, there I am in the midst of them.*" The Holy Spirit descends upon people who have convened together to praise God's name and to study His Word. Remember UNITY.
4. **Reading the Bible.** The Bible teaches us that the Holy Spirit cloaks the one who immerses him or herself in God's Word. To tap into the Holy Spirit you have to know the heart of God.
5. **Giving, Serving, Forgiving, & Loving Others.** Many times when we are called to love others, give sacrificially, serve in a ministry, or forgive someone who has hurt us...when we take on a God-sized task or step out of our comfort zone...we have to lean on the Holy Spirit for the words, the strength, the ability to love and to forgive...When we lean on the Holy Spirit to help us we get to know the Holy Spirit personally and intimately.

I share a story in the devotions this week about an old man who lived on a farm in the mountains of eastern Kentucky with his young grandson. Each morning, Grandpa was up early sitting at the kitchen table reading from his old worn-out Bible. His grandson who wanted to be just like him tried to imitate him in any way he could.

One day the grandson asked, "*Papa, I try to read the Bible just like you but I don't understand it, and what I do understand I forget as soon as I close the book. What good does reading the Bible do?*"

The Grandfather quietly turned from putting coal in the stove and said, "*Take this coal basket down to the river and bring back a basket of water.*"

The boy did as he was told, even though all the water leaked out before he could get back to the house. The grandfather laughed and said, "*You will have to move a little faster next time,*" and sent him back to the river with the basket to try again. This time the boy ran faster, but again the basket was empty before he returned home. Out of breath, he told his grandfather that it was impossible to carry water in a basket, and he went to get a bucket instead. The old man said, "*I don't want a bucket of water; I want a basket of water. You can do this. You're just not trying hard enough,*" and he went out the door to watch the boy try again.

At this point, the boy knew it was impossible, but he wanted to show his grandfather that even if he ran as fast as he could, the water would leak out before he got far at all. The boy scooped the water and ran hard, but when he reached his grandfather the basket was again empty. Out of breath, he said, "*See PopPop...It's useless.*"

"*So you think it is useless?*" The old man said, "*Look at the basket.*" The boy looked at the basket and for the first time he realized that the basket looked different. Instead of a dirty old coal basket, it was clean.

"*Son, that's what happens when you read the Bible. You might not understand or remember everything, but when you read it, it will change you from the inside out.*"



That's what happens when you read the Bible, develop the gifts of the Holy Spirit, pray daily, fellowship with other believers, love, give, serve, forgive..."*it will change you from the inside out*"...the Holy Spirit will begin to fill you...use you...work through you...and perhaps, you...and I... will have the opportunity to get a glimpse of Pentecost today...