

The Spirit Fills and Empowers

Opener: How has the church made a difference in your life or family?

Scripture: When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. ²Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. ³They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. ⁴All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them. ⁵Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven. ⁶When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard their own language being spoken. ⁷Utterly amazed, they asked: “Aren’t all these who are speaking Galileans?” ⁸Then how is it that each of us hears them in our native language? ⁹Parthians, Medes and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, ¹⁰Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome ¹¹(both Jews and converts to Judaism); Cretans and Arabs—we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues!” ¹²Amazed and perplexed, they asked one another, “What does this mean?” ¹³Some, however, made fun of them and said, “They have had too much wine.” Acts 2:1-13

On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command: “Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. ⁵For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.” Acts 1:4-5

“If you love me, keep my commands. ¹⁶And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever— ¹⁷the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you. . . . ²⁵“All this I have spoken while still with you. But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you. John 14:15-17, 25-26

Discussion Questions

1. Acts 2 records the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost, a Jewish feast held 50 days after Passover which celebrated the 1st fruits of harvest and was the day the Law was given to Moses on Mt. Sinai. Why would God choose that day to send His Spirit in such a unique way? How did it fulfill Acts 1:5?
2. What all happened in Acts 2:1-13 and how did people react? How did they know it was from God?
3. What changed because of what happened at Pentecost? What impact did those changes have on the Jews? What impact did they have on those who believe in Jesus and on the church? How did our relationship to and with the Holy Spirit change at Pentecost? Acts 2:1-13; John 14:15-17, 25-26
4. Acts 2:4 tells us, “All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them. . . . each one heard their own language being spoken.” Different views on speaking in tongues has caused deep division among Christians, but what Luke records here is clear: the Holy Spirit enabled those new believers to speak to everyone there in their native language. Why would that be important or necessary? What do you think they talked about?
5. How was what happened in Acts 2 the opposite of what happened at the Tower of Babel in Genesis 11? What was God demonstrating through this miracle? Acts 2:5-11
6. What does it mean to be filled with the Holy Spirit? How do you know if you are? What’s the meaning of Pentecost for you? What would the church be like without the Holy Spirit?

Wrap Up: There is no way to exaggerate the importance of what happened at Pentecost. In a very real sense, it echoes the incarnation. Think about it—by coming to live within believers, God put on flesh and works through us. That’s why the church is called the Body of Christ. Before Pentecost, the Holy Spirit empowered people to serve God, but He didn’t permanently dwell within all believers. After Pentecost that’s exactly what happened. The necessary power for fulfilling God’s plan on this earth and in our lives is His Holy Spirit. That’s what Luke wanted us to know.