

Empowered to Serve

Acts 2:1-8

2 When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. 2 Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. 3 They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. 4 All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues^[a] as the Spirit enabled them. 5 Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven. 6 When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard their own language being spoken. 7 Utterly amazed, they asked: "Aren't all these who are speaking Galileans? 8 Then how is it that each of us hears them in our native language?"

A. The Coming Of The Holy Spirit

Pentecost is a significant event celebrated in Christianity, marking the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the disciples. This event is recorded in the Book of Acts 2:1-8, where the disciples were gathered together, and a sound like a violent wind filled the house. Tongues of fire appeared and rested on each of them, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, enabling them to speak in different tongues.

Pentecost, meaning "the fiftieth," falls on the fiftieth day after Passover and is also known as "The Feast of Weeks." It was a time when traveling conditions were optimal, and Jerusalem was filled with people. The festival had two main significances: historical, commemorating the giving of the law to Moses on Mount Sinai, and agricultural, celebrating the completed harvest with offerings to God. No work was done on this festive holiday, and the streets were bustling with people.

B. Importance Of Pentecost For The Church

Pentecost holds immense importance for the Church, even though many Christians might consider it less significant than Christmas, Good Friday, or Easter. Without Pentecost, the celebration of these other events would not be possible. Pentecost empowers believers with the gift of faith, enabling them to recognize the reality of Christ's birth, death, and resurrection. Jesus, after His resurrection and ascension, returned to give the greatest gift of all: His Spirit to live within us.

C. Jesus' Promise Of The Holy Spirit

Jesus promised the Holy Spirit to His disciples, as recorded in Acts 1:4-5 and 1:8. This promise was reiterated by Peter, who quoted the prophecy from Joel (Joel 2:28-32) about the outpouring of God's Spirit on all people. On the day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit came upon the disciples like a rushing wind, with tongues of fire appearing above their heads. They began to speak in other languages, which attracted a crowd of people from various nations. This event left many amazed and perplexed, as they heard their native languages being spoken by the disciples.

The Hebrew word for spirit and wind, ruach, had been a symbol of the Spirit for the Hebrew people. This wind of God was present at creation and described in Ezekiel's vision of the valley of dry bones (Ezekiel 37). Jesus used the image of the wind to describe the Spirit when explaining to Nicodemus what it means to be born again (John 3:8). The Holy Spirit brought new life, energy, creativity, and emotion to the believers, birthing the Church.

D. The Outpouring Of The Holy Spirit

Jesus stated that He needed to go for the Holy Spirit to come, as described in John 16:7-15. The disciples gathered in unity, waiting with anticipation for the Holy Spirit. This posture included being together in one place, a spirit of prayer, receptivity to God's teachings, and waiting expectantly for God to act.

The day of Pentecost, described in Acts 2:1-4, saw the filling of believers with the Holy Spirit. This event demonstrated the necessity of community, prayer, scriptural engagement, and expectancy in receiving God's power.

E. The Purpose Of Pentecost

The primary purpose of Pentecost is empowerment for witness, as stated in Acts 1:8. Peter boldly preached to the crowd, explaining the significance of the moment, and the Holy Spirit empowered him to proclaim the Gospel fearlessly. The early Church grew because it was a learning, caring, worshiping, and evangelizing community. They devoted themselves to the apostles' teachings, shared their possessions, met regularly for worship, and continuously called others to repentance and faith.

F. The Empowerment Of The Holy Spirit In The Church Today

Pentecost is foundational for Christian faith, enabling belief in Jesus' birth, death, and resurrection. The Holy Spirit empowers believers for personal Christian living and corporate ministry. The event of Pentecost also illustrates the unity and diversity of the early Church, as people from every nation heard the Gospel in their own language. This diversity is a call for modern believers to embrace unity in spreading the Gospel.

Pentecost transformed lives and communities, filling the disciples with boldness and courage to witness and proclaim the Gospel. This empowerment is an ongoing reality for Christians, who are called to live by the Spirit, guided by His wisdom, and empowered for service.

G. Conclusion

Pentecost was a pivotal moment in the early Church's history, marking the outpouring of the Holy Spirit and empowering the disciples to be bold witnesses for Christ. The celebration of Pentecost is crucial, as it enables the Church to live to God's glory and do His work until He comes again.

As we celebrate Pentecost today, we should be filled with the Holy Spirit and empowered to be witnesses for Christ in our homes, communities, and the world.