**May 23, 2021 Acts 2:1-21**

***Pentecost As a Way of Life***

**Scripture:** Acts 2:1-21 NRSV

*(1)When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. (2)And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. (3)Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. (4)All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability. (5)Now there were devout Jews from every nation under heaven living in Jerusalem. (6)And at this sound the crowd gathered and was bewildered, because each one heard them speaking in the native language of each. (7)Amazed and astonished, they asked, "Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? (8)And how is it that we hear, each of us, in our own native language? (9)Parthians, Medes, Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, (10)Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, (11)Cretans and Arabs--in our own languages we hear them speaking about God's deeds of power." (12)All were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, "What does this mean?" (13)But others sneered and said, "They are filled with new wine." (14)But Peter, standing with the eleven, raised his voice and addressed them, "Men of Judea and all who live in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and listen to what I say. (15)Indeed, these are not drunk, as you suppose, for it is only nine o'clock in the morning. (16)No, this is what was spoken through the prophet Joel: (17)'In the last days it will be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams. (18)Even upon my slaves, both men and women, in those days I will pour out my Spirit; and they shall prophesy. (19)And I will show portents in the heaven above and signs on the earth below, blood, and fire, and smoky mist. (20)The sun shall be turned to darkness and the moon to blood, before the coming of the Lord's great and glorious day. (21)Then everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.'*

**Notes:**

1. What is ***Pentecost***?
   1. The ***Birth*** of the Christian Faith.
   2. The Holy Spirit ***infilled*** His disciples.
   3. A celebration of the ***First*** ***Fruits***.
2. The ***indwelling*** of the Holy Spirit.
   1. God takes up permanent ***residence***.
   2. Holy Spirit is ***available*** to all of humanity.
   3. God’s Spirit ***dwells*** with you at all time.
3. The ***infilling*** of the Holy Spirit.
   1. A ***gift*** given to God’s children.
   2. ***Transform*** believers to the likeness of Christ.
   3. The Lord wants to fill ***all*** hearts and souls.
   4. People must be willing to ***submit*** to God.
4. This willingness needs to be the ***norm***.
   1. Holy Spirit is the ***life*** ***blood*** of the Church.
   2. The Spirit ***desires*** to fill each believer.
   3. Pentecost, is a reality to be ***known*** and lived out;
   4. A living ***encounter*** with God’s holiness,
5. Pentecost is about ***abundance***.
   1. There is always ***more*** ***than*** ***enough***!
   2. This ***over***-***abundance*** flows into all aspects of life
   3. The Spirit is the Spirit of the ***fullness*** of life.
6. The ***Comforter*** has come.
   1. ***Believe*** what the Lord says he will do.
   2. Give the Lord total ***control***.
   3. ***Wait*** on him to reveal himself and cleanse you.

**Script:**

Have you ever been a part of a church service that was particularly moving? By “moving” I mean a service where you felt the Spirit of God all around you, a service where the emotional tension in the room was flowing freely. Each person was feeling it and some would let loose; tears would fall like rain, sobs may be heard, prayers and praises would be freely expressed, and everybody in the room would know that something special is taking place. I have been in a few services like this. Moments when the pianist would never leave her seat except to go to the altar herself. Men and women alike would be swept up in the emotional release of the service. Children would quiet as they looked around trying to figure out what was going on, and those who were living with sin in their life would surrender to the will of God. Those struggling with their own desires would lay them upon the altar of God, and it was here that I laid my burdens at my Savior’s feet and received his full blessing.

If you were a part of such a service; how did you feel when everything started t flow with the Spirit? Some people get swept up in the euphoria of the action, others become scared out of their wits, because this is not what they expected, nor was it anything they felt comfortable with. Perhaps that is when it is best for us to accept the moving of the Spirit for what it is. This is when we should surrender to the will of God. This is when we can lay every sinful element of our sinful life down at Jesus feet; unfortunately, many draw back and resist the spirits attraction. They walk away hoping to never feel that way again. It’s like leaving the world’s fastest roller coaster never to ride it again.

Today we enter into a scene in scripture where such a service has just taken place. It is Pentecost Sunday and many of us know what that means. Things took place in the upper room where the disciples were waiting, and the disciples were changed forever, for the better. Stand with me today as we share in the reading of our passage for today, Acts 2:1-21.

Acts 2:1-21 NRSV (1)When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. (2)And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. (3)Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. (4)All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability. (5)Now there were devout Jews from every nation under heaven living in Jerusalem. (6)And at this sound the crowd gathered and was bewildered, because each one heard them speaking in the native language of each. (7)Amazed and astonished, they asked, "Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? (8)And how is it that we hear, each of us, in our own native language? (9)Parthians, Medes, Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, (10)Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, (11)Cretans and Arabs--in our own languages we hear them speaking about God's deeds of power." (12)All were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, "What does this mean?" (13)But others sneered and said, "They are filled with new wine." (14)But Peter, standing with the eleven, raised his voice and addressed them, "Men of Judea and all who live in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and listen to what I say. (15)Indeed, these are not drunk, as you suppose, for it is only nine o'clock in the morning. (16)No, this is what was spoken through the prophet Joel: (17)'In the last days it will be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams. (18)Even upon my slaves, both men and women, in those days I will pour out my Spirit; and they shall prophesy. (19)And I will show portents in the heaven above and signs on the earth below, blood, and fire, and smoky mist. (20)The sun shall be turned to darkness and the moon to blood, before the coming of the Lord's great and glorious day. (21)Then everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.'

Today we celebrate one of the three great Holy Days of the Christian Church. As Americans we like our holidays. Everybody celebrates Christmas, and even those who do not believe in Jesus as the son of God, know that Christmas is the day we celebrate his birth. Most people celebrate Easter, and most people know that it has something to do with Jesus; something to do with his conquering death and sin. And then there is Thanksgiving, the day we give thanks for the blessings we have, we eat too much turkey, we watch too much football, and we get together as families and friends. There are other days we consider holidays; days such as: Flag day, Memorial Day, Fourth of July, and Veterans day. Then there is also Labor Day, Valentine’s day, and St. Patrick’s Day. As we make the full circle and return to where we began, we must ask, “What is Pentecost?”

What is Pentecost? Pentecost is a significant Holy day for the Jewish faith and has likewise been significant for the Christian faith as well. The Jewish faith observes Pentecost as the 50th day after Passover. It is also the celebration of the first fruits of the growing season, but it is also a time of commemoration of the giving of the Law to Moses in Sinai.

The Christian observation of Pentecost is in many ways similar. It observes the 50th day after Passover, and this also coincides with the 50th day after the resurrection of Christ. It is considered the Birth of the Christian Faith, because it was on this day that Jesus, having received the fullness of His glory poured out His Holy Spirit upon His beloved disciples in the upper room in Jerusalem. In many ways this is the celebration of the First Fruits of a greater harvest.

We know these things because Luke wrote it down in Acts, specifically chapter 2. The Disciples are gathered in an upper room waiting; partially out of fear to travel within the city, and because Jesus promised that he would be sending another. So they were waiting as to not miss the arrival of the one Jesus is sending. The town is filled with visitors from all over the place, travelers coming to celebrate; to celebrate the Jewish Pentecost, to celebrate the Feast of First Fruits, to celebrate the giving of the law. And then it happened, the sound of the mighty rushing wind, the ground shaking under foot, the tongues of fire over each person’s head, the Spirit of God, falling fresh upon each person; the indwelling and infilling of the Holy Spirit, and the disciples speaking in different languages. For those in the room, they would never forget this moment and experience.

But I mentioned two things that may be confusing to you, especially if you did not grow up in the church. Two words that many hear, sometimes use, and often wonder about. The infilling of the Holy Spirit and the Indwelling of the Holy Spirit. The indwelling of the Holy Spirit, is the action of God taking up permanent residence within the heart of those who believe in Jesus as their Lord and Savior. In the Old Testament it would occur for a period of time, but only with those upon whom God had chosen to perform some action. After Pentecost, the Holy Spirit is available to all of humanity and will take up residence within each person who places their faith in Jesus. When you give your life to Christ, His Spirit dwells with you at all time. The infilling of the Holy Spirit is a gift given to God’s children. It is also known as the baptism of the Holy Spirit; some refer to it as entire sanctification, a second work of grace, which transforms believers into the likeness of Christ. The way one thinks and acts is transformed and for some, things that once were a struggle are no longer an obstacle of their faith.

On the day of Pentecost, one would say that Jesus faithful followers were filled with the Holy Spirit. Their lives were transformed to think and act more like Christ. They have surrendered their will for the will of Christ. They were empowered with a boldness and confidence that what they do is no longer under their own power, but their lives are now under the ownership and control of Christ, and the things that they do, is done under the power of God. These men and women who were in this room, were sanctified holy, consecrated for the work of God, set apart from the world to draw others to God. In order for this to have happened, two things needed to occur. First the Lord wanted to fill the hearts and souls of all believers with the Holy Spirit; and secondly, the people needed to be willing to submit to the will of God; willing to put God first in their life and willing to be second to God.

This willingness needs to be the norm for our Christian existence. The Holy Spirit is the life blood of the Church. If you do not experience the Holy Spirit, you do not experience life to its fullest. The Spirit has a desire to fill each believer to their maximum capability; full to capacity. When you receive God’s saving grace your life changes and a load is lifted; but when you receive the infilling of the Holy Spirit, you hand the load to the Spirit, and he takes it away. There is a deeper life for each of us who believe, if we are willing to seek the Holy Spirit and invite him to not only dwell within you, but to fill you to overflowing. Our lives will change. There are wonderful benefits to be received when we live life in full surrender to God’s will. But that life cannot begin until we invite the Holy Spirit to come live within us. It cannot happen until we surrender completely and unconditionally. It will not happen until our desires take the back seat to God’s desires. We must welcome the Holy Spirit into our inner being, now!!!

Pentecost, or the descent of the Holy Spirit into the human heart is not a doctrine to be defended, but a reality to be known and lived out; it must be experienced; it is an experience… Human belief systems and even many of the doctrines of the church can be fallible. They are subject to the shortcomings of human understanding. There are many things written in scripture that many do not understand and left to our own interpretations, many ideas can be debated according to our biases. But a living encounter with God’s holiness, being filled with God Himself, this transforms lives and changes human history. Almighty God does come to live in His people and together, with God’s people, we ARE the church.

Our faith in God must permeate our entire being. It cannot be as simple as logically exist in my thinking, or excitedly flood our emotions or even determinedly rest in our human will. God must be a welcome guest in the center of all that we are and all that we do. On the day of Pentecost, after all the wind and flames, Peter walked out of the upper room, and empowered by the Holy Spirit, he began to preach, all of them there with him did likewise; they spoke in different languages that they had never had any training in, and for all we know they may never have even heard these languages spoken.

But here is what was shared. "Repent, and be baptized, every one of you, for the forgiveness of your sins!" "This God-shared LOVE, this Holy Spirit is to every one of you who will believe!” I don't know how many different meanings or lessons we are able to find in this passage. Every time we discover one meaning, there seems to be 3 or 4 more, jumping out at us as well! But that is the beautiful thing about Pentecost: it is about ABUNDANCE. When the spirit of God is involved, there is always MORE THAN ENOUGH! Enough for males and for females, enough for young and for old, enough for slaves and for free people, enough for Jews and all the nations under the earth. And as the life of the early church demonstrated, this over-abundance flowed into all other aspects of their life, land, property, food, shelter, community. Whenever people in the New Testament times talk about experiencing God's spirit, their language demonstrates the abundance that God provides. In all ways people have "more than enough". The Spirit is the Spirit of life and the Spirit fullness of life.

Today we celebrate Pentecost, because the Comforter has come. The Holy Ghost from Heaven, The Father’s promise given, O spread the tiding s round, Wherever man is found, The comforter has come.

Are you saved of your sins today? Have you repented of your sin? Have you asked Jesus to forgive you of your sin? And do you believe that he has done so? Have you experienced the indwelling of the Holy Spirit? Have you invited Jesus to take up permanent residence in your heart? And have you given him access to every nook and cranny of your heart? Have you experienced the infilling of the Holy Spirit? Have you experienced that second work of grace in your life? Have you surrendered all that is yours to Christ? Have you given the Spirit priority over all of the other things in your life that you desire?

Many times, we desire to have the Spirit take over the struggles of this world. But we refuse to give him total control. We don’t want the Spirit to enter certain areas of our heart and life. For some unknown reason we feel that Jesus doesn’t know what we were thinking, what we were feeling, or how angry we were when certain things occur. The Holy Spirit knows it all, but He will not deal with those areas of your life until you invite Him in. Believe what the Lord says he has done, and what he will do. Claim God’s promises for your own, by faith, don’t let anybody tell you otherwise. Give the Lord total control of your heart, mind, body and soul. Talk with Him sharing your concerns and desires; dig deep within His word studying His promises; focus on what He is saying to you; and wait on him to reveal himself to you and cleanse you through and through.