

Pentecost
June 9, 2019
“It Was Worthwhile Waiting”
Acts 2:1-13 (NIV)

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 as the Spirit enabled them.

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? ⁹ Parthians, Medes and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, ¹⁰ Phrygia 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!” ¹² Amazed and perplexed, they asked one another, “What does this mean?”



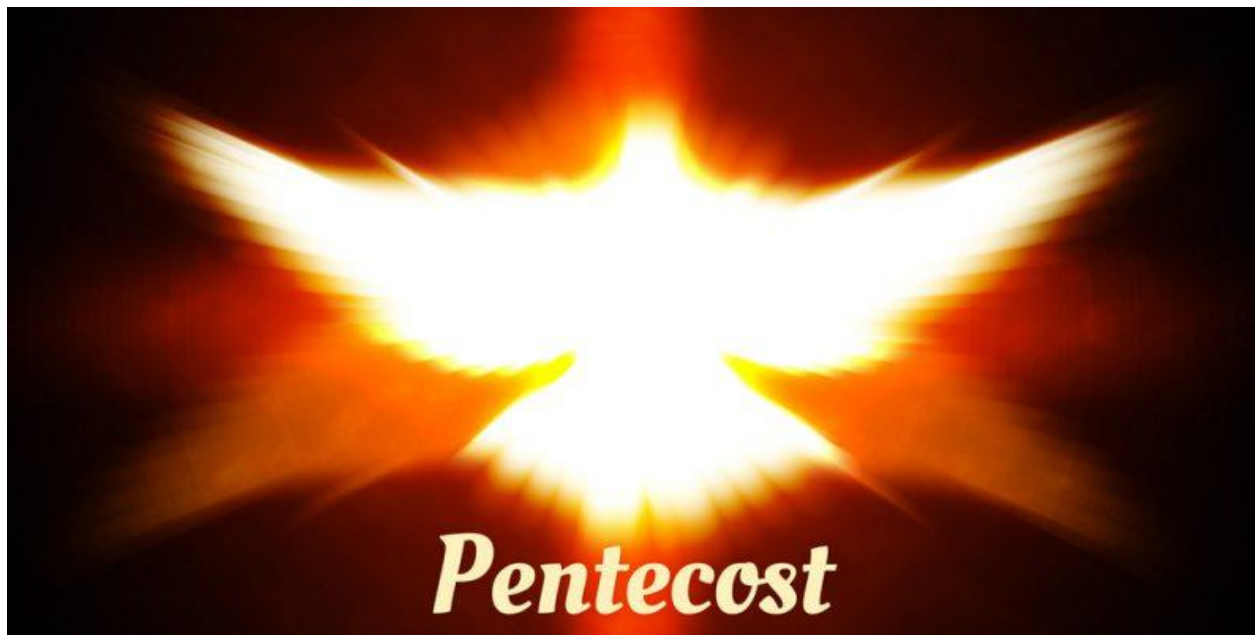
¹³ Some, however, made fun of them and said, “They have had too much wine.”

Do you know what this little thing in the human brain is? It is the pituitary gland. It’s a small pea-sized gland that plays a major role in regulating vital body functions and

general wellbeing. It is referred to as the body's 'master gland' because it controls the activity of most other hormone-secreting glands.

Even if you did not know before that it existed, aren't you glad it is there and is working for you?

The Holy Spirit is like the pituitary gland because the Holy Spirit is living in every Christian. On the other hand, the Holy Spirit only acts as the "master gland" when we say, "Yes" to the invitation. It is the Holy Spirit who regulates our spirit, which is the most vital part of a person and gives us general well-being individually and within the church which is the body of Christ.



If I ask you tell me about God, the Father, you would be able to share some things about God. Right? If I say, tell me about Jesus, I would hear even more information about the Son of God. We all struggle the most when we are asked about the Holy Spirit.

Think carefully about what happened in the life of the disciples. They witnessed Jesus' life, almost understood who Jesus is, knew he was crucified and were filled with joy at His resurrection. They had all the knowledge. They had the experience, but they were told to wait.

In Matthew 28, the resurrected Christ gave what we call the Great Commission to all of us. "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

How can you do that? It is obvious to me that there is no way a few hundred people could do that. It is simply impossible. Jesus knew it and said, "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 go, I will send him to you" (John 16:7).

I relish Christmas. It is a beautiful season. We enjoy giving gifts, decorating Christmas trees and celebrating Jesus' birthday. I am certainly excited about Easter. The impossible became possible because of Christ. We stand on the fact that Jesus is alive. I am here to proclaim you God News: that is that our Savior lives. I love Pentecost because, without it, we would be stuck in the facts and truth and would be without power.

You can have wires coming into your house and have all the appliances but if there is no power coming in it does you no good.

My words would be just words or, at best, a good speech. Because of Pentecost we all can hear, receive and share. Christmas and Easter are more about remembering and proclaiming the facts from the past. Pentecost is an ongoing event that is still in the present.

Like a trumpet announcing the entrance of a king, that Pentecost Day was the announcement that the Spirit of the ever-living, all-powerful God is present in our world. Pentecost is for unbelievers as well as believers. It was the Holy Spirit who used Peter's words to convince 3,000 people to repent of their sins and become followers of Jesus. The Holy Spirit added daily to the church those who were being saved. It is the same Spirit who is still active today working in our lives teaching us to live lives pleasing to God and making us holy.

Pentecost comes from the word meaning fifty. It comes 50 days after Passover. Pentecost for Jews was a feast day. It was the celebration of the beginning of the early weeks of harvest. *Shavuot* was a way for Jewish people to offer their best to the Lord. In Exodus, God commands His people: "The first of the first-fruits of your land you shall bring into the house of the Lord your God" (Exodus 23:19a;34:26). It was a feast, one of three, that all Jews needed to come to Jerusalem for. Our Lord, has planned at the harvest celebration to send a gift that truly will produce fruit.

On Pentecost they were all together in one place. Why it is so important? Because the gift of the Holy Spirit came to the group of believers who gathered together. Gathering together is God's intended plan. In the first chapter we read they were praying together. I love listening to good sermons and thought provoking devotions. I sit comfortably in my recliner, in my pajamas, having my cup of coffee. If I do not like it, I turn to something else. I believe it is time for everything, but God truly intends for gathering, for fellowship and growing together, dealing with each other face to face and learning how to do all in love.

Acts 2:42 tells us the first Christians did 4 things: “They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.”

All the disciples were in one place when they first heard a sound. No matter how many languages you may speak, there are some feelings and experiences that cannot adequately be described.



Luke says, “A sound like the blowing of a violent wind.” Like a violent wind. This seems scary to me. So first, God got their attention with a sound so all would hear it. The sound was so violent that it attracted crowds to come and see what is happening.

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...” That had never happened before. Again, Luke struggles to find the words. It was not fire, because they all would have run out screaming, “Fire”. No, it was like fire so they could see. They heard and they saw. It came and rested on all of them. All of them, not only the 12 apostles, because in chapter one we read that there were about 120 of them gathered in that upper room. So all who were there received the Holy Spirit: Women and men, young and old.

When we receive gifts from God, it is never just for our own purposes. Even if it does some good for you, it is given so you can share. If you have been healed, it is so you can continue or start to serve. The gift of singing is not just for you to enjoy your beautiful voice, but to bring glory to God. It is hard to use the gift of teaching without teaching others. Your gift of gardening, fixing, writing cooking or any gift is given for you to share and to bless others.

They received the gift of the Holy Spirit “and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them”. Remember, it was Pentecost, all the Jews, including those who spoke different languages were there because on that day "the first-fruits of wheat harvest" were presented to God. The noise, the sound of wind, the tongues of fire and the ability to speak in tongues was for one reason: so all the other people could hear and understand the Good News.

Just listen to me for a moment.

(I will speak in Lithuanian and will ask Emma to translate)

The reason the disciples received the gift of the Holy Spirit to speak in tongues was so people around could understand what they were saying. It was not for their own benefit.

I will not argue with people who still today receive a gift of speaking in tongues. They speak in the language that you cannot understand. I believe God still continues to give gifts of the Holy Spirit. It might include speaking in tongues, but if it is done in public I would trust God’s Spirit to enable another person to interpret.

Today, as we have gathered here in this beautifully decorated sanctuary, we are reminded that the Holy Spirit is alive and present. God is still looking for all the hearts who are willing to trust and receive the Holy Spirit who gives the power that heals, restores, reconciles, empowers and changes lives. The power that today helps the believers to share the gospel in this current age and in any present-day situation.

The believers continually gathered together and they received the power of the Holy spirit and were moved to share the gospel. From then on they were bold and courageous. Nothing or nobody was able to stop them of believing and proclaiming that Jesus is God’s Son who saves our lives. The church started when they all received the Holy Spirit and obeyed.

The Holy Spirit is a person, not an "it." The Bible teaches that the Holy Spirit is God and yet a separate person. Therefore, he is worthy of our worship and praise.

So exactly how does the Holy Spirit work? Very mysteriously and definitely not limited to any one way. Let me share some examples.

I was and I am still very thrilled with the Gleaners being here at our parking lot. Mostly I am exciting about the opportunities they bring to us. As for us, truly being a church, means we do not have to look for ministries, the ministry come to us. We just need to be the people God is calling us to be. We can serve the needy and more importantly offer them our fellowship, pray with these people, sit with them, maybe even remember a few names. We can share love and provide a meal as if for long awaited and honored guests. I think you all did an outstanding job. We served a great meal. So

many of you came to help. I am so proud. The thing is: what is next? If it is one of Jolita's great ideas, it should disappear and vanish. If it is God's plan it should continue.

I prayed: God, please let me know if I should just celebrate what we did and let it go. I prayed, Holy Spirit, if you send me one person who will be willing to lead this endeavor in the future I will know it is your will. I will not ask anybody, but, Lord, you work in someone's heart. Please speak to somebody. Sunday morning, a person came after church and told me, that she will take over the feeding people who come to Gleaners. I tell you what a joy it is to trust and work not on your own strength but lean into God's power.

Recently, I strongly experienced the Holy Spirit as I went to visit Jerry Crouse in the hospital. It was my third time to see him. The previous two times were very brief. First, I was just introduced to him. The second time was when we did the caroling at their house. When I visited him at the hospital and saw all his relatives around him, something was different. I started to pray and God's Spirit was in that room and took my heart and my voice. I was praying but I had to listen to myself and what I was saying because it was not me who was speaking. I started to cry. I cry very rarely and I barely know that man.

Both times the Holy Spirit was bringing glory to God and bringing God's kingdom closer to His people. I was amazingly blessed, but it was not for me. God uses us and we are blessed in the process, but it is for His people.

Today I encourage you to be open, to trust and to surrender to the promptings of the Holy Spirit. I do not know how or when the Holy Spirit will work in you, but I am certain the Holy Spirit will. It is God's promise and I trust in God's word. Will you trust and give all to Him?

As you come for communion and we will do it differently today. We will do it by intinction. I will ask you come to the center, take a piece of bread, dip it in the juice and come to be anointed by oil as seal of God's promise. The apostle Paul wrote: "Having believed, you were marked in Him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession—to the praise of His glory" (Ephesians 1:13b–14).

The oil will be a mark that you are sealed, you are redeemed and are given the Spirit of God. You belong to God. God will guide, heal and lead you closer to Him.