

“Why We Celebrate Pentecost” by Pastor Ed Terry Delivered 06 09 19

Joel 2: 28 – 29; John 14: 15 – 21; Acts 1: 1 – 14; **Acts 2: 1 – 21 & 36 - 42(Sermon)**

The word Pentecost is derived from the Greek word meaning “*the 50th day*”.

Pentecost always comes on the 50th day after The Feast of The Passover.

Pentecost has its roots in the Jewish Festival of Weeks which is sometimes referred to as The Feast of The Harvest or The Day of First Fruits. (Exodus 34:22, Leviticus 23: 15 – 22; Deuteronomy 16: 9 – 11)

The Festival of Weeks was one of the three Jewish Pilgrim Festivals God ordained.

The other 2 pilgrim festivals were Passover and The Feast of Tabernacles (Succoth).

On all three Pilgrim Festivals every Jewish man was required to travel to Jerusalem with sacrifices and offerings.

That explains why so many people from so many nations were in Jerusalem on that first Pentecost.

The events of that first Pentecost transformed the Jewish Festival of Weeks into the Christian Festival of Pentecost which comes 50 days after Easter.

In verse 1 of our lesson from Acts we read, “*When the day of Pentecost came ...*”

That could be translated, “*When the day of Pentecost was fulfilled.*”

We celebrate Pentecost because Pentecost was the fulfillment of the prophecies of Joel (Joel 2:28-32) and the fulfillment of Jesus’ promise to send The Holy Spirit to His disciples that we read about in our Gospel lesson from John.

In Acts 1:4 Jesus commanded His disciples “*do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with The Holy Spirit*”.

In Acts 1: 13 and 14 we read “*they came together as a body of believers*” and “*they all joined together constant in prayer*”.

Then in Acts 2: 1 the disciples “*were all together in one place.*”

The disciples were obedient, they were waiting, they were expecting, and the disciples were praying for the gift of The Holy Spirit.

In verse 2 we read “*Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting*”

Notice it was not a wind, but it sounded like a violent wind.

It must have been very loud like a tornado because verse 6 tells us that a large ***“crowd of God fearing Jews from every nation who were staying in Jerusalem came running to see what was happening.”***

If the sound had only been heard by the 120 disciples (1:15) gathered in the room, Peter would not have had a large crowd to preach to, there would not have been 3000 converts to Christianity, and the Gospel of Jesus Christ would not have been spread throughout the world.

When the Holy Spirit baptized these disciples who were gathered together on that first Pentecost The Holy Spirit was not visible, however, the presence of The Holy Spirit was made known to these people’s hearing and seeing.

In verse 3 we read ***“they saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and come to rest on each of them. Again notice it was not fire, but it looked like fire.”***

Notice what looked like tongues of fire separated and came to rest on each_of them.

God provided audible and visual evidence that the 120 disciples were baptized with The Holy Spirit

Then in Acts 2;1 we are told all of the disciples were together they were all filled with the Holy Spirit.

To be filled with The Holy Spirit means to be controlled by The Holy Spirit.

Ephesians 5:18 tells believers not to get drunk on wine but to be filled with The Holy Spirit.

This is an interesting comparison.

When a person is under the influence of alcohol the alcohol controls what they say and do.

They are uninhibited, they are bold, they say things, and they do things that they would not normally do.

When a person is filled with The Holy Spirit they boldly tell their friends about Jesus and they openly share the things Jesus is doing in their life.

When an ordinary person is filled with The Holy Spirit God gives that person extraordinary power and the ability to accomplish whatever task He has given them to do.

When a person is filled with The Holy Spirit everything they do and say reflects the love, the joy, the peace, and the hope of Jesus Christ.

The purpose of being filled with The Holy Spirit is to enable ordinary people to do extraordinary things for The Lord.

People are not filled with The Holy Spirit for personal gratification. People are filled with The Holy Spirit for service to The Lord.

When we allow The Holy Spirit to use us God gives us the ability and the power to do everything that Jesus Calls us to do.

In the last part of verse 4; ***“And they began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.”***

The disciples were speaking a known language they did not know, however they were speaking different languages known by the God fearing Jews who came to see what was happening. (Verse 5)

In verses 8-10 we read the crowd of God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven who had gathered there asked ***“How is it that each of us hears in his own native language?”***

This crowd wanted to know *“how could an uneducated bunch of Galileans speak a foreign language”*.

The answer to their question is in verse 4. ***“as the Spirit enabled them.”***

These disciples were enabled and empowered to proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ in different languages they did not know but they were speaking languages that the people in the crowd knew and understood.

These 120 disciples were proclaiming that Jesus was the Messiah.

They boldly proclaimed the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus for the forgiveness of sins.

The power to proclaim the good news of Jesus in a known language they had not learned was evidence of being filled with The Holy Spirit.

Remember after Jesus was crucified the disciples were afraid and the disciples hid behind locked doors.

And now these same disciples were loudly proclaiming the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus to the whole town.

They were proclaiming Jesus to the same Jewish people who had Jesus crucified.

On that first Pentecost two separate but very important events happened in the lives of these disciples.

They were baptized with The Holy Spirit and they were filled with The Holy Spirit.

Being baptized by The Holy spirit is **not** the same as being filled with the Holy Spirit.

I want to make sure that you understand the difference because today there is a lot of confusion and there are a lot of heated debates over the work of God The Holy Spirit.

Being baptized by The Holy spirit is not the same as being filled with the Holy Spirit.

Believers are never commanded to be baptized by The Holy Spirit but all believers are commanded to be filled with The Holy Spirit in Ephesians 5:18.

Jesus promised the disciples that they would be baptized by The Holy Spirit.

“do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with The Holy Spirit’. (Acts 1:4)

Baptism by the Holy Spirit is a gift from God that is automatically given to every person when they receive Jesus Christ as their savior.

1st Corinthians 12:13 states; ***“For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body; whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free ...”***

The word baptism means identification with.

When we are baptized we placed into the body of Christ.

- You are only baptized with The Holy Spirit once whereas we are commanded to be filled with The Holy Spirit every day.
- Every believer has been baptized by The Holy Spirit but only believers who are walking closely with The Lord can be filled with The Holy Spirit.
- Baptism of The Holy Spirit is a positional truth (in Christ) where as being filled with The Holy Spirit is a present reality (a state of mind).
- Baptism of The Holy Spirit is the work of God whereas being filled with The Holy Spirit is a choice believers must make each and every day.
- Baptism of The Holy Spirit is automatic where as being filled with The Holy Spirit is dependent on a believer confessing their sins, repenting, and wanting to be used by The Lord.
- Baptism of The Holy Spirit is unique to the church whereas The Old Testament is filled with examples of people being filled with The Holy Spirit for specific works of service.

- Baptism of The Holy Spirit is permanent whereas being filled with The Holy Spirit is temporary.

Verse 13 reminds us that there will always be mockers and people who do not accept the message of Jesus.

Then Peter stood up and preached an inspired powerful sermon (verses 14 – 41).

Peter's sermon was powerful because Peter was filled with The Holy Spirit.

Look at verse 37 again with me. ***“Now when they heard this they were cut to the heart and said, ‘Brothers, what shall we do?’”***

Peter told them and they repented.

Then in verse 41 we see that about 3,000 people accepted the Good News of Jesus Christ, 3,000 people were saved, and 3,000 people were added to the number of the disciples.

Pentecost was the beginning of the Church.

One minute before Pentecost there was no church. One minute after Pentecost there was a Church.

On Pentecost Sunday we celebrate the birth of the Church.

We celebrate Pentecost to remind us that one of the ministries of the Holy Spirit is calling people out of the world into the Body of Christ which is the Church.

Today if you have never publicly professed your faith in Jesus Christ by asking Jesus to save you the penalty of your sins and to save you from spending eternity in hell Jesus is calling you.

If you are not 100% absolutely positive that you will go to heaven when you die I beg you to talk to me after the benediction today.

Today if you hear God's voice do not harden your heart.

Friend tomorrow may be too late because The Lord may call you home today.

On Pentecost we also celebrate the fulfillment of Jesus' promise to send The Indwelling Holy Spirit to all of His disciples.

When we claim Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior we are born again (John 3:5).

We are baptized by the Holy Spirit into the Body of Believers (1st Corinthians 12:13), we receive the indwelling Holy Spirit (Romans 8:9; John 14:17), and the Holy Spirit seals us until the day of redemption (Ephesians 1:13-14; Ephesians 4:30).

If you are a Christian you have been baptized with The Holy Spirit, you have been sealed by The Holy Spirit, and you have been given The indwelling Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit is given to every believer so that we will have the power to proclaim the Good News of Jesus as well as to have the power to live the victorious life that God planned for us and that Jesus promised to all of His disciples. (John 10:10)

However, to be filled with The Holy Spirit you must repent of your sins and you must ask the Holy Spirit to use you each and every day.

When a person is filled with the Holy Spirit they totally yield themselves to the service of our Savior.

Believers are filled with the Holy Spirit for service to The Lord.

Remember in Ephesians 5:18 we are commanded to be filled with the Holy Spirit.

And in Ephesians 4:30 we are told not to grieve the Holy Spirit.

We are not to suppress or resist the Holy Spirit's desire to use us for the glory of God and to bring The Kingdom of God on earth

We celebrate Pentecost to remind us that Pentecost was the beginning and origin of the Church.

Pentecost reminds us of one of the ministry of the Holy Spirit calling people out of the world into the Body of Christ which is the Church.

Three very important events occurred on that first Pentecost.

120 believers were baptized by The Holy Spirit, 120 believers were filled with The Holy Spirit, and 3000 people accepted Jesus Christ as their savior and were saved from spending eternity in hell.

The day of Pentecost was a historical event and the day of Pentecost cannot be duplicated any more than we can duplicate the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem.

However, we can model the attitude, the commitment, and the behavior of the 120 disciples on that first Pentecost.

And we can trust God to duplicate the results of people hearing the gospel of Jesus Christ and being saved.

We celebrate Pentecost because God's word challenges each of us to respond to The Holy Spirit the same way as the disciples did on the first Pentecost.

Acts 2:42 tells us; ***“They devoted themselves to the Apostles’ teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread, and to prayer.”***

Friends that is the challenge for each one of us today. We all need to ask ourselves:

- Am I devoted to the Apostles’ teaching by reading and studying my Bible every day?
- Am I devoted to the Apostles’ teaching by attending one of the Bible Studies Mt Paran offers?
- Am I devoted to the fellowship of believers by attending worship every Sunday
- Am I devoted to the fellowship of believers by sharing with those believers in need?
- Am I devoted to private prayer each day and to the prayer ministries of our church?
- Am I devoted to communing with the Lord Jesus Christ by walking with The Lord each day and in celebrating the Sacrament of Communion?

When the disciples made themselves available to the Holy Spirit they were filled with joy, excitement, power, and energy.

Their lives took on new meaning and purpose because they were a real part of building the Kingdom of God in their neighborhood.

Can you imagine all of the miracles God would perform in our neighborhood if we all were totally devoted to The Lord and we were all filled with The Holy Spirit each and every day?

God’s word to us today is challenging each of us to pray the prayer contained in the first verse *“Spirit Of The Living God”*.

We will remain seated and sing the first verse of Hymn # 389 *“Spirit Of The Living God”* as a prayer.

AMEN