

Grace and peace to you from our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ  
**Amen.**

Our sermon text for today is written in the Book of Acts 2:1-21

Let us pray ...

Lord Heavenly Father, as we hear Your word today, help us to remember the significance of the day of Pentecost, of Your gift to us of Your Spirit, who guides our hearts and minds so that we can come to know and trust Your Son, Jesus Christ.

May the words of my mouth and the meditation of our hearts be acceptable in Your sight; we pray through Your son, Jesus Christ.

### **Title – The Holy Spirit At Work In Our Lives**

Today is the day that the church celebrates the coming of the Holy Spirit. It is the day of Pentecost. But the day of Pentecost has been on the church's calendar a lot longer than Christmas or Easter has. Pentecost was established as a 'holy day' for God's people, way back when the church met in the desert. There, God told Moses to set aside the 50th day after the wheat harvest began to give thanks to God for the crop. On the 50th day after the first fruits were cut, Israel was to bring baskets of the grain that they had harvested to the temple as a thank offering to God for the harvest.

If you think about that for a minute, you'll realize that there's something really weird about this. Israel is in the desert. Crops don't grow in the desert. What kind of harvest are we talking about here anyway?

Like all of the Old Testament holy days, Pentecost was a sign that pointed to something far greater than the celebration of a good crop of wheat. In fact, it pointed forward to the day when the new Israel would celebrate the harvest of a good crop of souls.

Today as we heard the account of the day of Pentecost, hopefully you recognized that this is a record of how God began to establish His church here with us. Throughout all the centuries since that day, the church has changed in many different ways. We have different services than those early believers. We speak different languages. We use different instruments, different technology, and different songs. But some things will always remain the same; we still look to Christ as our only hope of salvation, we still gather together to give glory to God, to learn about His love for us and to be renewed through His sacraments. To hear his word read and proclaimed so that His Spirit can do His work on us.

As we heard in the reading, the day of Pentecost began with the apostles and Jesus disciples gathered together in one place, in prayer and devotion. And as we reflect on the text, it would appear that the emphasis of this account of the day of Pentecost day is on its timing, rather than the exact whereabouts of the disciples.

As the Spirit of God came upon them, it was accompanied by three supernatural signs; the sound of the wind, the appearance of flames and speech in a different language.

As the disciples were sitting they heard *a sound like the blowing of a violent wind from heaven*; Jesus himself compared the coming of the Spirit to the blowing of the wind in the gospel according to John (3:8) and towards the end of the gospel account we hear that *Jesus came and stood among them and said 'Peace be with you.'* *And when He had said this, he breathed on them, and said to them, 'Receive the Holy Spirit.'* (John 20:21-22). Therefore the blowing wind surely must be related to the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:4).

And those present *saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them.* The events described here are a sign of divine presence and power, which is akin to the burning bush in the book of Exodus (3:2-5). Both wind and fire carry words of judgment; it can be seen throughout the Old Testament that the wind blows away the chaff, and the fire consumes it and later in the book of Acts (5:3, 9) the deaths of Ananias and Sapphira shows this in action.

And then the disciples began to speak in foreign tongues; that is they began to speak words without conscious control in a language not normally known to those speaking it, an ecstatic utterance. There is a profound importance here; this is the preparation of the disciples by the Holy Spirit for the proclamation of the Gospel to the ends of the earth.

There is a good chance that this went on for some time; the people were gathering and marveling that they could hear their hometown native language being spoken, to their amazement and apparent delight. Some, of course, heard all the noise, and all they heard was babbling, and announced their judgment that the disciples were drunk.

Then Peter stands up and begins to preach. Peter tells these Jews gathered together that what they were witnessing is what Joel prophesied; the out pouring of the Holy Spirit in the Last Days. Peter Quotes; *in the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people ... Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy ... And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.*

This first Pentecost was something unique. God was doing something remarkable in a way so that we would be clear about what He was doing and that He had done it. Through it He marked the beginning of the church here on earth, and He provided His Church with His on-going presence, in the form of the Holy Spirit and did so with a visible and audible illustration of the gift. He even duplicated the gift to some small extent with what is called the Pentecost of the Gentiles, in the home of Cornelius the Centurion, as Peter preached to them. He did it then to make it unmistakably clear to the Disciples that us Gentiles were also welcome to the Holy Spirit and the grace of God in Jesus Christ. Pentecost was about beginning the Church in earnest, and confirming His presence and activity in it by these signs.

The sending of His Spirit is not just some sort of potential for us; rather it is a present reality. But it 's a reality we do not witness with our senses. Rather, having made His point, God expects us to walk by faith and not by our senses ever since.

It is this same Spirit – the same one that fell upon the apostles in Jerusalem – that is given to each of us. He made his entrance into our lives first at Holy Baptism, and now, through the Word of God, he continually rests upon our hearts and souls. Through the same Word of God, the Holy Spirit does for us exactly what Christ our Lord promised he would do.

The Holy Spirit lives among us and inside us, and convicts us of our sin. He shows us that even the most seemingly minor sin in fact makes us idolaters and betrayers of Christ. The Holy Spirit convicts us concerning righteousness, by reminding us that even though we cannot see Christ, he is our righteousness. And as our righteousness, Christ is now in our Heavenly Father's presence pleading for mercy on our behalf, while at the same time revealing himself here and now through His holy word read and preached, and in his precious body and blood given us in the His holy meal, the Lord's Supper.

The Holy Spirit convicts us concerning judgment, reminding us that the ruler of this world, Satan, has been judged and condemned for leading rebellion against God. And that there is no good reason whatsoever to follow in his steps, because they will only ever lead us to the eternal fires of hell. By this work the Holy Spirit challenges us to fear and love God above all things; He urges us to trust in Christ as our righteousness before God the Father and receive his righteousness in Word and Sacrament.

As we remember the first Pentecost, we remember how the Apostles found themselves filled with the Holy Spirit so much that they could not help but preach, even though it was in another language! What a remarkable thing that must have been, preaching but hearing your own voice come out in another language! The message was the one God gave them, and their words were supplied by God, and the powerful effect was by God's work too. That is why we should join in with our brothers and sisters in Christ: proclaiming the Good News to all people with the help of the unchanging Spirit who still does for us as He did for the Apostle's two thousand years ago.

The Holy Spirit came with a mighty wind and used his power to bring souls to faith - in Christ. The Holy Spirit came with tongues of fire and lit the way to everlasting life - in Christ. The Holy Spirit spoke through the apostles and communicated faith - in Christ - to the hearts of three thousand men and women. That's what Pentecost is all about. The Holy Spirit turns us to Christ by his power. The Holy Spirit lights the way for us, to life in Christ by enlightening our hearts and minds. The Holy Spirit speaks to us, using words that we can understand, and by those words he rescues us from eternal death and condemnation, for by his work among us and within us we have come to believe in Christ Jesus as our Lord and Savior.

Therefore, this is no insignificant day ... we see God, in the person of the Holy Spirit, coming and dwelling in all his believers in a way the world has never seen before. Christ promised us the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit has come and will remain with us to the very end of the age, opening our eyes of faith, and fixing them on Jesus, the author and completer of our faith.

God tells us, and invites us to believe in His Son, Jesus Christ, and through the help of the Holy Spirit we learn of His good will and love for us, we learn to trust in Him; therefore we can say with confidence *it shall come to pass that everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved* (John 14:15-18).

Amen.

The peace of God, which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.  
**Amen**