

## Pentecost

### The gift of the Holy Spirit.

**Joel 2.28 – 32**

**Psalm 139. 1-4, 7-8, 11-12, 23-24**

**Acts 2. 1-11**

**John 20. 19- 23**

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

Today, we gather on this sacred day of Pentecost to celebrate the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the early disciples and the birth of the Church. Pentecost, which means "fiftieth" in Greek, marks the culmination of the fifty days of Easter and commemorates the fulfilment of Jesus' promise to send the Holy Spirit. As we delve into the Scriptures, let us explore the significance of Pentecost and the transformative power of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

The incident of Pentecost in Acts 2 is a pivotal moment in the early Church, marking the fulfilment of Jesus' promise to send the Holy Spirit to empower His disciples for ministry. Let's delve into the significance of this event. On the day of Pentecost, the disciples were gathered together in one place, likely the same upper room where they had shared the Last Supper with Jesus. Suddenly, there came a sound like a mighty rushing wind, filling the entire house where they were sitting. This wasn't just a physical phenomenon but a manifestation of the presence and power of the Holy Spirit.

As the disciples looked on in amazement, something extraordinary happened. Tongues of fire appeared and rested upon each of them. This symbolized the empowering and purifying work of the Holy Spirit, preparing them for the task ahead. But perhaps the most remarkable aspect of Pentecost was the speaking in tongues. The disciples were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, languages they had not previously known or studied. This miraculous manifestation drew the attention of devout Jews from every nation under heaven who were gathered in Jerusalem for the festival of Pentecost.

As the crowds heard the disciples speaking in their own languages, they were astounded. Some were amazed and marvelled, while others were perplexed and bewildered, wondering how this could be possible. Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, seized the opportunity to address the crowd and proclaimed the good news of Jesus Christ. In his powerful sermon, Peter explained that what they were witnessing was the fulfilment of Joel's prophecy, where God promised to pour out His Spirit on all people. He testified to the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, proclaiming Him as Lord and Saviour. He called on the people to repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus for the forgiveness of sins.

The response was incredible. Three thousand souls were baptized and added to the Church that day. The once-fearful disciples were now emboldened by the Holy Spirit, ready to carry out the Great Commission and spread the gospel to the ends of the earth. The significance of Pentecost cannot be overstated. It marks the birth of the Church and the beginning of a new era of ministry empowered by the Holy Spirit. It demonstrates God's faithfulness to His promises and His desire to equip His people for service. And it serves as a reminder that the same Spirit that descended upon the disciples at Pentecost is still at work in the Church today, empowering believers to be witnesses for Christ in the world.

### **The Promise of the Spirit (Joel 2:28-32)**

In the book of Joel, we find the prophecy of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in the last days. Joel declares, "And afterward, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions." This prophecy points to the universal nature of the gift of the Holy Spirit, which is poured out upon believers of all ages and backgrounds. Pentecost fulfills this prophecy as the Spirit descends upon the disciples gathered in Jerusalem, empowering them for the task of proclaiming the Gospel to the ends of the earth.

Imagine a barren land suddenly drenched in a downpour of refreshing rain, bringing life and vitality to every living thing. Similarly, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit revives and rejuvenates the Church, equipping believers for ministry and mission.

### **The Omniscient Presence of God (Psalm 139)**

Psalm 139 eloquently portrays the omnipresence and omniscience of God, who knows us intimately and is ever-present with us. The psalmist declares, "Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence?" This profound truth reminds us that the Holy Spirit is not only a gift given to us but also the very presence of God dwelling within us. As we celebrate Pentecost, let us be mindful of the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit, guiding, comforting, and empowering us in every aspect of our lives.

Consider the image of a loving parent watching over their child, guiding and protecting them every step of the way. In the same manner, the Holy Spirit hovers over us, nurturing and sustaining us with His divine presence.

### **The Manifestation of the Spirit (Acts 2:1-11)**

In the book of Acts, we witness the dramatic events of Pentecost as the Holy Spirit descends upon the disciples gathered in the upper room. Suddenly, a sound like the blowing of a violent wind fills the house, and tongues of fire rest upon each of them. They are filled with the Holy Spirit and begin to speak in other languages, proclaiming the wonders of God to the crowds gathered in Jerusalem from every nation under heaven. This miraculous manifestation of the Spirit demonstrates His power to unite people of diverse backgrounds and languages in the worship of God.

Imagine a symphony orchestra, each musician playing their part to create a harmonious melody that transcends language and culture. Similarly, the Holy Spirit unites believers from every nation and tongue, forming a beautiful tapestry of God's kingdom on earth.

### **The Commissioning for Ministry (John 20:19-23)**

In the Gospel of John, we read about Jesus' appearance to His disciples after His resurrection. He breathes on them and says, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive anyone's sins, their sins are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven." This act of commissioning marks the beginning of the disciples' ministry empowered by the Holy Spirit. As we celebrate Pentecost, let us remember that we too are commissioned by Christ to proclaim the forgiveness of sins and the reconciliation offered through His sacrifice on the cross.

Think of a torch being passed from one runner to another in a relay race, symbolizing the passing on of a mission from one generation to the next. Likewise, the Holy Spirit empowers us to continue the ministry of Jesus, spreading His message of love and redemption to the world.

Dear friends, as we celebrate Pentecost and the gift of the Holy Spirit, may we be filled anew with His presence and power. Let us embrace the transformative work of the Spirit in our lives, allowing Him to guide, comfort, and empower us for the work of ministry and mission. As we go forth from this place, may we be bold witnesses to the love and grace of God, empowered by the Spirit to proclaim the good news to all who will hear.

**Concluding Prayer:**

**Heavenly Father,**

We thank You for the gift of Your Holy Spirit, who empowers us for the work of ministry and mission. As we celebrate Pentecost, fill us afresh with Your Spirit, that we may be bold witnesses to Your love and grace in the world. Grant us wisdom, courage, and compassion as we seek to fulfil Your commission to make disciples of all nations. May Your kingdom come and Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. In the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour, we pray. Amen.

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