

Sermon Topic: The Promise of the Father, by Rev Daniel Lee (Pentecost Sunday)
 Sermon Text: Acts 2:1-21

The Holy Spirit Comes at Pentecost

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. ⁵ 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,^[b] 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." ¹⁴ Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd: "Fellow Jews and all of you who live in Jerusalem, let me explain this to you; listen carefully to what I say. ¹⁵ These people are not drunk, as you suppose. It's only nine in the morning! ¹⁶ No, this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel:

¹⁷ "In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams. ¹⁸ Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy. ¹⁹ I will show wonders in the heavens above and signs on the earth below, blood and fire and billows of smoke. ²⁰ The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and glorious day of the Lord. ²¹ And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.'

Introduction

- The first believers were filled with the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, when tongues of fire separated and came to rest on each one. The believers began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them. While those that were gathered were Galileans from the north, they were able to speak the native languages of those who had come to Jerusalem in the South which they would not have learnt previously. What was going on?

1. The Holy Spirit is the Promised gift of the Father.

- Jesus had earlier promised His disciples that they would receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:4-8)
- The gift of the Holy Spirit was foretold by the prophet Joel (Acts 2:16) as a gift that would be extended to all, including those who are far off (people like us, Gentiles)
- God wants His people to go out and evangelise (ref. The Great Commission in Matt 28:19-20).
- The giving of the Holy Spirit reverses the effect of what happened at the Tower of Babel, when God caused humankind to speak in different languages and scattered them over the face of the earth because of the wicked intentions He perceived in their hearts. The Holy Spirit enabled and empowered the disciples to spread the Gospel across to peoples of every tribe, language and tongue.
- The Bible mentions the ability to speak in different tongues, in the tongues of men and of angels (ref. 1 Cor 13:1)

2. The Holy Spirit gives power to witness (ref. Acts 1:8)

- The disciples were afraid, and abandoned Jesus when he was arrested earlier. But when the Holy Spirit was given to them, the disciples were transformed!
- The Holy Spirit turned the disciples from cowards to fearless witnesses for Christ. In the same way, God wants to pour out His Holy Spirit on us to be His witnesses.
- A gas-powered water heater has a pilot flame that becomes a big burning fire when the heater is switched on. Employing the analogy of the gas heater to our lives, the Holy Spirit is given to us and present in our lives from the time of conversion, but is He manifested in our lives as a pilot flame or a big burning fire? God wants to ignite His holy fire in us so we can spread this fire to others.
- The Methodists in John Wesley's day were described as 'enthusiastic', which bore the same meaning as the word 'charismatic' in today's terms. It was meant as a term of insult, just as the term 'Methodist' originated from others' ridicule at the methodical way John Wesley and his group approached and lived out their faith. Since we have seemingly embraced this quality of being methodical, should we not also be proud of, and carry on this quality of being 'enthusiastic'?

3. Baptism of the Holy Spirit came with tangible signs.

- Physical manifestations accompanied the baptism of the Holy Spirit in the Bible. This includes Gentile conversions such as Cornelius and his household who received the Holy Spirit whilst listening to Peter's message, and spoke in tongues (Acts 10:44-46)
- In Acts 19:1-7, another group of believers in Ephesus that Paul ministered to also spoke in tongues upon receiving the Holy Spirit.
- Tangible signs accompanying the baptism of the Holy Spirit were also recorded by John Wesley in his journals (ref: 'The Supernatural Occurrences of John Wesley' available online) and experienced during the 'ACS Clock-tower revival' in Singapore.
- Pentecost is repeatable!

4. Baptism of the Holy Spirit passed on through laying of hands

- While there was no laying of hands in the case of Cornelius and his household, the Holy Spirit came on the Ephesus disciples when Paul laid his hands on them (Acts 19:8). Ananias was also instructed by God to lay his hands on Saul (Acts 9:12,17-18). Most baptisms (except that of Cornelius and his household) of the Holy Spirit in the Bible have been marked by the laying of hands.

Questions:

1. Have you experienced the Baptism of the Holy Spirit?
2. How have you experienced His Empowering to witness?
3. What are the gifts of the Holy Spirit that you have received and exercised to minister to others?