

Main Idea: In Acts 2:1-41, Luke explains what really happened at Pentecost. He clarifies three aspects of Pentecost for us. We’ll examine the first two aspects today.

I. The event of Pentecost (1-4)

- A. There was a unique sound (2).
 - 1. It was like powerful wind.
 - 2. It came from heaven.
- B. There was a unique sight (3).
 - 1. It was like fire.
 - 2. It came on each of them.
- C. There was unique speaking (4).
 - 1. It resulted from the Spirit’s filling.
 - 2. It resulted in other languages.

II. The effects of Pentecost (5-13)

- A. Many were amazed (5-12).
 - 1. They came together (5-6).
 - 2. They asked questions (7-10).
 - 3. They heard the wonders of God in their own language (11-12).
- B. Some were amused (13).
 - 1. They ignored the message.
 - 2. They mocked the messengers.

III. The explanation of Pentecost (14-41) – next time

The Bottom Line: Because of Pentecost, three things are true...

- 1. The Holy Spirit has come.
- 2. If we have Christ, we have the Holy Spirit.
- 3. We can fulfill our mission.

Scripture Reading: Joel 2:25-32

The day began as normal. The sun broke through the darkness in the eastern sky. Most people took a business as usual approach throughout the city. Life in Jerusalem had pretty much returned to the way it had been before the earth-shaking events hit the city seven weeks earlier.

The crowds that had cried, “Crucify Him!” were now silent. And though reports were circulating that Jesus of Nazareth had risen from the dead and had even been seen by His followers, there had been no news for ten days now. It had been quiet since the day He left the earth in a cloud.

For the inhabitants of the world, the tenth day began as a very ordinary day. And even for the small band of Jesus’ followers—some 120 of them—the day began as the previous nine days had. They were meeting together in an upper room, waiting for something special to occur. They knew it was coming. They just didn’t know when.

And though they didn’t know it when they got up that morning, today would be the day, the day that would change not only their lives, but the world forever.

Nearly two thousand years have passed, and without question that day is one of the most significant days in the history of the world. Yet also without question, it has become one of the most controversial.

Pentecost. The word itself means “The Fiftieth.” It was so called because it was a holiday that fell on the fiftieth day, a week of weeks, after Passover.

There were three Jewish festivals to which every Jew living within thirty miles of Jerusalem was legally bound to come—the Feast of Tabernacles, Passover, and Pentecost. The Passover fell in the middle of April. That meant that Pentecost occurred at the beginning of June. That also meant that at least as many Jews came to Jerusalem

^{**}Note: This is an unedited manuscript of a message preached at Wheelersburg Baptist Church. It is provided to prompt your continued reflection on the practical truths of the Word of God.

¹ For an earlier development of this text, see the Acts series preached at WBC in 2001.

for Pentecost as they did for Passover, since the time of the year afforded the best traveling conditions.

As William Barclay notes, “Never was there a more international crowd in Jerusalem than at the time of Pentecost.”² Jews from literally all over the known world made the trip to the House of God for this yearly feast.

Historically, Pentecost commemorated the giving of God’s Law to Moses at Mount Sinai. It also had agricultural significance. At Passover, the Jews offered the year’s first omer of barley to God, while at Pentecost they offered Him two loaves of bread in appreciation for the harvest.

That’s why the Jews also referred to Pentecost as the Feast of Harvest (Ex 23:16) and the Feast of Weeks (Deut 16:10), as well as the day of first-fruits (Num 28:26). For nearly fifteen centuries, since God gave the command to Moses in Leviticus 23:15-16, the Jews had observed the holy day called Pentecost.

But this Pentecost would be unlike any other. Why? What made it so unique? We’ll find out this morning as we open our Bibles and investigate the account of Acts 2.

Jesus, of course, died as the Passover Lamb who came to take away the sins of the world. Three days later He conquered death and appeared to His followers in His resurrected body.

According to Acts 1, for the next forty days He met with His followers. He taught them about the kingdom of God (3). Then He gave them two specific commands.

First, He told them to wait. Wait for the coming of the Holy Spirit (4-5).

Then, secondly, after the Spirit came, they were to stop waiting and start witnessing. “You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses (8).”

Those were His final instructions. And Jesus’ followers took them to heart. According to verses 12-26, they waited. They returned to the upper room in Jerusalem and waited. The ten day waiting period was hardly a time of inactivity, for while waiting they prayed, pondered Scripture, and prepared for their mission by selecting an apostolic replacement for Judas.

Then it happened. The day of Pentecost came. Unfortunately, many today don’t know what really happened at Pentecost, nor why it happened. Still others shy away from the subject of Pentecost. “That’s the day they spoke in tongues, isn’t it?” Yes, it is, but tongues-speaking (more accurately, other languages-speaking) was just one visible effect of something very amazing that occurred. And sadly, because of the misunderstandings and abuses associated with Pentecost, we have shortchanged ourselves.

Know this, brothers and sisters. We wouldn’t be here today were it not for Pentecost. We wouldn’t have the ability to live the Christian life were it not for Pentecost. We couldn’t appropriate the benefits of Christ and experience His life-changing presence were it not for Pentecost.

So what really happened at Pentecost? Thankfully, God’s Word tells us very clearly, not only *what* happened, but *why* it happened.

In Acts 2:1-41, Dr. Luke addresses three aspects of Pentecost for us; the event (1-4), the effects (5-13), and the explanation (14-41). We’ll focus on the first two today by looking at verses 1-13, which essentially tell us, *what happened?* Next time, the Lord willing, we’ll see *why it happened?* as we probe verses 14-41.

I. Consider the event of Pentecost (1-4).

² William Barclay, *Acts*, p. 21.

Remember Luke wrote two God-inspired books. First, his Gospel. Second, the book of Acts. He wrote them initially for his friend, Theophilus, so he would know the certainty of the things he had heard about Jesus. In Book One Luke tells what Jesus did when He came to earth. In Book Two he tells what Jesus is doing on earth through His Body, the church.

In Acts 2 Luke details what in essence was the birthday of the church. He begins the narrative in verse 1, “When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place.”

According to scholar, Joachim Jeremias, the city of Jerusalem had about 55,000 inhabitants. But during special feasts, the number grew to some 180,000. So it’s likely that on this particular Pentecost the city of Jerusalem was jam-packed with Jews from all over the world.³

Those who believed in Jesus were meeting together, Luke says “in one place,” as they had been for ten days now. *Waiting*. Then it happened. Not gradually, but according to verse 2, *suddenly*. The Holy Spirit came, just as Jesus promised. His coming was accompanied by three features.

A. There was a unique sound (2). “Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting.”

So there was a unique sound. The disciples heard something. Luke, informs us of a couple of characteristics of this sound.

1. *It was like powerful wind.* It wasn’t wind, but rather *like* wind. “There came a sound from heaven like a rushing mighty wind,” as the KJV puts it. This was more than a gentle breeze. The sound was loud and forceful, sort of like a tornado.

It’s noteworthy that in both Hebrew and Greek, the words for “wind” and “spirit” are the same. The followers of Jesus no doubt caught the connection.

Six centuries prior, the prophet Ezekiel used the term *ruah* to describe the Spirit of God moving over a valley of dry bones. Do you recall the scene? In a vision recorded in Ezekiel 37, Ezekiel saw a valley full of lifeless bones, symbolizing the dead condition of his people. God told him to prophesy, and as he did he heard a noise, a rattling sound. The bones came together, bone to bone (7). Then tendons and flesh appeared on the bones, and skin covered them, but there was still no “breath” (*ruah*) in them.

Until Ezekiel called out at God’s command (9): “Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe into these slain, that they may live.” And breath (*ruah*) entered them, and they came to life!

What did the believers hear that day? The sound of a mighty wind.

They certainly recalled Jesus’ words to Nicodemus in John 3:8, “The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit.”

A second characteristic of the sound...

2. *It came from heaven.* Luke says the sound “came from heaven and filled the whole house.” This was a heaven sent sound. The source of this sound was heaven itself, the dwelling place of God. God sent this unique sound. And it filled the house.

A second feature accompanied the Holy Spirit’s arrival. The first feature affected the auditory, the second the visual.

B. There was a unique sight (3). “They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them.” Notice two things about this sight.

1. *It was like fire.* Throughout the Bible, fire is a symbol of God’s presence. In Exodus 3:2-4, God appeared to Moses in the *burning* bush. In Exodus 24:17, when God

³ Joachim Jeremias, *Jerusalem in the Times of Jesus*, p. 83.

gave the Ten Commandments there was a *consuming fire* on Mount Sinai. And so, when the Holy Spirit came at Pentecost, there was the visual presence of fire.

But what does fire actually do? I'm indebted to observations by James Boice at this point. He notes that fire produces two things: light and warmth.

We tend to forget that fire is a source of light because we live in an age of electricity. When we think of light, we think of flipping a switch on a wall. Not so in the ancient world. Light came either by sun or by fire.

When the Holy Spirit came at Pentecost, the result was instant illumination. The darkness left. The house lit up. And that's what happened from this point forward. Wherever these Spirit-filled followers of Jesus went, spiritual illumination resulted. As they proclaimed the gospel of Christ, that gospel work brought enlightenment. It transferred people out of darkness and into the light.

Do you remember the day the Spirit caused the light to shine in your life? I love how 2 Corinthians 4:6 puts it, "For God, who said, 'Let light shine out of darkness,' has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."

Fire also brings warmth. The problem isn't just that the world is in darkness. It's also as cold as ice. To live without God is to be numb. The world is impersonal, harsh, and unloving. And the hearts of men are cold.

But when the Holy Spirit works, He warms cold hearts. When the Lord reached John Wesley in that little chapel at Aldersgate in London, Wesley testified in response, "My heart was strangely warmed."

But it wasn't just fire they saw at Pentecost. Luke says, specifically, they saw what seemed to be "tongues of fire."

What do we do with our tongues? We *speak* with them. Which is exactly what Jesus' followers will do as a result of the Spirit's coming. They will be empowered to *speak* as we shall soon see. Notice something else about this fire.

2. *It came on each of them.* The tongues of fire entered the room, separated, and came to rest on *each* of those present. No one was missed. All 120 believers experienced the same thing.

Don't miss that. The Holy Spirit didn't come on the most spiritual in the group, but on all of them, for there is no such thing as a person who has Jesus who does not have the Holy Spirit. When the Spirit came, He brought unity to the church, not division.

Then, following the unique sound and sight...

C. There was unique speaking (4). "All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them."

We're told a couple of things about this unique speaking in verse 4.

1. *It resulted from the Spirit's filling.* They were filled, then began to speak.

2. *It resulted in other languages.* Not gibberish, but actual languages.

So *all* of them participated in this unique speaking. No one was left out. All were filled with the Holy Spirit, and all began to speak in other tongues.

More about what came out of their mouths in a moment, but first, let's clarify something. The Holy Spirit was not induced into coming because these believers prayed. Jesus had already promised the Spirit would come. He didn't tell them that they needed to pray to receive the Holy Spirit. He just told them to wait and it would happen.

There are some today who teach that receiving the Holy Spirit involves a second work of grace. That is, you become a Christian when you believe in Christ, but to receive the Holy Spirit, you must do something else, namely, earnestly seek Him through prayer and even the prayers of others.

That's a popular teaching in our day, indeed millions believe it. Ligonier Ministries sums up why, then offers a helpful critique:

Theologians in this tradition justify their view by appealing to the four instances recorded in the Acts of the Apostles when people received the Holy Spirit in an experience distinct from conversion: Jewish believers; Samaritan believers; God-fearers (Gentiles who believed in Yahweh without being circumcised); and believers who were once pagan Gentiles (2:1–13; 8:14–17; 10:9–48; 19:1–7). However, the New Testament nowhere else describes a second work of grace, making these narratives at best an incomplete foundation on which to build a theology of the Spirit. Acts records the transition in redemptive history when God, for our sake, had to make it clear that His gifts were no longer limited to Jews. In fact, Acts begins by telling us that the Apostles would witness to Christ first in Jerusalem, then in Judea, Samaria, and the ends of the earth (1:8). Notably, the Spirit baptisms Luke records in Acts conform to this geographic spread of the gospel: Jews in Jerusalem, God-fearers in Judea, Samaritans in Samaria, and Gentiles, who represent the ends of the earth. These baptisms confirm that none who are welcomed into God's kingdom through faith in Christ alone are second-class citizens.⁴

Friends, the New Testament nowhere commands believers to seek the baptism of the Holy Spirit. The baptism of the Holy Spirit was a historical event that occurred in the book of Acts. Just as Christ died once, rose again once, and ascended to heaven one time, so the Holy Spirit came *one* time.

And He hasn't left since. At Pentecost He baptized all the followers of Christ, even including those who would come later, into one body, the body of Christ.

So we are not to seek the baptism of the Holy Spirit. It's a done deal. If you are a believer in Jesus Christ, you've already been baptized by the Spirit into Christ. The event happened on the day of Pentecost two thousand years ago, and the benefit of the event was applied to you on the day the Spirit birthed you into the family of God.

Paul makes that clear in 1 Corinthians 12:13, "For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body—whether Jews of Greeks, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink." So person experiences the benefit of the baptism of the Holy Spirit at the moment of regeneration, when he is "born again".

It saddens my heart that so many people are seeking something they already have. I hear it in prayers, like, "Oh Lord, send your Spirit to this meeting today." Or even in songs, like, "Heavenly Spirit, gentle Spirit, O descend on us, we pray." And, "Spirit of God, descend upon my heart."

Be assured, the Spirit has already descended. If you have Christ, you have the Spirit. You have been baptized by the Holy Spirit into the Body of Christ, and He will never leave you.

But the "filling" of the Spirit is different. Unlike the baptism of the Spirit which occurred once, being filled with the Spirit is something continual. It's possible to be a believer and not be filled with the Holy Spirit, which means, we're not yielded to His control.

Think about it. Was the apostle Peter filled with the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost? Yes he was, according to verse 4. But Acts 4:8 speaks of another filling. Indeed, many of the same people who were filled with the Spirit in Acts 2 were filled again in Acts 4:31. Stephen was a man "full of faith and the Holy Spirit," according to Acts 6:5. But Acts 7:55 states that he was filled again.⁵

⁴ <https://www.ligonier.org/learn/devotionals/baptism-holy-spirit/>

⁵ As John MacArthur observes, *Acts*, p. 41.

Follow me. There is no command to be baptized by the Spirit, since that's already happened. But the Bible does command us regarding the filling of the Spirit. We're told in Ephesians 5:18, "Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, *be filled with the Spirit.*"⁶

So what does it mean to be filled with the Spirit? Look again at verse 4. What happened to the believers at Pentecost when the Holy Spirit filled them? They began to *speak*. Don't miss that. In the New Testament, there's a strong connection between the filling of the Spirit and speaking up for Jesus.

In the NT, when the Holy Spirit filled someone, the person began to speak. When the Holy Spirit filled the believers in Acts 4:31, they "spoke the word of God boldly." When the Holy Spirit filled Stephen in Acts 7:55, he testified verbally about Christ, even though it cost him his life.

In Ephesians 5 we see this same connection. In verse 18 Paul commands us to be filled with the Spirit. What does he say will happen if we are? According to verse 19 it will show up in our speech: "Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord."

When people are filled with the Spirit, it affects their lives and particularly their mouths. They speak in ways that bring attention to Christ.

That's exactly what happened in Acts 2. The Spirit-filled believers began to *speak*.

Let's talk application for a moment. If you want to know whether a person is filled with the Spirit, here's a critical test. Check out their speech. A Spirit-filled person will speak, as James Boice puts it, "often and effectively about Jesus."

Jesus made that connection in His final words (1:8), "You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my *witnesses*." In other words, Jesus was saying, when the Holy Spirit comes you will use your mouths to talk to others about Me.

Is that happening in your life? Do you talk about Jesus in your home? With your kids? Your spouse? Do you talk about Jesus when you get together with your friends, those who know Him, and those who don't.

And of course, we all have neighbors who need Christ. Have you told them about the Savior? Perhaps you've been fearful. Or maybe you just don't know what to say. Here's a practical place to start. Ask God to fill you with His Spirit, and then *get ready!*

So we don't need to ask the Spirit to descend on us, for He's already living in us (1 Cor 3:16; 6:19). But we do need to ask Him to fill us, for when He does, He enables us to speak and live for Christ in ways we never could in our own strength.

He certainly did in the early church. Within one generation, He used a group of ordinary people to fill the Roman Empire with the message of Christ.

And it all began in Acts 2. At Pentecost there was unique speaking which resulted from the Spirit's filling.

But there was something peculiar about how they spoke. Luke says they spoke in "other tongues." The Greek term is *glossa*. It clearly refers, not to some sort of babbling⁷, but to other languages. In fact, Luke actually uses another, more specific term in verses 6 & 8, translated "language" in the NIV. It's the Greek term *dialekto*, from which we get the English word "dialect." Luke uses the terms *glossa* and *dialekto* interchangeably.

⁶ A comment by John MacArthur is helpful, "To be filled with the Spirit is to consciously practice the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ and to have a mind saturated with the Word of God. Colossians 3:16-25 delineates the results of 'letting the word of Christ dwell' in us. They are the same ones that result from the filling of the Spirit." John MacArthur, pp. 41-2.

⁷ Indeed, as we'll explain later, Acts 2 is the opposite of the tower of Babel incident in Genesis 11.

So what about today? Should we expect the Holy Spirit to enable Christians to do this today? Some say yes. I disagree. Granted, the Holy Spirit can do as He pleases, for He is God. And sometimes He does what defies human explanation.⁸

But should we expect Him to do so? Should our missionaries skip language school and go right to the field expecting the Spirit to enable them to speak in other languages?

No. Granted, the Spirit enables us to speak, but not to speak in *glossa*. That unique mode of speaking fulfilled a special purpose in the transitional period between the day of Pentecost and the completion of the canon of Scriptures.

But that purpose has been completed. We don't need to speak in tongues.

You say, "Well then, why did the Holy Spirit enable the believers at Pentecost to speak in other languages?"

Peter himself answered that question in his sermon which begins in verse 14. We'll consider his answer when we get to that section next week.

Back to our initial question. What really happened at Pentecost? In short, the church was born. On the day of Pentecost, the Spirit of God baptized the followers of Jesus into one spiritual body, the body of Christ. It was a one time, historical event. The baptism occurred as the sovereign work of God, not because people sought it.

The tongues of fire separated and came to rest on *each* of Jesus' followers. There was no hierarchy, no spiritually elite group in the church. They *all* received the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is not the possession of some advanced, more spiritual group of individuals. If Jesus is your Savior, you have the Holy Spirit.

On the day of Pentecost, God the Holy Spirit came to this world, took up residence in Jesus' followers, and began a unique period of time in God's redemptive plan. Paul calls it a "mystery." This is the age of the Spirit. This is the age of the church.⁹

I hope you love the church. The church is at the center of what God is doing in the world today. "I will build my church," said Jesus. And that's exactly what He's doing.

We've considered the event of Pentecost. Now let's consider...

II. Consider the effects of Pentecost (5-13).

What happened when the Spirit came? Luke says his coming produced two effects.

A. Many were amazed (5-12). Luke explains in verses 5-6, "Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven. When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard them speaking in his own language."

Remember, there was never a more cosmopolitan gathering in Jerusalem than during one of the holidays like Pentecost. But as a consequence of the Spirit's arrival three things happened to this diverse crowd.

1. *They came together (5-6).* They heard the sound, probably referring to the sound of the violent wind, and they came together in search of an explanation.

By this time, the disciples had moved from the room to the streets. When the crowd came upon them, they were startled by what they heard. Each one heard his mother tongue being spoken. So not surprisingly...

⁸ I read an article this week by an Assemblies of God chaplain, "In Our Own Tongues": A Defense of Miraculous Speech Based on Eyewitness Testimony," The writer offers eight such testimonies. http://enrichmentjournal.ag.org/201501/201501_010_Tongues.cfm

⁹ The church age is the period of time between the first and second coming of the Messiah. It's the phase in history in which God brings together Jew and Gentile in one body, something unheard of in Old Testament times. Paul refers to the church as a "mystery" in Ephesians 3:3-10 and Colossians 1:24-29.

2. *They asked questions (7-10).* “Utterly amazed, they asked, ‘Are not all these men who are speaking Galileans? Then how is it that each of us hears them in his own native language? Parthians, Medes and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome (both Jews and converts to Judaism); Cretans and Arabs.’”

Notice their first question. *Aren't these men Galileans?* Galilee, of course, was located in the north near the Sea of Galilee. The Galilean dialect was noted for its confusing of the various guttural sounds.¹⁰ The typical stereotype of a Galilean was that he was an ignorant, unsophisticated country bumpkin who had a funny accent.

But now, all of the sudden, these uneducated “hicks” are speaking with amazing linguistic power. And they were speaking in dialects from all over the world!¹¹

In fact, Luke lists 15 different language groups, ranging from the Parthians (in modern Iran) to Phrygia and Pamphylia (in Asia Minor, modern Turkey) to Libya (in northern Africa) to Rome (in Europe).

What's the point of the list? The Lord is showing us what He intends to do in this church age. People from all over the world were there, from Jerusalem and Judea and to the ends of the earth, and they heard these followers of Jesus speaking in their own languages. When you stop and think about it, the church of Jesus Christ still speaks in many tongues (I'm grateful to have heard several of them¹²).

Yet with all our diversity, we are one church.

What God did at Pentecost was to begin the reversal of Babel. Remember the Tower of Babel? At Babel (see Genesis 11) God used languages to confuse and separate people who tried to reach Him their own way. But at Pentecost, He used languages to bring people together so they could hear about the One He sent to reach them.

3. *They heard the wonders of God in their own language (11-12).* That's what they said in verses 11-12, “We hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues! Amazed and perplexed, they asked one another, ‘What does this mean?’”

I wonder what the believers were saying. Luke doesn't tell us. He just says that the hearers said they heard *the wonders of God*. And they were amazed.

But not everybody.

B. Some were amused (13). “Some, however, made fun of them and said, ‘They have had too much wine.’”

There always seem to be a few in the crowd who don't take anything too seriously. So in this crowd. Some saw the same evidence the others saw, but...

1. *They ignored the message.* They wrote it off. Imagine that! They just heard the wonders of God in their own language, but rather than heeding the message...

2. *They mocked the messengers.* They tried to turn the whole thing into a joke. Like many are doing today. Perhaps it's what you're doing.

My friend, you can mock God's work, but you can't stop it. What God did at Pentecost makes that perfectly clear. This was just the beginning. The mocking will continue, but this band of 120 won't stay 120 for long. And even though the mocking soon turned into an all out assault, it couldn't stop the message of Jesus from spreading and rescuing sinners from all over the world.

¹⁰ F. F. Bruce, *Acts*, p. 59.

¹¹ This raises some questions. Did the disciples speak in their own language, with the miracle occurring in each hearer so that he heard the message in his own language? Or did the disciples speak in the various languages of the hearers, so that the miracle occurred in the speakers? Or did the disciples speak in some “unknown tongue” which each hearer heard in his own language, so that the miracle was occurring in both the speaker and the hearer? William LaSor, *Church Alive*, p. 45.

¹² I've heard brothers pray in Angor, Albanian, Russian, Spanish, Romanian, Hebrew, Thai, etc.

Such was the effect of Pentecost.

III. Consider the explanation of Pentecost (14-41).

We'll hear Peter's explanation next time, if the Lord allows, but for now, let's talk about the bottom line.

The Bottom Line: Because of Pentecost, three things are true, three guarantees.

1. *The Holy Spirit has come.* We celebrate Christmas, the coming of the second person of the Trinity to the world, and so we should. But why not Pentecost? At Pentecost, the third person of the Trinity came to the world.

Let that sink in, beloved. God the Holy Spirit has come! People tend to go to extremes. They either ignore the Spirit or they become enamored with Him. Let's do neither. Rather, let's thank God today for this assurance.

The Holy Spirit has come. He descended to earth two thousand years ago, just as Jesus promised He would.

2. *If we have Christ, we have the Holy Spirit.* Make it personal. If *you* have Christ, *you* have the Holy Spirit. You need not ask Him to come, for He lives in you.

Yet to experience the kind of life He intends for us, there is a requirement. We need Him to fill us. And for that to happen, we need to acknowledge something we resist in our pride.

Our *emptiness* without Him. Kent Hughes is right when He says this of God, "He will not fill our sails with the wind of the Holy Spirit unless we admit that the sails are empty." And that requires humility, brokenness, and emptiness.

Hughes continues, "The key to the Spirit-filled Christian life is found in a paradox: cultivating an attitude of perpetual emptiness brings with it a perpetual fullness."¹³

Will you admit today that you are empty? If you will, He will fill you up.

Jesus said He came to rescue, not the righteous, but sinners. That's why He went to the cross and died, then conquered death, to pay sin's penalty for those who admit to themselves and God that they have nothing to offer Him. It's to the empty that God grants His Son's salvation. It's to the empty that God grants the fullness of His Spirit.

It's significant that the Spirit came on a day when Jews offered to God their first-fruits. Indeed, on this day of Pentecost the Spirit came as the first-fruits of the believers' inheritance. He "has given us the Spirit as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come (2 Cor 5:5)." Or as Paul puts it in Ephesians 1:14, He "is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession—to the praise of his glory."

Simply put, what that means for us is this. Guarantee #3...

3. *We can fulfill our mission.* Realize this. When God sent the Spirit on Pentecost, it was His guarantee that He would complete His work. When the 120 believers were baptized by the Spirit on that day, they were just the first-fruits of the full harvest of believers to come.

And indeed the harvest came. First, there were 120 Spirit-baptized followers of Christ. A few hours later there were 3,000 (41). Within a matter of days the number grew to about 5,000 (Acts 4:5).

Brothers and sisters, because the Spirit has come, we can fulfill our mission. So let's go, and give, and pray, and tell, and serve. So the world will know the One we love.

¹³ R. Kent Hughes, *Acts*, p. 35.