

“Pride Prevents Personal Pentecost” (Acts 2:1–21)(5.31.20)

Acts 2:1–21 (NIV84) *The Holy Spirit Comes at Pentecost*

2 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 them speaking in his own language. ⁷ Utterly amazed, they asked: “Are not all these men who are speaking Galileans? ⁸ Then how is it that each of us hears them in his own native language? ⁹ Parthians, Medes and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, 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 men 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 heaven 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.’

The word of God for the people of God.

Title: **“Pride Prevents Personal Pentecost”**

LET US PRAY.

INTRODUCTION:

Some made fun. Put yourself in that crowd. There is an extremely loud blowing of the wind from heaven. Suddenly, something like flames of fire appear on peoples’ heads. God the Holy Spirit supernaturally empowers the disciples to speak in foreign languages; many languages. Confusion comes over the crowd and it develops into amazement; UTTER amazement. Everyone was able to hear the proclamations that glorified God in their own native language. Not only are they amazed, they become perplexed. This is a significant emotional event. What can this extraordinary happening mean? Some, however, made fun of them.

There is a miraculous movement of God and while some responded others witnessing the same thing speak dismissively. The same Holy Spirit softened some hearts that would be cut to the quick while others had hard heads and harder hearts. Our God wills that all should be saved; but some, are self-

willed and self-destructive. In their scoffing; in their air of superiority; they evidence the arrogance of their hearts. And my friends, I can give you personal testimony, personal pride prevents a personal Pentecost.

What does the celebration of the Jewish Harvest Festival called Pentecost that happened 2,000 years ago have to do with today? With the modern church? With each and every individual? I say everything. Every Christian is the tabernacle of God the Holy Spirit and yet way too many Christians show little evidence of the divine nature. We produce so little spiritual heat so our churches are a sad sample of what they should be.

Then there is the issue of pride. It can keep non-believers in darkness. In Christians, it leads to divisions and dissension. When people start believing they are better than other people, the root of racism has taken hold. Today's scripture demonstrates the fallenness of humankind and the Lord's solution.

BODY:

On what proof do I make this proclamation? First, I tell you it was my own pride that prevented my coming to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. I had determined that when I could understand God; when the Lord Almighty would fit into a box of my construction; then I would believe in God. How ludicrous that the creature tries to rule the Creator.

Second, virtually the whole canon of scripture testifies against prideful people. Here are just three samples of more than 100 about pride.

From the Old Testament: Proverbs 16:5 (NIV84)

The Lord detests all the proud of heart.

Be sure of this: They will not go unpunished.

From a New Testament letter: 1 Peter 5:5 (NIV84)

Young men, in the same way be submissive to those who are older. All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because,

“God opposes the proud
but gives grace to the humble.”

Jesus says in the Gospel of Matthew 23:12 (NIV84), “For whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted.”

In the Garden of Eden, Satan tempts Eve with the promise, “When you eat of this fruit, your eyes will be opened, and **you will be like God.**” And, Adam and Eve listened to Satan instead of the Almighty and here we are in this fallen world today!

It was God's decree that the human race would spread over the face of the earth and multiply. But we read in Genesis 11:4 (NIV84) Then they said, “Come, let us build ourselves a city, with a tower that reaches to the heavens, so that **we may make a name for ourselves** and not be scattered over the face of the whole earth.” In their arrogance they defied the desires of the Almighty and sought out a reputation for themselves. So, the Lord came down and saw what they were doing. He confused their language and scattered them over all the earth. Hence, the name the Tower of Babel.

Many people witnessed Jesus' miracles; yet, many of them did not believe he was the Messiah. Jesus healed the man blind from birth and the Pharisees tried to discredit him. At other times, they accused Jesus of using demonic powers. And when Jesus called Lazarus out of his tomb after four days, the Jewish leaders plotted to kill Jesus.

Was the fact that the miracle of the Holy Spirit was witnessed in men from Galilee a factor? After all, these uneducated men from a backwater place couldn't be used by God could they? Aren't we sometimes guilty of discounting people due to their background and our prejudices? Maybe there was a feeling of superiority. We certainly get a sense of a dismissive, condescending attitude: “they must be drunk with wine.”

Luke tells us that those witnessing the Pentecostal Presence of the Holy Spirit were from all over the known world. The countries named include Eastern Europe, Western Asia, Arab people, and Northern

Africa. Because of sin and disobedience, the Jewish people had been dispersed and exiled. The feast of Pentecost brought even more Pilgrims than the Passover Feast. God's timing was intentional. These events did not cause everyone to speak the same language. However, they did communicate a truth to anyone who was willing to hear and see it. The Holy Spirit was for people from all over the world. Everyone is in need of the Power of God. We all need the Counselor, the Comforter, the Giver of Life. We are united in ways that are significantly more important than the ways in which we are different.

We are all made in the image of the same Creator. We all need the Lord Jesus as Master and Savior. We all need the presence of God within us, if we have any hope of living into the image of God. All those that receive the Pentecostal power are partakers in the divine nature.

These people are described as God-fearing Jews. They were devout and pious, having traveled to Jerusalem to celebrate God's goodness and provision for His Chosen People. They were going to feast and drink wine. For those that would hear Peter's proclamation and receive the blessing of Jesus, they would be seeds pollinated with the Holy Spirit. They would return home for a future harvest that continues until this day.

Peter quotes the Old Testament prophet Joel extensively. What is happening is what Israel had been hoping for, the last days. God promised to pour, not drip, but pour out God's Spirit on all people; ALL PEOPLE. Men and women; old and young; parents and children; All were to have dreams, visions, and to prophecy. Properly understood, telling future events is only part and not the larger part of prophecy. More accurately, prophecy is an oral, divine message mediated through an individual that is directed at a person or people group and intended to elicit a specific response.

After Peter explains that this is what Israel has long awaited, he says in verse 21, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." In the following verses he goes on to share the good news of Jesus with the crowd. Jesus of Nazareth was sent by God to do miracles and to be nailed to the cross and killed. But God raised him from the dead. Jesus was the promised Messiah and he was resurrected. We are witnesses. Now, Jesus is at the right hand of the Father and today you see the Holy Spirit sent by Him. Then again in verse 39, Peter repeats the sentiment from verse 21. Acts 2:39 (NIV84) The promise is for you and your children and for **all** who are far off—for ALL whom the Lord our God will call."

Three thousand were added to the disciples, but it is clear that this was only part of the crowd. Luke says, "Those who accepted Peter's message were baptized." Some make fun. Some don't feel they need saving. Some don't see their own sin. Some feel superior and self-sufficient. Some are comfortable in their religion and their rituals. Some are mockers and scoffers.

What does the good news that Peter shares tell us about racism? As the events of this week unfolded across the nation, there was sorrow in my soul. I didn't pick this text to show God's universal love for humankind. This is Pentecost Sunday and the text is almost mandatory. But doesn't our sick society need to know that the desire of God's heart is to bring us all back into a proper relationship with our Creator and our neighbor?

I remind you of what I have taught in previous years, Pentecost is the birth of the Church. In this age, we are supposed to prophecy God's love. We are to prophecy the saving work of Jesus. We are to prophecy the Power of the Holy Spirit. Each person needs this personal Pentecost. The Church needs this Pentecost. Our culture **desperately** needs this Pentecost.

At this past Tuesday's Zoom bible study, I was asked, "If this is the birth of the church, why are there so many different churches?" What a great question. We must acknowledge that because the church is a gathering of people, there is no perfect church. There is no doubt that the Enemy, Satan, is at work to dilute our effectiveness in our kingdom work. I believe our pride and self-centeredness also contribute greatly to divisions and dissensions in the Body of Christ.

Yes, there can be honest differences in theological opinions. We believe what we believe because we think we are right. If we didn't think we were right, then we obviously wouldn't believe it. We **MUST**

realize though that it is the same for those with whom we disagree. We are supposed to be people of grace. We have been saved by grace and we should be communicators of grace. Imagine if grace was as contagious as a virus.

It is actually healthy for us to have some diversity in our opinions. The Holy Spirit brings unity not conformity. When we discuss those areas in which we disagree in a loving and respectful manner, not only do we come to a clearer understanding of what and why we believe them, we come to a better understanding of our brother or sister in Christ. Always remember that they too are image bearers of God.

Our Christian Churches are even divided over the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Is speaking in tongues a necessary sign of being saved? Are the miraculous gifts still in effect or have they ceased? Faithful and dedicated students of the Bible disagree and each position can make a strong appeal to the scriptures. Is the problem with the scriptures? Or, are our differences in opinion an opportunity to engage in a loving and discerning dialogue?

Francis Chan was a megachurch pastor in California. He might be best known for his book *Crazy Love*. He resigned from his church and started a network of home churches so that he could develop a serious face to face discipleship ministry. Now, he is living in Hong Kong and doing mission trips into remote regions that have never heard about Jesus. For most all of Chan's life he believed the Charismatic gifts had ceased during the apostolic era. This week I read an article and watched a video where he shared that he has witnessed miraculous healings in his latest missionary efforts.

We are called in Ephesians 4:2 (NIV84) [to] Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Philippians 2:3 (NIV84) Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, **but in humility consider others better than yourselves.** (repeat)

Micah 6:8 (NIV84)

He [God] has showed you, O man, what is good.

And what does the Lord require of you?

To act justly and to love mercy

and to walk humbly with your God.

[WE must remember that] All men are like grass, and all their glory is like the flower of the field.

The grass withers and the flower fades,

Because the breath of the Lord blows on it.

Surely the people are grass.

The grass withers and the flower fades,

But the word of our God stands forever. ([Isaiah 40:6–8](#))

CONCLUSION:

In my devotional for May 27th, A. W. Tozer makes this observation about humility: His verse was "*All of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility. (1 Peter 5:5)*"

I have met two classes of Christians; the proud who imagine they are humble, and the humble who are afraid they are proud!

There should be another class: the self-forgetful men and women who leave the whole thing in the hands of Christ and refuse to waste any time trying to make themselves good. They will reach the goal far ahead of the rest.

The truly humble person does not expect to find virtue in himself, and when he finds none he is not disappointed. He knows that any good deed he may do is the result of God's working within him.

When this belief becomes so much a part of any man or woman that it operates as a kind of unconscious reflex, he or she is released from the burden of trying to live up to the opinion they hold of themselves.

They can relax and count upon the Holy Spirit to fulfill the moral law within them.

Let us never forget that the promises of God are made to the humble: the proud man by his pride forfeits every blessing promised to the lowly heart, and from the hand of God he need expect only justice!"

My friends, I tell you, if we want to live in the power of our personal Pentecost; if we want to have the abundant life that Jesus promised; if we are to be part of the movement and mission of God; then there is something we must ALL do. We need to empty of self so that we can be filled with the Savior.

Amen and amen. Let us pray.

Lord, the keeper of my soul. I confess that I am tired. The battle with the sin within me is wearing me out. There is no doubt that I fear you and revere you God; yet, I still struggle to live a life worthy of my calling. How much more isolated and discouraged are people that don't know You and love You? Where is their hope?

There is a part of me that wants to retreat. I long for the quiet cabin in the woods where the worries of this world cannot intrude. I know that there are many people that feel the same way. But that cannot be your solution because that would be desertion of our Christian calling.

We pray for the power of that Pentecostal fire to burn intensely within our being. Almighty God, let nothing within us hinder us from being the disciples of Jesus that the world needs us to be. May our personal fires and gifts come together and blaze a heavenly blessing over this church and our community.

I pray all this in the wonderful name of our Savior, Jesus. Amen.