

"I will pour out my Spirit..."

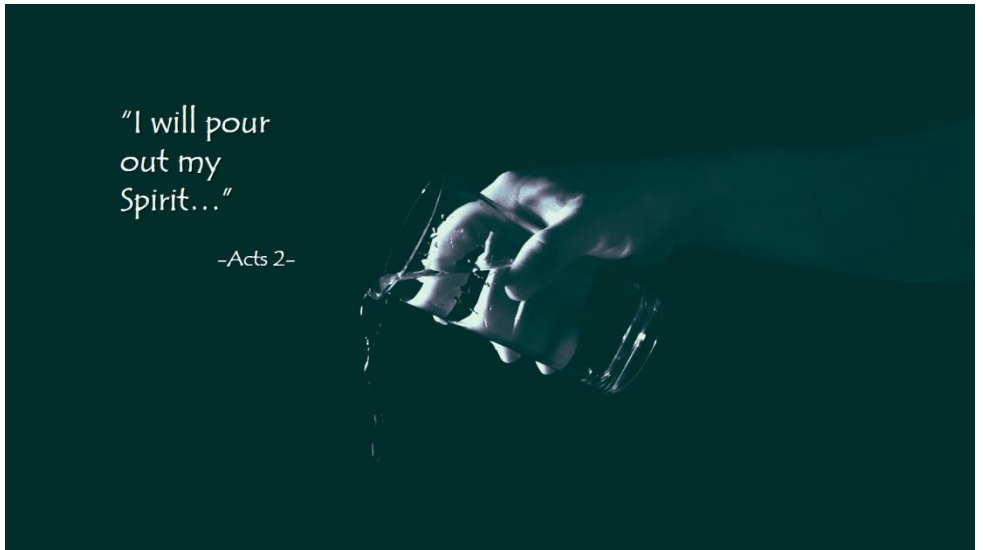
- Acts 2, Part 1 -

by Pastor Tim Dodson
at JF Believers Church
in Menomonie, Wisc
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1 When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. 2 And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. 3 Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them. 4 And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. 5 And there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men, from every nation under heaven. 6 And when this sound occurred, the multitude came together, and were confused, because everyone heard them speak in his own language. 7 Then they were all amazed and marveled, saying to one another, "Look, are not all these who speak Galileans?" 8 "And how is it that we hear, each in our own language in which we were born?" 9 "Parthians and Medes and Elamites, those dwelling in Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, 10 "Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya adjoining Cyrene, visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, 11 "Cretans and Arabs—we hear them speaking in our own tongues the wonderful works of God." 12 So they were all amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, "Whatever could this mean?" 13 Others mocking said, "They are full of new wine." 14 But Peter, standing up with the eleven, raised his voice and said to them, "Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and heed my words. 15 "For these are not drunk, as you suppose, since it is only the third hour of the day. 16 "But this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: 17 'And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, That I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh; Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, Your young men shall see visions, Your old men shall dream dreams. 18 And on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days; And they shall prophesy. 19 I will show wonders in heaven above And signs in the earth beneath: Blood and fire and vapor of smoke. 20 The sun shall be turned into darkness, And the moon into blood, Before the coming of the great and awesome day of the LORD. 21 And it shall come to pass That whoever calls on the name of the LORD Shall be saved.' 22 "Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a Man attested by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs which God did through Him in your midst, as you yourselves also know— 23 "Him, being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death; 24 "whom God raised up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that He should be held by it. 25 "For David says concerning Him: 'I foresaw the LORD always before my face, For He is at my right hand, that I may not be shaken. 26 Therefore my heart rejoiced, and my tongue was glad; Moreover my flesh also will rest in hope. 27 For You will not leave my soul in Hades, Nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption. 28 You have made known to me the ways of life; You will make me full of joy in Your presence.' 29 "Men and brethren, let me speak freely to you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. 30 "Therefore, being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that of the fruit of his body, according to the flesh, He would raise up the Christ to sit on his throne, 31 "he, foreseeing this, spoke concerning the resurrection of the Christ, that His soul was not left in Hades, nor did His flesh see corruption. 32 "This Jesus God has raised up, of which we are all witnesses. 33 "Therefore being exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He poured out this which you now see and hear. 34 "For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he says himself: 'The LORD said to my Lord, "Sit at My right hand, 35 Till I make Your enemies Your footstool.'" 36 "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ." 37 Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" 38 Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 "For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call." 40 And with many other words he testified and exhorted them, saying, "Be saved from this perverse generation." 41 Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them. 42 And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers. 43 Then fear came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles. 44 Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common, 45 and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need. 46 So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, 47 praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.

"I will pour
out my
Spirit..."

-Acts 2-



“And it shall come to pass afterward ,That I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh...” Joel 2:28

The best research available places the crucifixion of Christ on Friday, April 3, in the year 33. That may be somewhat innocuous, but the fact it fell on the Jewish Passover was not. For on that particular Passover, everything changed. For it was Jesus that year who was the Passover offering of the “unspotted lamb...”

The scriptures record God’s detailed instructions for observing the Passover. On the 10th day of the first month a lamb without blemish or fault was chosen by each family and set aside and inspected for imperfections until the 14th day of the month when it was to be killed as a sacrifice. In the first Passover in Egypt, the blood of that sacrifice was placed above and on both sides the door of the house of believers. One cannot miss the significance of the shape of the cross in such an act. Without the blood of the lamb no family would be spared the wrath of God. (*Exodus 12:23*). In the New Testament, Christ is referred to as a lamb without blemish (*1 Peter 1:19*). Christ's blood- the blood of the unblemished lamb- was shed for us on that long ago Passover in 33 AD (*Luke 22:20*).

In the New Testament, we read of how on the 10th day of the month Jesus rode into Jerusalem where the people chose Him (*John 12:12-13*). He stayed in Jerusalem for the days that followed where he was tested and inspected by the chief priests, Sanhedrin, and Pilate (*Matthew 26:59-60, Luke 23:4*). Just as the sacrificial lambs were found to be without fault, so too was Jesus found “without fault.” On the 14th day of the month of Abib, Jesus was crucified, or essentially *sacrificed*. On the very same afternoon that the Passover lambs were being killed as a sacrifice, Jesus - the Lamb of God- was being sacrificed for all of us. His blood would be the “protection”...the “covering” before God for the sins of all of mankind.

Now, leaping ahead 50 days following that Passover was the observance of Pentecost, also known as the Feast of Harvest. It was a time in which the people would offer to God the first fruits of their harvest (the first wheat to be brought in from the fields), with the expectation that God would bring in the rest of the harvest. This is significant, for we are clearly led to believe that the outpouring of the Holy Spirit came to the believers on the following Pentecost after that historical Passover...*50 days later*. That would mean that the believers prayed and waited as instructed for up to 50 days after the resurrection! I would imagine such a “wait” was a testing in itself.

The coming of the Holy Spirit that year would also naturally encompass the innate aspects of Pentecost...the surrender of the “first fruits” of our lives. For us, the literal and physical surrender of the first place of our lives and living to God. It was on this stage that the Spirit of God came to those believers. It is clear that within the reception of the Spirit, lies a crucial openness to God’s control...a surrender of our today and tomorrow...a trusting faith that if I place Him first in my heart, mind and living, He will come and “give you everything else you need.” (*Matthew 6:33*) This aspect of our Christianity is not an embellishment...a spiritual “addition.” It is the crucial full surrender of our lives to the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

Often when we first are reborn we know little about what this life of Christianity really is going to look like. We come knowing we are a sinner and we want forgiveness, a life with God’s involvement and of course *eternal life*. But as we learn and grow in knowledge we move on from the “milk” as Paul puts it and come to the understanding of what a disciple’s life looks like...we begin consuming the “meat.” Eventually, we effectively and essentially come to a second decision in our lives...*will we allow Jesus first place in our lives? Will he be Lord or just Savior?* If we, with clarity now, surrender that life to the control of Christ, we are ready to be baptized or *filled* with the Holy Spirit of God. Please note that He will not share the space with us. Only an “empty vessel” can be so filled by the Spirit of God. In *Philippians 2:7-8*, we read that Jesus “...made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in

appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.” The text says He made Himself “nothing” ...or “emptied Himself.” The word is “kenosis”, the “emptying” of all He was in humanity. The 'self-emptying' of Jesus' own will and becoming entirely receptive to God's divine will.

Now Pentecost had fully come, and He would indeed fill these disciples up to overflowing with the bounty of His blessings! This Pentecost would usher in a new covenant—a new agreement—with our Creator. The Law of God would no longer just be written in stone, but upon the hearts of mankind. God had sent His only Son to take our place. Jesus had taken upon Himself the debt of sin of all mankind. Now He would fill all who were willing with His very presence as well as His control. He would now possess **all of** who they are, and bring a clarity and spiritual state that can never be attained on our own...no matter how much we work and study!

The crucifixion Passover saw a “rescue from death” which reached far beyond the redemption of Israel from death in Egypt at that first Passover. Here in this “upper room” at Pentecost, the Holy Spirit of God was ready to rescue man from the *power* of death and sin. In a way, the Passover saved them physically, and the Pentecost Baptism in the Holy Spirit would save them spiritually.

When that day finally came, those that loved Him had *gathered together* and *gathered in one accord*. **Together**, they waited upon the Lord as they had been instructed. This is where the Spirit of God found them that day: *unified and obedient in spirit and body*. They stood **together** in obedience to His direction and unified in *soul*. “One accord” is translated out of the Greek language from a word that is found 12 times in the New Testament, 11 which appear in the book of Acts. This was a church that began unified. They understood their need and their emptiness, and *together* they sought the power of God in their midst.

We are failing today to leave the mark that that early church did. Perhaps it is because we are missing that dynamic of unity, and that precious gift delivered to those believers there, waiting obediently, in a non-descript upper room in Jerusalem. Unity...the spirit of “one accord,” is a practice and state of being that is front and center in Satan’s spiritual warfare against the church. God works through unity. Satan through division. And Satan’s onslaught against any kind of unity with others is clearly evident in the world at large. And sadly, the shifts of culture around us inevitably creep into the church and into those who make it up. If we are not careful and alert to Satan’s attacks, he has the potential to destroy a community with a cancer from within: one of “me-centered” pursuits and self-centered desires. Within the church, there is no “me.” Only “us.” We must always be aware that Satan is prowling around “seeking whom he may devour.” And “devour” he has. Not just here, but throughout the greater church!

2:2-4 *And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.*

The religious world can so often become lost in the *external* factors that were in play that day. We must not lose track of the primary issue which is found in verse four: “*and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit.*” The sound of a rushing mighty wind or *spirit*, (in Greek it is the same word), filled the room. There appeared *like*, or “*as of*” “tongues of fire.” (Note: “*like*,” in King James, in case you are waiting for “tongues of fire” to come rest upon you!)

We must note that Scripture records subsequent arrivals of the Holy Spirit upon others later in the book of Acts. These external characteristics were different or absent, yet the lasting elements of such an outpouring were

always the same! We note that in the gospels Jesus seemed to change His practice of healing nearly every time He manifested such power, apparently to discourage an embrace of a “recipe”...a “methodology” in the manifest of Gods divine power and presence. He knew that mankind tends to the adoption of a process or system in such matters, to the extent that the *result* becomes lost in the *mechanism*.

John the Baptist prophesied that Jesus would baptize with “*the Holy Spirit and with fire.*” Fireworks to purify as well as to burn away what is temporary, and to leave that which will last. This is a perfect picture of the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives today. The Spirit’s effect upon our lives is *more* than just *power*; it has a purifying effect upon our very being. God is still “purifying” his people and His church with fires of testing and cleansing.

They were all *filled*. This is the critical element of the event. Please note that the Spirit did not suddenly appear on the scene. He had been active in the lives of select individuals for hundreds of years, but this was different! This was an *outpouring*; this was a complete *filling*. Are you *filled* with the Spirit today? Or are you still thirsty? (John 7:37) We must never see the filling of the Holy Spirit as a Christian life option. It is a scriptural mandate. It is a direct command of Scripture: “*Be filled with the Spirit.*” (Eph. 5:18) Yes, a person can be born again and not so filled with the Spirit. But ultimately, that “period at the end of sentence” must occur, or you will not make it. If you are indeed reborn and owned by Christ, the surrender of your life and the falling under the control of the Holy Spirit will occur. It must or you are doomed to a life of chaos...perhaps saved and perhaps not, but the manifest of your life will be the same.

The Spirit fell upon those who were waiting for Him, and those present began to speak in other tongues. Paul lists the speaking of tongues as a gift of the Spirit in 1 Corinthians 12 and 14, along with the clear mention that “*all do not speak in tongues.*” Not everyone has every gift! He also clearly places it on equal footing with all of the other gifts except one, and that is the gift of love. Love is the supreme gift given to all, and to be exercised by all! Despite the attention that has accompanied this issue, the gift of speaking in tongues *is* no more or less a miraculous event than any other miracle in Scripture. Why do we attempt to escape such a truth by denying its existence or exalting it higher than any other?

It is obvious from the text that the languages that were spoken that day were unknown by those who spoke them, but were not unknown altogether. For there were those present, or at least within earshot, that did indeed know those languages. (verse 11) In fact, it seems to have played a very real part of the massive evangelistic crusade that occurred that day. People from all over who were in Jerusalem that day for Pentecost were no doubt reborn upon the words of Peter and carried Christianity and the Spirit back home to their own country and regions and languages.

However, we can gather from other verses such as 1 Corinthians 13:1, that some languages are not always known languages. We also know of the attempts by some denominational groups who, because of embarrassing abuses by certain charismatic churches, have attempted to erase this gift from existence. For sure, the gift of tongues is one of the greatest denominational divides in history, and that’s sad for it need not be so.

While we cannot give an in-depth and complete study here concerning the issue of the gift of tongues, we can, and should put this issue into the context and reality of the passage that we have before us. The gift of tongues is a reality. It is true that they must be practiced according to 1 Corinthians...that of order not chaos...and again, it is a gift possessed by some and not others. But we have no reason to believe otherwise other than our often discomfort and inordinate fear of the unknown. The truth is that it is just quite simply worldly uncomfortable. If that was enough to ward us off, would we even be here worshipping a Creator we so often fail to grasp?

Those bystanders that were present asked the question many folks have been asking for a long time: “*Whatever could this mean?*” Legitimate question. 1 Corinthians 14:21-22 tells us that tongues are a sign to unbelievers. 1 Corinthians 14:2, and verses 13-15, tell us that it is a vehicle of communication between man and God. Peter elaborates further.

In verses 14-28, we see a presentation of a known characteristic and attribute of the working of the Holy Spirit, the tongues ended as Peter began to preach. Peter pointed out that these men couldn’t be drunk because it was only 9 a.m. Even for a Jew who indulged in drink, to drink at such an hour was unthinkable, for that period of the day was strictly set aside for prayer.

Yet the bystanders present that day thought that these tongue talkers were drunk. Sounds familiar! But Peter was quick to explain that everything occurring was not only *scriptural*, but *prophetic*. Yet these witnesses were a group that had all come to Jerusalem for the festival of Pentecost. They would have been speaking many different dialects and even different languages, and these folks all heard their own tongue being spoken by people who should not naturally be able to do so. In a situation difficult to understand, Peter did what we all should do: **he had a Bible study!** “*This is what the prophet Joel wrote about...*” Peter went on to speak of future events, the miraculous, and, most importantly, about salvation and the one to whom it would come through: *Jesus Christ*.

Peter elaborates further in what is a short history of the plan and redemption of Jesus Christ, something we commonly call “The Gospel” or “*good news*” of the salvation of Jesus Christ! Peter did not give a classic religious altar call. He just preached the Word, the *truth*, and the people sought the Lord. Coming to an understanding of their sin, the people asked -as man does even yet today -*what should we do?*

Peter instructs them to *repent, be baptized, and receive the Holy Spirit*. This is the path of redemption and a life of faith. It is not complicated or exclusive! The “*promise is to you and your children... (even) to all who are far off...*” That’s us! That day began the salvation of untold millions that would follow. The new Spirit-filled Peter boldly spoke the Word of God, and three thousand people were “reborn!”

2:42-43 And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers. Then fear came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles.

Please note that the early church was focused upon four things: *the Word of God, fellowship, eating together, and prayer*. One cannot help but wonder how the church today has become so distracted by other things! Politics, comforts, titles, worldly clout and power, and prestigious buildings seem to be the focus today. The greater church reflects this in its lack of the attributes of God’s presence and the miraculous. A new sense of awe, respect, and trepidation settled in amongst the new believers. There was a clearer understanding of the presence and power of God. God, for these believers, was *real*.

While tongues like fire and mighty rushing winds were incredible and marvelous events, these last two verses stand as the abiding legacy to the work and the presence of the Holy Spirit. Their lives in Christ became a *daily* manifestation. They attended church, they fellowshiped together and they praised God! They did all of this with the joy that being believers brings to a righteous group of people.

The church grew because of this, not because of demographics and new church growth methods! Those things are fragile and temporary, a church built on shifting sand. However, the church that is built upon the rock will

stand the test of time. Salvation and church growth is ultimately the Lord's work. Our part is to be obedient, practice love for each other, and to *continue daily*.

There was an overt presence of humility in that early church. There was unity and other-centered love. I have discovered over the years that when an individual's heart and language changes from "us," to "me" and "them," it is only a matter of time before that person moves on. Jesus "emptied Himself" to go to the cross filled with the presence and power of God's Spirit. These early church members "emptied themselves" and were filled with that same presence and power of God. The emptier we are, the more we can be filled.

In 2 Kings 4 we read the story of Elisha and the widow woman. In that account, the woman was poor and had nothing. Elisha told her to go and gather jars—from all her neighbors, and then to take the jar of oil (a biblical picture of the Holy Spirit) and pour it into the vessels she had collected. As long as she had empty vessels to use, the oil would continue to flow, but when her sons told her they had no more vessels, the oil stopped. As long as the Lord has empty vessels, who are wholly yielded to Him, He pours out His Spirit, for He gives the Spirit without measure (John 3:34). When the vessels have been filled, these pour out what they have because they cannot contain the presence of God inside of them. It overflows out of them like rivers of living water (John 7:38). This is what is supposed to happen when you're filled with the Holy Spirit. As long as there was something empty to be filled in the widow's home, the oil didn't stop flowing. So it is with us, for God seeks to use vessels fit for His use, and so long as He can find people empty of the world and themselves, He can and will fill them and flow through them. **Do we hear this message church?**