

## HOLY SPIRIT-2011

Weren't those testimonies inspiring.  
And it was inspiring to see the doves being waved over the congregation.  
It symbolized the movement of the Holy Spirit as we celebrate Pentecost Sunday.

And the altar arrangement with the beautiful dove, with the flame and red flowers  
symbolizing the tongues of fire on the day of Pentecost was inspiring too.

There have been a lot of traditions and rituals established over the years  
to help teach and celebrate Pentecost.

My favorite Pentecost tradition was begun in the Middle Ages.  
Churches and cathedrals throughout Western Europe  
were built and fitted with small circular openings in the roof.  
Those openings were called HOLY SPIRIT HOLES.

At Pentecost the Congregation sang "Spirit of the Living God, Fall Afresh On Me,"  
the Holy Ghost holes were opened up, red and white rose petals,  
and even white doves fell from the "above."

Isn't that amazing? Churches were designed and built with Pentecost in mind.

**Pentecost** began as one of the great holidays of the Jewish faith.  
The Jewish nation celebrated the first fruits of their harvest, sort of a Thanksgiving celebration.

They also celebrate that they were God "first people."  
Pentecost was an affirmation of their identity as God's people.  
And on Pentecost they also celebrated God's gift of the law to them through Moses.

Today we as Christians run a parallel track.  
We celebrate the first fruits of faith, that being Jesus and the disciples.  
We celebrate our birth as a body of believers, our identity as the people of God.

And we celebrate God's gift not the gift of the law  
but God's the gift of God's presence with us, of the Holy Spirit.

So let's talk about that movement of the Holy Spirit and how we should respond to it.

### **THE CHURCH WAITS**

Jesus was with the disciple's after his resurrection, Acts 1.4  
**"On one occasion, while he was eating with them he gave them this command;  
Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you hear me speak about."**

Wait is the operative word and we don't like to wait do we?  
They say patience is a virtue, it's pretty much a lost virtue for most of us.

Think about how fast computers are and how much information we have at our disposal.  
But, if we have to wait 30-40 seconds, or even 5-10 seconds.  
to get an answer or pull up some info we're frustrated, maybe even outraged.

We live in a day that when we want to do something, we, "Just do it."  
We don't have to wait. We are our own authority.  
Our needs, actually what we want comes first and foremost.

Maybe it is the early bird that gets the worm,  
but more often it probably is the second mouse that gets the cheese.  
And maybe it's even more likely God simply honors the one who waits.

To wait, it's like being a waiter in a restaurant who continues to wait on people.  
They continue to serve, meeting the needs of others while waiting for further orders.

And those orders may not seem like the best for us.  
The Holy Spirit often times invites us into unreasonable, unpleasant, and painful places.

Nehemiah is a wonderful example. He was a captive in Persian, (which is modern day Iran).  
serving the king as the wine taster and he gets bad news from back home.  
Jerusalem has basically been destroyed, the wall is in shambles, and the place is run by corrupt leaders.

He waits for the Lord, and as he waits for the Lord he waits upon the King.  
Nehemiah serves faithfully until God provide opportunity, Nehemiah 2.2-3,  
**"So the king asked me, Why does your face look so sad when you are not ill?  
This can be nothing but sadness of heart."**

Nehemiah tells him his woes and Artaxerxes replies, verse 4 **"What is it you want?"**  
Nehemiah prays, asks the king to give him what he needs,  
then off he goes to Jerusalem and rebuild the wall.

Timing was the key, God's timing. Nehemiah didn't just go charging off to fix the wall in Jerusalem.  
He waits on the Artaxerxes as he waits for God.

Is there something you think God wants you to do but things haven't fallen into place yet?  
God hasn't given you the green light yet?  
Be patient, wait upon the Lord.

You just might want to worship while you wait.

### **THE CHURCH WORSHIPS**

Remember Jesus had promised them before he had to leave and that the HS would come.  
He gave them the command, he blessed them, he ascended into heaven;  
Luke 24.52-3, **"Then they worshiped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy.  
And they stayed continually at the temple, praise God.**

Things happen when we worship when we least expect it simply because we're in the right place.

John Wesley, bumped out one night, went to a prayer meeting  
 he really didn't want to go to but he did, and he had his heart strangely warmed.  
 He knew that beyond a shadow of a doubt that Jesus had died for him, if for no one else.

At Acquire the fire, some of our youth were thinking, "ho hum, is that all there is to this, is that all you got.  
 And a few minutes later they didn't know what to think.  
 There were tears rolling down their checks, hands waving in the air, and voices praising God.

You've heard Bill and Lynnn talk about their experience on Mother's day.  
 There was surely a Sweet, Sweet Spirit in this place because that same day.

Tonya Jark, too, was touched by the Holy Spirit.  
 She described that experience as a wave of well-being,  
 a wave of warmth sweeping over her bringing tears of joy.

Back to the Scripture those on the steps of the temple on the Feast of Pentecost, Acts 2.1,  
**"When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place."**  
 That one place, probably the Southern steps of the temple because you need a place where a large  
 diverse crowd could gather and a place where you could baptize 3000 people.

Well the Spirit moved and they began to prophesy, they began to witness, Acts 2.6,  
**"When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment,  
 because each one heard them speaking in their own language."**

And the first response, at least for some, Acts 2.13,  
**"Some made fun of them and said, 'They have had too much wine.'"**

Just know as you worship, how you worship, what and who you worship is a witness.

### **THE CHURCH WITNESSES**

Peter jumps up to explain what happened. He starts to preach.  
 He says, let me explain this to you, listen carefully, these men are not drunk.  
 It is only nine in the morning. Then he quotes the prophet Joel from their Bible.

It's always a good thing to do if you're preaching to quote the Bible.  
 And in his sermon he is going to say what happened, how it happened, and why it happened.

**HE EXPLAINED WHAT HAPPENED**, Acts 2.17,  
**"That the Spirit of God will be poured out on all people."**

That is pretty much a given for us in the way we think, but back in their day,  
 for the most part it was men, the older and wise, and the rich that were blessed and could preach.

He says this twice, V17, **"your sons and daughters will prophesy,"**  
 And verse 18, **"both men and women I will pour my Spirit in those days and they will prophesy."**

Which means women as well as men will receive the Spirit.  
**"young men will see visions, old men will dream dreams,"**

Which means the young as well as the old,

verse 18, **“Even on my servants,”**

Which means the Spirit will be poured out the poor as well as the rich.

When accept Jesus Christ as our Savior and Lord, we’re given the Spirit of God, the presence and power of God lives in us. Do you believe that?

Jesus promised that, Acts 1.8, **“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you.”**

The root word for power is the same root word for dynamite and for dynamic.

Jesus promised that and poured that out, Peter prophesied that, Acts 2.33,

**“...he has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear.”**

Jesus promised, Peter prophesied it, and Paul proclaims it, I Corinthians 3.16,

**“Don’t you know that you yourselves are God’s temple and God’s Spirit lives in you?”**

We’re given the Spirit of God, we have the presence and power of God living in us. Do you believe that?

Peter explained what happened and now **HE EXPLAINS HOW IT HAPPENED.**

It’s basically Christ has come, Christ has died, Christ has risen.

In Acts 2. 22 and following he speaks of God’s provision and protection in Jesus.

He **CAME** and among the people did **“miracles, signs, and wonders.”**

**He DIED,** He was handed over them, and to wicked men and **“was put to death by nailing him on a cross.”**

**AND HE HAS RISEN** , **“But God raised him from the dead.”**

Peter explained what happened, how it happened, and then tells them **WHY IT HAPPENED,**

When they heard Peter preach, Acts 2.37, **“...They were cut to the heart.**

**They were** ”convicted!!! And they said, **...’Brothers, what do we do?”**

Peter responds, Acts 2.38, **“Repent and be baptized every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins, (and guess what?) you will receive the Holy Spirit.”**

And then we will be witnesses, Acts 2.32, **“God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of that fact.**

**SO WHY DID IT HAPPEN?**

It happened so that we and others might be convicted and come to a saving knowledge in Jesus Christ.

We celebrate the day of Pentecost today, a community, the church, the people of God, were born out of the heart of God, so that others can come to be born again, so that others can come to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ.