

Acts 2:1-8, 14-17 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?...¹⁴ Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd...let me explain this to you; listen carefully to what I say...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.

For the Jew, the day of Pentecost was an important festival. It was a time to remember the giving of the Law on Mount Sinai as well as a festival of thanksgiving for the harvest. It came on the fiftieth day after the Passover Sabbath. And on this particular Pentecost, God did some amazing things.

There was a sound like a violent wind. There was what looked like flames of fire. There was the ability to speak in other languages. All these got the attention of the people in Jerusalem so that through the powerful word of God spoken that day the Holy Spirit could work faith in the hearts of thousands of people.

1. Why is it important to take note of the words “*like* the blowing of a violent wind” and “*what seemed to be* tongues of fire?”
2. Which miracle showed that the Spirit was present in the hearts of the disciples?
3. On the basis of Acts 2, what would you say to the person who says the apostles’ speech was just babbling which the hearers then interpreted?
4. What was the primary purpose of Pentecost?

Prayer: O Holy Spirit, dwell in our hearts today and always, that we may be forever connected to Jesus. Amen.
John 15:26,27 – “When the Counselor comes, whom I will send to you from the Father—the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father—he will testify about me. ²⁷ And you also are going to testify, because you have been with me from the beginning.”

These words took place 53 days before Pentecost. It was Maundy Thursday, the day before Jesus would die on the cross for the sins of the world. Night had fallen. Jesus had spent the last few hours in the Upper Room with his disciples celebrating the Passover. The meal was over, the disciples' feet washed, his betrayer exposed, the Lord's Supper instituted, and now Jesus continues to teach, instruct and encourage his disciples.

What was Jesus teaching and encouraging his disciples about on the day before his death? Well, in the words right before our lesson, Jesus warns his disciples (both then and now) that the world would hate them just as it hated him. And in a matter of hours and days the disciples would see that. They would see the mob that went to arrest Jesus. They would hear the cry, "Crucify him!" They would hide themselves behind locked doors fearing the same thing would happen to them. So, in the context of Jesus words, what he shares next is meant to comfort and strengthen the disciples: **"When the Counselor comes, whom I will send to you from the Father—the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father—he will testify about me."**

Jesus told his disciples he was going to send them a counselor. He is speaking about the Holy Spirit. And look at what he would do for the disciples – he would testify about Jesus. In other words, they would be able to withstand the world's hatred because of the special ministry of the Holy Spirit that directed them to look to Jesus.

1. What did Jesus warn the disciples about that made it necessary for them to have encouragement?

2. In what ways do we face hatred from the world for being believers?

3. How does the Holy Spirit help us withstand the world's hatred?

Prayer: O Holy Spirit, as you testify to us about Jesus in your Word, open our hearts to receive it in faith and comfort us with the truths it reveals. Amen.

We can think of the Holy Spirit's work this way. Imagine waking up one day and finding out that you are being sued by someone. It's a very complicated lawsuit. You don't understand it. So who do you call? You call a lawyer, your legal counselor. He sits at your side. He explains all the complicated things to you. He helps you understand what's going on and what you need to do about the situation. Without your legal counselor, you'd be lost. That's what the Holy Spirit does for us.

The reason this is necessary can be summarized well in a passage from 1 Corinthians. There we read, **"The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are [evaluated spiritually]" (1 Corinthians 2:14).** Without the work of the Holy Spirit, we cannot know Jesus or the way to salvation.

Of course, we don't like to think that. That's one of our sins isn't it? We aren't willing to admit weakness, a fault, a spiritual blindness. Instead, we want to puff ourselves up and think we can figure it out on our own. We don't want to be dependent upon anyone. We don't want anyone telling us what we should do, how we should act, or that our natural way of thinking about salvation is all wrong and will only earn us hell.

That's why we need the Holy Spirit.

1. How is the Holy Spirit like a legal counselor?
2. Why is it proper to say that without the Holy Spirit we would be lost?
3. What specific sin of ours does pastor mention in this section?
 - a. How have you seen it in yourself?

Prayer: O Holy Spirit, show us Jesus again and again, that our trust in him may grow day by day. Amen.

Friends, it wasn't just the first disciples who were on Jesus' mind in those hours before he died. It was all who would follow after them too. That means you and me. And the Helper he promised is for you too. This Helper continues to testify about Jesus – about what he did, about why he did it, and about what it now means for you. Where is this testimony?

It isn't found in our "feelings." This testimony isn't found by looking at what is accepted in society. Nor is it found in the approval of friends. No, the Spirit comes in a more certain way – through the Bible.

There he testifies concerning the truth about ourselves. That truth is that we are sinners, guilty of falling short of the righteous requirements of God. The Holy Spirit counsels us by holding the mirror of God's law before our very eyes. When he does, it shows us that **"whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it" (James 2:10)**. That means the unkind word you spoke, the whining because things didn't go your way, and the impure thought you had made you fully guilty. As a result, **"no one will be declared righteous in [God's] sight by observing the law" (Romans 3:20)**.

Without that work of the Spirit, we would never understand why Jesus came to pay for our sins. We would never see a need for a Savior and we would comfortably slide our way into hell. Then, having brought us to recognize our sin and inability to earn heaven, the Spirit testifies to the work Jesus.

1. Where is the testimony of the Holy Spirit found?
 - a. Why is that so important to remember?
2. What is the truth about ourselves that the Spirit testifies to?
 - a. Why is it essential that we know that?

Prayer: O Holy Spirit, keep Jesus always before our eyes. Amen.

If we want forgiveness, if we want to be right with God, if we want peace with God and life with God both now and forever in heaven, we need to see Jesus. We need to see the life he lived because it was a perfect life and he lived it in our place. We need to see the death he died because it was a sacrificial death and paid for our sins. We need to see his victory over death because his resurrection guarantees ours.

When the good news of Jesus is proclaimed, the Holy Spirit goes to work on our hard hearts and turns them into little sponges that soak up all the goodness of forgiveness and eternal life God wants us to enjoy in Christ. The Holy Spirit's job isn't to "wow" us with signs. His job isn't to shock you with some spectacular religious experience. His main job is to testify about Jesus. His main job is to bring us to faith so that we understand and believe all the things Jesus has done for us.

That's real help! That's help for times of good and times of bad. That's help when tempted to chase after the things of the world. That's help when sick and dying. That's help when hated by the world. That's help in every season under the sun. It is the answer that there is hope for those who trust in Jesus. It's help when it comes to witnessing to people in our lives.

1. If we want forgiveness, if we want to be right with God, if we want peace with God and life with God both now and forever in heaven what do we need?
2. What might we say the main work of the Holy Spirit is?
 - a. Do you know what the work of the Holy Spirit is called?
3. How is being brought to faith so that we understand and believe all the things Jesus has done for us "real help"?

Prayer: O Holy Spirit, be our constant source of help so that we might always love and understand our Savior. Amen.

From the disciple's point of view, they didn't really understand all that Jesus came to do. It didn't make sense to them. But on Pentecost, the Holy Spirit came to them and caused them to understand. They connected the dots, so to speak. With mature faith, they could go out and testify about Jesus to others so the Holy Spirit could work in the hearts of others as well.

The process to this day is essentially the same. Through the Bible, the Spirit comes to us and shows us Jesus. Through the message of Jesus we are brought to faith. Then, in faith we witness to others, and the sequence repeats. It's one of the ways the Holy Spirit helps us.

We need that help. You see, we have a tendency to be timid. We fear what others might think of us. We are concerned about how they will react. We worry about losing friends. We get caught up with the things of this world so that we forget that witnessing to others about Jesus is part of our ministry here on earth. But witnessing is what Christians do. Did you notice the words of our lesson – **“And you also are going to testify.”**

Jesus didn't say we might witness. He didn't say those who feel like it will witness. He didn't suggest that witnessing would be a good thing to do. He didn't say when you've had the Spirit for a while you'll be ready to witness. No, he says, you also are going to testify. It's what Christians do.

Many of you come into contact with more people who need to hear about Jesus than I do. Think about it. I am called to serve the members of Faith. I do that by visiting members in hospital, nursing home and in their homes. I serve you through worship and Bible class. Yes, I also reach out with the word. But you will interact with many people who don't know Jesus, people who don't see a need for a Savior and are comfortably walking into hell. The Spirit is waiting...waiting to witness through you to the world. And he will help you do this.

1. Why might we say the old saying “wash, rinse, repeat,” could be a good motto for this section of pastor’s sermon?
2. In what way does Jesus indicate that witnessing isn’t optional for the Christian?
3. What is the point of pastor highlighting the fact that the members often come into contact with more unbelievers than he does?

Prayer: O Holy Spirit, use us in this beautiful cycle of gospel proclamation all our days. Amen.

You know, nobody really talks about the cameraman. You never really see him either. He is literally behind the scenes. But even though we never really talk about him or see him, his work is important. In fact, his work is vital. Without him we wouldn't be able to see the show.

The work of the Holy Spirit is a lot like the work of a cameraman. Think of it this way: when we think of the message of the Bible, we rightly think of Jesus as the main character. Everything revolves around him. He's the show. But without the Holy Spirit we wouldn't know this. He is the one who testifies about Jesus. He is the one who opens our eyes so we see Jesus for who he truly is.

This happens only through the Word. If you want to see the movie, you've got to turn the television on. If we want to have the Holy Spirit testify about Jesus, we need to be in the Word. If we want to grow in our witness to the world, we need to be in the word. That is how the Holy Spirit helps us. Make use of his help dear Christian friends. Amen.

1. What is the point of comparing the Holy Spirit and his work to that of a cameraman?

2. What do these passages teach us about the Holy Spirit?

And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God's will. (Romans 8:27)

All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he gives them to each one, just as he determines. (1 Corinthians 12:11)

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness and self-control. (Galatians 5:22,23)

Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:19)

Prayer: O Holy Spirit, bless our time spent in God's Word that our faith in Jesus may grow ever stronger. Amen.

ANSWER PAGES

PAGE 1

1. Why is it important to take note of the words “*like* the blowing of a violent wind” and “*what seemed to be* tongues of fire?” It shows us that these were not just “natural” things that the disciples exaggerated. These were external miracles. But we recognize it wasn’t exactly fire or wind.
2. Which miracle showed that the Spirit was present in the hearts of the disciples? Their ability to speak in tongues.
3. On the basis of Acts 2, what would you say to the person who says the apostles’ speech was just babbling which the hearers then interpreted? The people present in Jerusalem that day clearly said, “each of us hears them in his own native language.” That means these were known languages that the disciples were speaking. They hadn’t learned them before, but the Spirit gave them the ability to speak them. This is much different than the “tongues” spoken in holiness churches today. Today, it is just babbling. The disciples weren’t babbling.
4. What was the primary purpose of Pentecost? The primary purpose of Pentecost was to fill the disciples with the Holy Spirit.

PAGE 2

1. What did Jesus warn the disciples about that made it necessary for them to have encouragement? He warned them that the world was going to hate them.
2. In what ways do we face hatred from the world for being believers? Your answers will vary as there are many ways the world demonstrates this hatred. For some believers, they endure physical hatred in the form of injury or death. We haven’t gotten to that point yet. But we still face hate. We might lose a job promotion or a friendship because we put Jesus first and don’t go along with the crowd. We might face hate with hurtful speech from those who pass by when we stand guarding the tomb. We might face hate when people attack our character or our church because we don’t agree with a sinful lifestyle.
3. How does the Holy Spirit help us withstand the world’s hatred? He testifies about Jesus. That is another way of saying he helps keep our eyes focused on Jesus. This is all important because Jesus is the comfort and strength we need in these times. In Jesus we find promise after promise and know those promises will be fulfilled. Promises like: “I will be with you always to the very end of the age.” “I will give you the strength to stand up under whatever trial comes your way.” “Don’t be afraid of those who can only harm the body.” “I have overcome the world.” In addition, it is when we are pointed to Jesus that we are pointed to the comforting future of heaven, where we will not deal with these things. Heaven is the real home of every believer.

PAGE 3

1. How is the Holy Spirit like a legal counselor? A legal counselor explains the confusing and intricate aspects of the law to their client. Without that legal counselor, the client would not be able to understand or know what is going on. Well, the Holy Spirit opens our eyes and “explains” to us the beautiful and intricate aspects of God’s Word to us. Without the Holy Spirit, we would not understand the word. It would be foolishness to us.
2. Why is it proper to say that without the Holy Spirit we would be lost? We often say that without Jesus we would be lost, and that is correct. Without his life, death and resurrection for us as our substitute, we could not be saved and we would be lost forever. But it is just as accurate to say that without the Holy Spirit we would be lost. Without the Holy Spirit enlightening us to see the truth about ourselves and our need for a Savior; without the Holy Spirit opening our eyes to see Jesus is that Savior; and without the Holy Spirit creating faith in Jesus as our Savior, we would never benefit from the work Jesus did on our behalf. Oh how marvelous the work of God the Holy Spirit.
3. What specific sin of ours does pastor mention in this section? It really is a sin of pride. The pride of not wanting to think that we are spiritually blind, corrupt and lost in our natural state. The pride that wants to deny that we would end up in hell without the Spirit’s work through the word.

- a. How have you seen it in yourself? This pride shows itself in many different ways. It shows itself in thinking that we aren't as bad as others. It shows itself in not wanting to submit ourselves to the Word and what it says about how we are to live. It shows itself in a work-righteous attitude that thinks that somehow we are able to do something to earn our salvation. Perhaps you can come up with other ways.

PAGE 4

1. Where is the testimony of the Holy Spirit found? Only in the Bible.
 - a. Why is that so important to remember? Too often, people want to put an emphasis on how they feel, and that if they "feel" strongly enough about something then the Spirit must be moving them. But he works through the Word. Another reason that is so important to remember is because people so often think they can remain strong in their faith even if they aren't in the Word. That isn't going to happen, because the Holy Spirit works through the Word. We need to remember to stay connected to the Word.
2. What is the truth about ourselves that the Spirit testifies to? That we are sinners who are guilty of falling short of God's glory and deserving of hell.
 - b. Why is it essential that we know that? If we don't recognize that, we will never really understand the need for a Savior.

PAGE 5

1. If we want forgiveness, if we want to be right with God, if we want peace with God and life with God both now and forever in heaven what do we need? We need Jesus. We need Jesus because he is the only one who can actually deal with the problem of our sin and the problem of our lack of righteousness. He secured righteousness for us with his perfect life and removed the guilt of our sin with his sacrificial death on the cross.
2. What might we say the main work of the Holy Spirit is? The Holy Spirit's main work is to bring us out of the darkness of unbelief to faith and to make us holy.
 - a. Do you know what the work of the Holy Spirit is called? This work is called "sanctification." Sanctification means "to set apart." The Holy Spirit sets us apart from the unbelieving world by calling us to faith in Jesus. We are now holy and righteous in God's sight because we are clothed in Jesus' perfection. Furthermore, the Holy Spirit graciously sets us apart from the sinful behavior of the world around us by strengthening our faith so that we live according to the life God has called us to.
3. How is being brought to faith so that we understand and believe all the things Jesus has done for us "real help"? The answer to this question is found in the last paragraph in this devotion. "That's help for times of good and times of bad. That's help when tempted to chase after the things of the world. That's help when sick and dying. That's help when hated by the world. That's help in every season under the sun. It is the answer that there is hope for those who trust in Jesus. It's help when it comes to witnessing to people in our lives." What is being emphasized is that knowing Jesus and forgiveness and having a right relationship with God through Jesus enables us to deal with all the trouble that comes because of the world hating us. Part of that is because we know it won't last forever and that we have a perfect home in heaven waiting for us.

PAGE 6

1. Why might we say the old saying "wash, rinse, repeat," could be a good motto for this section of pastor's sermon? The Spirit would testify to the apostles about Jesus, calling to mind and giving meaning to all he had done among them. Then, as those he had chosen as his apostles, they would testify about Jesus. The process to this day is essentially the same. Through the witness of the apostles in the Word, the Spirit

comes to us and shows us Jesus. Then we bring the witness to others, and the sequence repeats – wash, rinse, repeat.

2. In what way does Jesus indicate that witnessing isn't optional for the Christian? He clearly says, "you also are going to testify." "Are going to testify" tells us that this is something we do, not something we might do. It is not an option.
3. What is the point of pastor highlighting the fact that the members often come into contact with more unbelievers than he does? Sometimes the mindset is that witnessing to others is someone else's "job." When we think corporately as a church, it's easy to think that this is the pastor's "job" or the outreach committee's "job." But the reality is that each individual member probably comes into contact with more people who need to hear about Jesus than does the pastor. This highlights the need for each Christian to see themselves as a witness through whom the Holy Spirit testifies. Let us see ourselves that way, trust the Spirit's help to do it, and make use of the opportunities offered to get better at it.

PAGE 7

1. What is the point of comparing the Holy Spirit and his work to that of a cameraman? In the same way that we don't "see" the cameraman and he works "behind the scenes," so does the Holy Spirit. However, without the cameraman, the show could not be seen. So also, without the Holy Spirit, we would not be able to see Jesus, know what he did for us, and believe in him.
2. What do these passages teach us about the Holy Spirit?

And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God's will. (Romans 8:27)

The Holy Spirit has a mind

All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he gives them to each one, just as he determines. (1 Corinthians 12:11)

The Holy Spirit has a will

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness and self-control. (Galatians 5:22,23)

The Holy Spirit has emotional feelings

Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:19)

The Holy Spirit is one of the persons of the Godhead active at baptism

All this is meant to show that the Holy Spirit is true God. He is referred to as a Person, not an "it." For further study of this, notice how the Holy Spirit is called God in the section of Acts below:

Now a man named Ananias, together with his wife Sapphira, also sold a piece of property. ² With his wife's full knowledge he kept back part of the money for himself, but brought the rest and put it at the apostles' feet.

³ Then Peter said, "Ananias, how is it that Satan has so filled your heart that you have lied to the Holy Spirit and have kept for yourself some of the money you received for the land? ⁴ Didn't it belong to you before it was sold? And after it was sold, wasn't the money at your disposal? What made you think of doing such a thing? You have not lied to men but to God."

⁵ When Ananias heard this, he fell down and died. And great fear seized all who heard what had happened. ⁶ Then the young men came forward, wrapped up his body, and carried him out and buried him.

⁷ About three hours later his wife came in, not knowing what had happened. ⁸ Peter asked her, "Tell me, is this the price you and Ananias got for the land?"

"Yes," she said, "that is the price."

⁹ Peter said to her, “How could you agree to test the Spirit of the Lord? Look! The feet of the men who buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out also.”

¹⁰ At that moment she fell down at his feet and died. Then the young men came in and, finding her dead, carried her out and buried her beside her husband. ¹¹ Great fear seized the whole church and all who heard about these events. ¹

¹ *The Holy Bible: New International Version*. (1984). (Ac 5:1–11). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.