



**Sermon Text: Acts 2:1-13**

*Sermon Date: August 13, 2017*

Our passage centered on one of the most important events in salvation history—the giving of the Holy Spirit to the church at Pentecost. In typical biblical fashion, Luke’s historical account is straightforward and matter-of-fact. In order to grasp the significance of Pentecost, we examined four aspects of it.

#### **EQUIPPED FOR MISSION**

The giving of the Holy Spirit to the disciples is how Jesus equipped the church to accomplish the Great Commission. Without the Spirit, the witness of the church is absolutely powerless. If the apostles went in their own strength, nothing would have happened. While we can quickly state our agreement with this truth, do we really believe it? Do we humbly confess our utter inability to live out the Christian life? Do we consciously depend upon the Holy Spirit? R. Kent Hughes says, “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.”

#### **A PROMISE KEPT**

We also saw that at Pentecost, God kept His promise. Jesus had promised to send the Spirit, and He did. In Ezekiel 36, God promised that in the new covenant he would “put my Spirit within you” and He did. Even further back, God promised that he would bless all the families of the earth through Abraham’s offspring (Gen. 12), and that promise finds fulfillment at Pentecost (see Gal. 3:14). God keeps His promises!

#### **OLD TESTAMENT ECHOES HEARD**

Beyond this, in Luke’s recording of the events of Pentecost we hear echoes of several Old Testament events. **The Feast of Weeks** was a celebration of the wheat harvest by offering the first fruits. At Pentecost, we see the conversion of 3,000 souls—the first fruits of an even greater harvest. By the time of Christ, Pentecost was considered the anniversary of **the giving of the Law at Sinai**. Just as Moses ascended up the mountain and descended to the people with the Law, Christ ascended on high and now pours out His Spirit on His people, to write the law on their hearts. The sound of a mighty wind blowing echoes Genesis 1:2, revealing that **a new creation** occurs at Pentecost. Lastly, we saw how the various languages utilized to praise God at Pentecost is a glimmer of **Babel’s judgment reversed** (Gen. 11).

#### **A POINT TO EMPHASIZE: A VERBAL WITNESS IS ALWAYS NECESSARY**

Lastly, we saw that a verbal witness is always necessary. A supernatural event clearly occurs. And yet it is met with confusion and ridicule. “What does this mean?” the crowd wonders. Without Peter’s speech, empowered by the Spirit, no one would have been saved! We must grasp that we too must give a verbal witness. We can’t just live a godly life and love people. We must also bear witness to Christ—his life, death and resurrection—with our words. While our witness must always be more than just words, it cannot be less than that. We must speak.

The necessity of speaking causes us to confront our fears and frailties. It forces us to confess our inadequacies. And that is the very thing God wants. Kent Hughes says, “Each time we acknowledge our inadequacy, he fills us with more of his Spirit so we can carry on his work. He will not fill our sails with the wind of the Holy Spirit unless we admit that the sails are empty. This requires humility and confession. The apostles were living in empty dependency until the filling came.”

#### **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

1. What stood out to you from the sermon and the biblical text from this Sunday?
2. Do you believe that all of the Christian life is beyond your natural ability? How can you actively cultivate an attitude of perpetual emptiness and dependence upon the Holy Spirit?
3. Why is it important to see that a verbal witness is always necessary? What causes you to hesitate to give a verbal witness to Jesus Christ in your daily life?