

On the day of Pentecost in Acts 2, the risen Lord Jesus begins to pour out what He promised: the Holy Spirit given to ordinary men and women so that His work can continue through them. He has already shed His blood on the cross for our sins and risen from the dead as Savior and Lord; now He empowers His people to proclaim that good news to the world.

1. The Day of Pentecost and the Coming of the Spirit (Acts 2:1–4)

Pentecost was the great feast held fifty days after Passover. At Passover, the lamb was slain. At Pentecost, Israel brought the firstfruits of the grain harvest to God. The priest would wave the sheaves before the Lord as an offering, acknowledging, *“Lord, the first and best belongs to You; the rest of the harvest is still coming.”*

It was no accident that God chose this feast. Jesus, the true Passover Lamb, had already been crucified and raised. Now, on the day that celebrated firstfruits, God begins a new kind of harvest: the gathering in of people—men and women, Jews and Gentiles—who will be saved through faith in Jesus.

Luke tells us that on that day, *“they were all with one accord in one place.”* The followers of Jesus were together, united in obedience and prayer, waiting for the promise of the Spirit.

Without warning,

- a sound like a rushing mighty wind filled the house,
- what looked like divided tongues of fire appeared and rested on each one,
- and “they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.”

Wind suggests the breath of God. Fire suggests His holy presence and purifying power. Tongues suggest speech—witness, proclamation, praise. The point is not a rigid formula (“it must always sound like wind,” “you must be sitting,” etc.), but that God Himself came upon them in power, and the evidence was unmistakable.

Practical application for believers:

Notice that *all* of them were filled, not just the apostles or a spiritual elite. God desires to fill every follower of Jesus with the Holy Spirit so that we can live and speak for Him. The question for us is not, “Am I gifted like someone else?” but, “Am I available and yielded to the Lord?”

You might pray: *“Lord Jesus, You gave the Spirit to Your church. Fill me afresh. Use me in whatever way You desire.”*

2. A Multinational Crowd and the Gift of Tongues (Acts 2:5–13)

Jerusalem at feast time was crowded with devout Jews from many nations. When the sound of the wind was heard, a crowd gathered. To their amazement, they heard these Galilean believers speaking in their own native languages.

Luke lists people from Parthia, Media, Elam, Mesopotamia, Judea, Cappadocia, Pontus, Asia, Phrygia, Pamphylia, Egypt, Libya, Rome, Crete, and Arabia. And what were they hearing? Not random

noise, not sermons aimed at the crowd, but *“the wonderful works of God”* being declared in their languages.

This fits perfectly with what Paul later explains: when someone speaks in a tongue, he is speaking to God, declaring mysteries, praise, and thanksgiving. When the tongues were understood at Pentecost, they were understood as worship and praise directed upward, not as messages directed downward to the people. When tongues are used in public worship, Scripture puts clear boundaries around them so that everything is done decently and in order and the church is built up with understanding.

The crowd reacts in two ways:

- Some are amazed and ask, “What does this mean?”
- Others mock and say, “They are full of new wine.”

Whenever God truly works, there will be both genuine seeking and cynical dismissal. That was true at Pentecost, and it is still true today.

Practical application for believers:

We should not be surprised when some are drawn and others mock when the Spirit is at work. Our responsibility is not to manage people’s reactions, but to be faithful—to explain the work of God from Scripture, with humility and clarity, just as Peter does next.

3. Peter Explains: “This Is That” – Joel’s Prophecy Fulfilled (Acts 2:14–21)

Peter stood up with the eleven and addressed the crowd. He began by brushing aside the mockery: *“These are not drunk, as you suppose; it is only the third hour of the day.”* In Jewish timekeeping, the third hour was about nine in the morning. This was not drunken confusion; it was a genuine work of God.

Then he answers the key question, “What does this mean?” by turning to Scripture:

“This is what was spoken by the prophet Joel.”

He quotes Joel’s promise that in the last days God would pour out His Spirit on all flesh:

- sons and daughters would prophesy,
- young men would see visions,
- old men would dream dreams,
- even servants, both men and women, would receive the Spirit and prophesy.

Joel also speaks of signs in the heavens and on the earth, and of the day of the Lord that is still to come. The Spirit’s outpouring begins in Acts 2 and continues through these “last days” until Jesus returns. It is not limited to one generation or one narrow slice of church history.

The climax of the Joel quotation is this:

“It shall come to pass that whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.”

The same Spirit who fills believers now is still at work drawing people to call on the Lord Jesus for salvation.

Practical application for believers:

God promised to pour out His Spirit “on all flesh.” That includes ordinary men and women, old and young, rich and poor. You never age out or fall below the Spirit’s concern. Ask the Lord to keep you sensitive and surrendered to His Spirit’s leading, whether He prompts you to speak, to pray, to comfort, or to serve.

4. Peter’s Christ-Centered Sermon: Jesus Crucified and Risen (Acts 2:22–36)

Peter now shifts from explaining the phenomenon to proclaiming the Person behind it: Jesus of Nazareth.

He reminds them that:

- Jesus was “a Man attested by God” through miracles, wonders, and signs which God did through Him in their midst. They had seen those works. The works backed up His claims.
- Jesus was delivered to death according to the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God. The cross was not an accident or a failed plan. Long before Jesus came, Scripture had foretold His suffering, being “lifted up,” and bearing our sins. God, in love, planned to redeem us through the cross.
- Yet human responsibility is not cancelled. Peter says, “You have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death.” God’s plan does not excuse human sin. Those who rejected and crucified Jesus were responsible for their choice.

Then Peter comes to the heart of the gospel:

“Whom God raised up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that He should be held by it.”

It was “not possible” for death to hold Jesus because:

1. The Scriptures had foretold His resurrection.
2. He is the Holy One, without sin. Death has no legitimate claim over Him.
3. The Father accepted His sacrifice on the cross and publicly vindicated Him by raising Him from the dead.

Peter supports this with Psalm 16, where David speaks of not being abandoned to the realm of the dead and not seeing corruption. Peter points out that David died, was buried, and his tomb was still known. David was speaking prophetically about the Messiah, who would rise and not see decay.

David also knew that God had sworn to him that one of his descendants would sit on his throne. That promise is fulfilled in Jesus, the Son of David, whom God raised from the dead and exalted.

“This Jesus God has raised up, of which we are all witnesses.”

The apostles are not offering secondhand opinions; they are testifying as eyewitnesses. They saw the risen Christ, talked with Him, touched Him, and ate with Him over forty days.

Peter continues:

- Jesus has been exalted to the right hand of God.
- He has received from the Father the authority to send the promised Holy Spirit.
- He is the One who has poured out what the crowd is now seeing and hearing.

Peter ends this section with a powerful conclusion:

“Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.”

Jesus is Lord—sovereign, worthy of worship—and He is the Christ, the promised Messiah. His cross and resurrection prove it.

Practical application for believers:

Our faith rests on real events: the cross and the resurrection of Jesus. When doubts or pressures come, go back to who Jesus is and what He has done. Remind yourself: He shed His blood for my sins. He rose from the dead. God has declared Him both Lord and Christ. My hope is not in my performance but in His finished work and living presence.

5. The Conviction of the Spirit and Peter’s Call (Acts 2:37–39)

When the crowd hears this, “they were cut to the heart.” The Spirit uses the truth Peter has proclaimed to pierce them with conviction. They suddenly realize that the One they had rejected and crucified is God’s Lord and Messiah.

They cry out, “Men and brethren, what shall we do?”

That is the right question whenever God convicts a heart. Not, “How can I explain this away?” but, “What must I do in response?”

Peter answers clearly and simply:

“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.”

To repent is to turn—to turn from sin and self-rule and turn to God, trusting in Jesus Christ who died and rose again. Water baptism is the outward confession of that inward faith, identifying publicly with Jesus in His death and resurrection.

Peter also says, *“You shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”* The same Jesus who shed His blood for our forgiveness and rose from the dead now gives the Spirit to all who come to Him. The Spirit is not an optional extra for “advanced Christians”; He is God’s gift to all who belong to Christ.

Then Peter extends the promise outward:

“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.”

This promise is:

- for those listening (“you”),
- for the next generation (“your children”),
- and for those “afar off” (both in distance and, ultimately, in time and background).

God continues to call people to Himself, and everyone is invited to receive the forgiveness of sins and the gift of the Spirit.

Peter keeps exhorting them, urging them to be saved from their “perverse generation”—a world twisted by sin and rebellion against God.

That day about three thousand people gladly receive his word, are baptized, and are added to the growing fellowship of believers. What a “firstfruits” harvest on the day of Pentecost.

Invitation to non-believers:

If you recognize that Jesus is Lord and Christ, and you sense that conviction in your own heart, the call is the same: repent and believe. Turn from trusting yourself and your own way, and turn to Jesus—who shed His blood on the cross to pay for your sins and rose again to give you new life. Call on His name in simple, honest prayer:

“Lord Jesus, I believe You died for my sins and rose from the dead. I confess that I am a sinner and I need Your mercy. I turn to You now. Forgive me, cleanse me, and make me Yours. Fill me with Your Spirit and teach me to follow You.”

Whoever calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.

6. The Life of the Spirit-Filled Church (Acts 2:42–47)

Luke then gives us a beautiful snapshot of the newborn church:

“And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.”

Four simple practices mark this Spirit-filled community:

1. The apostles’ teaching – They devoted themselves to the Word of God, to learning all that Jesus had taught and was now unfolding through His apostles.
2. Fellowship – A deep shared life, a spiritual partnership, not just casual friendship. They belonged to one another as members of one body and family.
3. Breaking of bread – They shared meals, and they shared the Lord’s Supper, remembering the body and blood of Jesus given for them.
4. Prayers – They sought God together. Prayer was not a formality but a lifeline.

As they lived this way:

- A sense of reverent awe came upon every soul.
- Many wonders and signs were done through the apostles.
- Those who believed were together and generous, sharing what they had with believers in need.
- They met daily in the temple and from house to house, eating their food with gladness and simplicity of heart.
- They were praising God and enjoying favor with the people.

And then we read this wonderful line:

“And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.”

The Lord Himself grows His church. They did not rely on gimmicks, marketing strategies, or entertainment. They relied on the risen Christ, the Word of God, the fellowship of the saints, the remembrance of the cross, and prayer. As they lived honestly and lovingly in the power of the Spirit, God brought people to faith.

Practical application for believers:

Acts 2 gives us a healthy pattern:

- Are you devoted to the Word, or is it something you visit occasionally?
- Are you really sharing life with other believers, or just slipping in and out of meetings?
- Are you remembering Jesus’ death and resurrection regularly, keeping the cross central?
- Is prayer an integral part of your life and your church’s life?

You do not need a perfect program to be a faithful ekklesia (church). You need a crucified and risen Savior, a Spirit-filled people, and a simple commitment to be devoted to what matters most.

A Challenge for Believers and an Invitation for Seekers

For believers:

Acts 2 confronts us with a question: Are we content to run on our own strength, or do we truly desire to be filled and empowered by the Holy Spirit? The early church was not impressive by worldly standards, yet God used them mightily because they were surrendered to Jesus and dependent on His Spirit.

Ask yourself:

- Have I drifted into relying on methods rather than on God?
- Am I willing to let the Lord simplify and purify my priorities—personally and in my church?
- Am I available for Him to use me as a witness, even if it stretches me beyond my comfort?

You might turn this into a prayer:

“Lord Jesus, You are both Lord and Christ. You shed Your blood for me, You rose from the dead, and You have given the Holy Spirit. I offer myself to You again. Teach me to walk in Your Word, to live in real fellowship, to remember Your cross, and to pray. Fill me with Your Spirit and use my life to point others to You.”

For those who have not yet trusted in Christ:

The same risen Lord who poured out the Spirit at Pentecost is calling you today. He sees you, He knows your sins and your struggles, and He loves you. He went to the cross to bear your guilt. He rose from the dead so that you could have forgiveness and new life.

The promise still stands:

“Whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.”

You do not have to clean yourself up first. You come as you are, turning to Him in repentance and faith. If you are ready, you can call out to Him even now:

“Lord Jesus, I believe You died on the cross for my sins and rose from the dead. I cannot save myself. I turn from my sin and I turn to You. Please forgive me, make me new, and fill me with Your Spirit. I want to follow You as my Savior and Lord.”

If you sincerely call on Him, He will hear you. And just as the Lord added people to the church daily in Acts 2, He still adds to His people today—one heart at a time, including yours.