

# **“Spirit of LIFE”**

Message by DD Adams

Providence United Methodist Church

Pentecost Sunday

May 24, 2015

The lesson for today is taken from the book of Acts, chapter 2, verses 1 through 21. I'll be reading from *The Message* by Eugene Phillips . When the Feast of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Without warning there was a sound like a strong wind, gale force—no one could tell where it came from. It filled the whole building. Then, like a wildfire, the Holy Spirit spread through their ranks, and they started speaking in a number of different languages as the Spirit prompted them. There were many Jews staying in Jerusalem just then, devout pilgrims from all over the world. When they heard the sound, they came on the run.

Then when they heard, one after another, their own mother tongues being spoken, they were thunderstruck. They couldn't for the life of them figure out what was going on, and kept saying, "Aren't these all Galileans? How come we're hearing them talk in our various mother tongues? Parthians, Medes, and Elamites; Visitors from Mesopotamia, Judea, and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene; Immigrants from Rome, both Jews and proselytes; Even Cretans and Arabs! "They're speaking our languages, describing God's mighty works!" Their heads were spinning; they couldn't make head or tail of any of it. They talked back and forth, confused: "What's going on here?" Others joked, "They're drunk on cheap wine." That's when Peter stood up and, backed by the other eleven, spoke out with bold urgency: "Fellow Jews, all of you who are visiting Jerusalem, listen carefully and get this

story straight. These people aren't drunk as some of you suspect. They haven't had time to get drunk—it's only nine o'clock in the morning.

This is what the prophet Joel announced would happen: "In the Last Days," God says, "I will pour out my Spirit on every kind of people: Your sons will prophesy, also your daughters; your young men will see visions, your old men dream dreams. When the time comes, I'll pour out my Spirit on those who serve me, men and women both, and they'll prophesy. I'll set wonders in the sky above and signs on the earth below, blood and fire and billowing smoke, the sun turning black and the moon blood-red, before the Day of the Lord arrives, the Day tremendous and marvelous; and whoever calls out for help to me, God, will be saved." This is God's word for God's people. Thanks be to God. God bless the reading, hearing, and understanding of your holy word. Amen.

What was Pentecost to the Israelites? It was a feast called the Feast of Pentecost or Weeks; it started at Passover and was the time when families would thank God for grace and bounty. The celebration started at Passover and ended with the spring harvest. We read in Acts 2 verse 1 that the Day of Pentecost came—yes—it had come and had gone 1500 times since Moses established the feast. It was here to stay but not quite in the way the Jews expected! On that day there were 120 believers in God who were gathered together, but I tend to think they weren't overly united as a group, but after the fire fell they came down as a unified whole!

What was it they heard? They didn't see anything! All they heard was this rushing wind—like a hurricane or something—it came from heaven. Nobody outside heard it but them. The wind is symbolic of the Spirit of God. No one manipulates or controls him. He can't be pushed into a corner or owned by any one group. The Holy Spirit moves as he decides.

The Spirit of God—the Holy Spirit—moves at the will of God with no one seeing. We see the effects, but we don't see the substance. A new age was about to begin that day in the upper room. It caught everyone in that upper room by the ear not the eye. That's what faith is, faith comes by hearing not seeing or feeling.

Then all of a sudden the fire fell! This was another symbol of the Spirit! The thing about fire is that it spreads when people get it on them. It starts with just a small flame, but then it spreads and reaches out to make as many things as it can burn. A fire's aim is to devour and to quench. *Now we can put out fire*, but nobody can smother Holy Spirit fire. This was the fire that fell, it was like tongues of fire that rested on those who were in that upper room; it was a baptism, and it wasn't partial either. It didn't pick out just one or two believers—it affected everybody in that upper room. This fire that fell from heaven began a new age. The birth of the Christian Church started here, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit.

Now everyone in that upper room was filled with new life! New life! Power to witness, power to live the Christian life, and new life for the church! They went up those steps to the upper room as individuals that day, but when they walked down the steps they came down a church! When they got outside from this incredible experience everyone heard them proclaiming the great and wonderful works of God in different languages. They were dumbfounded! They were amazed! Those who were speaking in other tongues weren't educated, and some said they were drunk—but wait a minute—it was only 9:00am. No way!

Somebody who's drunk and filled with alcohol is totally changed. They can't walk straight or speak right. Somebody who's filled with the Holy Spirit is changed too! They're turned into an entirely new person, and it's a Christ-like person. They walk different, and they talk different! Some who heard all these believers speaking in other tongues mocked them. Hey—mockers are always

around to make fun and point a finger, but this mocking turned those believers into strong willed powerful preachers!

So why is Pentecost important for today? As disciple's of Christ, there's no possible way we can become who we're destined to become in Christ until the Spirit of LIFE fills our hearts. Without Pentecost, the future of the Church isn't possible. Without the Spirit of LIFE, all we'd be doing is telling a story without the power to change!

Because of the Spirit of LIFE, we become the people of God, and we live into the salvation story that began over 2,000 years ago. Allow the Holy Spirit of God to breathe this Spirit of LIFE into you today.

Let's pray. Spirit of the living God fall down on all us gathered here today. Bring your gusts of wind and your purifying fire to invade our hearts. We walked into this house of worship today one way, Lord make us leave different, and make us walk out as a changed person—a changed church with power to witness and to walk in newness of life filled with the Spirit of LIFE. Amen.