

The Power of Pentecost

Franklin Church of Christ
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AM Worship

Introduction:

Have you ever anticipated something great? Graduation? Your wedding day? The birth of a child or grandchild? Thinking of these issues, you can perhaps get a feel for the great anticipation fostered in the apostles when Jesus said, "Truly I say to you, there are some of those who are standing here who will not taste death until they see the kingdom of God after it has come with power" (**Mark 9:1**). Then again when Jesus said, "It is not for you to know times or epochs which the Father has fixed by His own authority; but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you" (**Acts 1:7-8**). Can you imagine what the apostles thought as they woke up each morning following these statements? "Is today going to be that day?" Then 50 days following Jesus' resurrection and 10 days following his ascension on the day of Pentecost it happened. The Holy Spirit came upon the apostles with great power and Christ's kingdom was established. Read **Acts 2** to be reminded of the full story. Certainly, the "noise like a violent rushing wind" filling the house, the "tongues as of fire" that rested on the apostles heads and the miraculous ability "to speak with other tongues" was powerful. As powerful as these things were, they were not the most powerful things on that day. Examine with me four aspects of that amazing day and learn the true power of Pentecost.

Discussion:

- I. The Power of Fulfilled Prophecy
 - A. When mockers accused the apostles of drunkenness, Peter took his stand and said that this amazing feat of speaking in tongues was not the result of drinking but the result of fulfilled prophecy (**Acts 2:15-16**). He then quoted **Joel 2:28-32**. God had promised this kind of occurrence and just as He had always delivered on His promises, He had delivered again.
 - B. Peter goes on to demonstrate that **Joel 2** was not the only fulfilled prophesy. **Psalms 16:8-11** was the story of Jesus' death, burial and resurrection written by David nearly 1000 years earlier. The prophecy had not been fulfilled in David because they could go to David's tomb at that very moment. Instead, it had been fulfilled in Jesus the Christ who also fulfilled **Psalms 132:11**.
 - C. We could spend several sermons looking at Jesus' nature, life and death to learn how exactly His life had been prophesied and foreshadowed through the Old Law. From His lineage in the tribe of Judah to His birth in Bethlehem, from his toddler trip into Egypt to His upbringing in Nazareth, from His amazing miracles to His death by crucifixion and finally, His resurrection. All of these were prophesied and fulfilled. Fulfilled Prophecy is a powerful teacher. According to **Deuteronomy 18:21-22**, fulfillment of prophecy was used as a great indicator that God was working. Peter explained that what the people were witnessing was fulfilled prophecy. What had happened just 52 days earlier was fulfilled prophecy and just 50 days earlier the greatest prophecy was fulfilled—Jesus was resurrected. What a powerful message.
- II. The Power of a Risen Savior
 - A. According to **Acts 2:22**, Jesus had been attested to by God through many miracles and wonders and signs. So confident was Peter about Jesus' miracles that he told the multitudes they already knew about them. The most amazing however was reserved for after his death. Jesus was resurrected from the dead. While there may have been some in that Pentecost crowd who had not been in Jerusalem during the Passover, Peter demonstrates that the crowd not only knew about Jesus' amazing life, they also knew about His death. They had in fact been a party to it (**vs. 23**). However, God raised Jesus, putting an end to the agony of death (**vs. 24**).
 - B. In **vs. 32**, Peter says the apostles had witnessed the risen Savior. Paul, in **I Corinthians 15:4-8**, listed several of the appearances of Jesus. Peter repeats his claim as an eyewitness in **II Peter 1:16**. John demonstrated himself as an eyewitness in both **John 21:24** and **I John 1:1-3**.
 - C. This teaching was not occurring centuries or decades or even years after Jesus died. It happened 7 weeks later. In **vs. 29**, Peter pointed out that he could take everyone to David's tomb and find the dust and bones of David's remains. What a perfect opportunity to prove Peter wrong and go to the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea and pull out Jesus' remains. But they could not. Why? Because Jesus was resurrected. The tomb was empty. As Paul stated in **Romans 1:4**, His resurrection declared Jesus to be the Son of God.

- D. Do not miss how powerful this is. Certainly, many myths and legends contain stories of dying and resurrected gods. However, how many of them contain the story of a dying Savior, who died as a sacrifice for our sins. Among the world religions, many have gods, many have prophets, many have stories of amazing feats to inspire devotion, but only Christianity has a Savior. Only Christianity has a Savior who died to be the propitiation for our sins (**I John 2:2**). Only Christianity has a risen Savior whose resurrection demonstrates that we also can overcome death (**I Corinthians 15:23**). What a powerful message.

III. The Power of a Heavenly King

- A. Amazingly, the Jews had been looking for a Messiah. They had been looking for a king who would ride in on a powerful steed bringing his army to wipe out the Romans. Instead, God sent a suffering Savior. However, the story did not end there. In **Acts 2:34-36**, Peter demonstrated another fulfilled prophecy. **Psalms 110:1-2** had prophesied a king sitting at the right hand of God. Jesus fulfilled that too. When He ascended in **Acts 1:9**, Jesus went to the right hand of God to sit on His throne as our heavenly King.
- B. Great leaders come and go. Kings live and die. Some bring great power and honor to their kingdoms. Nebuchadnezzar, Alexander the Great, Augustus Caesar and others have been powerful men. But these earthly kings all died and their great works have been ground into dust by the force of time. We, on the other hand, have a heavenly king whose kingdom is in this world but not of this world (**John 18:36**).
- C. The power of this heavenly king and heavenly kingdom is demonstrated in the prophecy that came through Nebuchadnezzar's dream in **Daniel 2:44-45**. Considering the forces that have arisen against Christianity, especially in its early days, it is astounding that it still exists. The early Christians were scattered and hunted. As the years went on they were repeatedly persecuted by the Jews and the Romans. According to historical tradition every one of its early leaders, with exception of John, was martyred. Beyond the external persecution, there has been the constant influx of false teaching that has plagued the world for 2000 years. Yet, here we are worshipping and serving God simply according to His Word. Christ is our heavenly king and His heavenly kingdom still stands. More powerful than the signs that signified Jesus' kingdom had come was the fact that Jesus' kingdom had come. People could be transferred from Satan's kingdom of darkness into Christ's kingdom of light (**Colossians 1:13**).

IV. The Power of Forgiveness

- A. The most powerful aspect of Pentecost, however, was demonstrated in **Acts 2:37-41**. Peter did not simply condemn his Jewish brethren as Christ killers. He preached to them the message of forgiveness by the blood of the very Jesus they crucified.
- B. To fully comprehend the power of these verses, we need to remember exactly why all these Jews from all over the world were in Jerusalem. In **Exodus 23:14-17**, God prescribed three national feasts in which all the men of Israel were to travel to Jerusalem and present themselves before God. According to **Deuteronomy 16:9-12**, this feast was a memorial that they had been slaves in Egypt and had been delivered by God from that bondage. According to **Numbers 28:27-30**, on Pentecost (Feast of Weeks, Feast of Harvest), they had to offer two bulls, one ram, seven male lambs as a burnt offering and one goat to make atonement. Just a month and a half earlier they had gathered for the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened bread. The Passover included a sacrifice of course. Further, according to **Numbers 28:19-24**, they had sacrificed two bulls, one ram, seven male lambs as burnt offerings and one male goat as a sin offering for seven days in a row. This is in addition to the two male lambs of burnt offering that the priests offered every day (**Numbers 28:3**), the two extra male lambs that the priests offered on every Sabbath (**Numbers 28:9**) which had just occurred the day before Pentecost and the new moon sacrifice of two bulls, one ram and seven male lambs that had occurred about a week before Pentecost.
- C. The world of the Jews dripped in blood offered to get rid of their sins. Peter explained to them that Jesus Christ had offered the one sacrifice that would truly do that. They had gathered to once again memorialize their deliverance from Egypt and learned about the deliverance they could have from sin. They gathered once again to remind them that they were extremely sinful

and needed blood shed to forgive them and learned that blood had been shed that really did forgive them. Consider **Hebrews 10:4,10-18**. Can you imagine what these Jews who realized they had crucified the Messiah must have thought and felt when they realized that their sin really could be forgiven by the blood of Jesus Christ? That is the power of Pentecost.

V. The Power to Change

- A. How do we know all of that was powerful? Because we see what it accomplished. In **Acts 2:41-47**, we see that nearly 3000 of those listening repented and were baptized on the very day. But it did not stop there. They devoted themselves to the further teaching of the apostles. They devoted themselves to worship with their new brethren. They devoted themselves to caring for their new brethren.
- B. How many of these new Christians were not from Jerusalem? We don't know. But apparently many of the pilgrimaging Jews who became Christians stayed in Jerusalem instead of returning home. Talk about a life change. Further, this message of a changed life continued as the lives of these new Christians impacted others and more were added to Christ's church daily.
- C. The real Power of Pentecost is the power to change lives. The power to change us from people who followed the course of this world to people who follow the doctrine of Jesus Christ. The power to change us from people who follow selfishness and fleshly lusts to people who follow the way of the Spirit. The power to get us to put off the old man and put on the new. That is power—the true Power of Pentecost.

Conclusion:

This power still works today. While the miraculous power of the gifts of the Holy Spirit are no longer used, the true Power of Pentecost still holds. The prophets have still been fulfilled. Our Savior has still risen. Our King is still on His throne in heaven. Our sins can still be forgiven. Will you allow the power of that message to save you and change your life? It can. But you have to let it. If you haven't already, let the true Power of Pentecost enter your heart, change your life and save your soul. Do exactly what the people on Pentecost did, repent and let everyone of you be baptized for the remission of your sins (**Acts 2:38**). Be saved from our perverse generation.