

A Pentecostal Experience

Acts 2

A couple of weeks ago we looked at 1 Thessalonians in our growth groups and we discussed the sort of healthy church we would want to be. This week we're going to think again about the sort of church we want to be, but this time from the perspective of being a 'Spirit-filled' church. To do this we're going to look at the day of Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit came down on 120 men and women and the Christian church was 'born'.

There is much there for us to learn and be encouraged by as we think about the sort of church God would want us to be.

Read Acts 2

Following the resurrection of Jesus, his followers are gathered together in one place. But then something extraordinary happens. What are the three signs that are given in connection to the coming of the Spirit?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Focusing on verses 4-11, how would you describe this sign of 'tongues'?

A bit of background...

When Israel was crushed by Babylon in 587BC, Jews were scattered everywhere! Their land was smashed, and little remnants of the people were sprinkled in all sorts of places. Read what Isaiah 11:10-12 says will happen when the 'root of Jesse' (the Messiah/Christ) takes his throne:

In that day the Root of Jesse will stand as a banner for the peoples; the nations will rally to him, and his place of rest will be glorious. 11 In that day the Lord will reach out his hand a second time to reclaim the remnant that is left of his people from Assyria, from Lower Egypt, from Upper Egypt, from Cush, from Elam, from Babylonia, from Hamath and from the islands of the sea. He will raise a banner for the nations and gather the exiles of Israel; he will assemble the scattered people of Judah from the four quarters of the earth.

What do the unusual events of Acts 2 tell us about Jesus and the new era he is starting?

A natural question that people have is – was this pouring of the Spirit and the tongues that accompanied it a once off event or should we seek more Acts 2 moments in our church? Keep in mind that this 'arrival' of the Spirit was a great moment predicted, anticipated and promised.

Read Ezekiel 36:24-27.

Read Joel 2:28-32 – you can read Peter's quote of it in Acts 2:17-21

Read Luke 3:15-16

Read Acts 1:8

It's helpful to realise that Acts 2 was a great and momentous happening. It was the moment that the prophets Ezekiel and Joel spoke of. And it was the moment John the Baptist and Jesus spoke of. Would this suggest to you that Acts 2 is a time that we should expect again and again, or that it was a once-and-for-all fulfillment event?

From verse 14-36 Peter gives his answer to the crowd's question "What does this mean?" (v12). In Peter's answer it may be surprising that he does not go into a long explanation of the nature of the Holy Spirit, what the Spirit is like or what's it feel like to have the Holy Spirit. When you read through these verses, who is at the centre of Peter's explanation?

Including the quotes from Psalm 16 and Psalm 110 what does Peter want to emphasis about Jesus?

What does Jesus' resurrection and exaltation mean? v33 and v36

What is the fitting response to Jesus who is both the Lord and Christ?

Why do you think people not take the step of repentance?

What does repentance and baptism mean? See 1 Peter 3:21

Read Acts 2:42-47

You may hear phrases like 'We should be a New Testament church', or 'We should be a Spirit-filled church' or even 'We should be an Acts 2 church'. People may mean different things by those statements but they are all great ambitions to have when you look at what a Spirit-filled Acts 2 church looked like!

From your reading of v42-47, what seems to be the emphases for this new Spirit-filled church?

Do you think this an instruction for us to sell all our possessions today?

It's worth noting that the selling of property is again mentioned in 5:1-4. Ananias and Sapphira are judged by God – not for with-holding their property, but for being deceptive. It would seem there is no command to Christians to sell their property, but there are plenty of words in the Bible about being generous with our material possessions.

Do these verses present a challenge for our church? Are there distractions for us that get in the way?

Even as a growth group, what can you do to reflect the Spirit-filled life?