

FRESH WIND**Acts 2**

Intro: We had a weather change on Wednesday evening. It was still hot, practically in the 90s, as I arrived home at about 5:15 PM to an increasingly darkening sky as a fast moving storm was moving in. Fiona and Grady were there and they wanted to play in the yard, which they did as the breeze increased; Fiona on the little motorized John Deere tractor, and Grady pushing his very authentic looking toy Husqvarna lawnmower. Their play was shortened by a loud crack of thunder. Fiona made that little tractor fly as she beat for the garage. Grady simply left his mower where it was a beat for Papa. The breeze became wind and then wind became a roar as it tore through the woods behind our house. We got into the house as the sky opened up for a very brief but violent shower. As we looked out the windows and saw the trees bending in the gale I wondered if I should take the kids and get to the basement. Before I could though, the storm was past just like that, and the wind quickly died away. I was able to get the slightly frightened kids peeled off me enough to get them supper since I needed to be at prayer meeting in less than 90 minutes. Since I didn't get back outside of the house until I left for prayer meeting, I had no idea how much the temperature had dropped. As I walked into the church building I was wondering if I should have worn a jacket. Wow! What a difference just two hours made! It was a fresh wind.

Today is Pentecost Sunday. It's a day of celebrating the arrival of the Holy Spirit in a new and glorious way on that first Pentecost Sunday. It was 50 days after Jesus arose from the garden tomb and the people of God were about to be transformed by a fresh wind and fire from heaven. That fresh wind and fire continues to be available to God's people today. The Church needs it. WE need it. So let's look at it and remind ourselves of how the Holy Spirit arrived and how we can invite him to continue in our lives and ministry.

Let's pick up in the midst of the ten days between what Joel preached about last week, the Ascension of Jesus to the Father, and the Day of Pentecost which we celebrate today: The disciples returned from the ascension mountain top experience and they were waiting and meeting and replacing and PRAYING!!!

Just before Jesus ascended to heaven he had told his followers to stay put in Jerusalem. Acts 1 says they were . . . *to wait for the promise of the Father, which, he said, "you heard from me; for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now."* Acts 1:4-5. So they did just that. Later in Acts 1 we read, *Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day's journey away. And when they had entered, they went up to the upper room, where they were staying, Peter and John and James and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot and Judas the son of James. All these with one accord were devoting themselves to prayer, together with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brothers.* Acts 1:12-14 They stayed and waited in Jerusalem as instructed. They found a replacement for Judas the betrayer so the band of original apostles was back up at its full complement of 12. And they prayed.

What made their prayer different was that Jesus had promised . . . *you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you* Acts 1:8. They knew that there wasn't a single promise Jesus had not kept so they were waiting and praying with expectancy. Do we wait with such expectancy? You see, expecting to have results from our prayer takes faith. Do we have that kind of expectancy?

Last week at Board meeting we were discussing this text which I had used as a devotional, and someone used the illustration of a farm community that was in the midst of a drought, and as the crops withered, a prayer meeting was called to be held in the town square. As the people gathered, the pastor looked around at the farmers who were there and asked them where their faith was? Were they not expecting God to answer their prayer for the much needed rains? They looked at each other and wondered why the preacher was being so hard on them and then, as he held up his umbrella, they realized that he, alone, had thought to bring one. He planned to pray with expectancy but they were just going to go through the motions.

Today on Pentecost Sunday let's make sure that we look with expectancy to the Holy Spirit for his fresh wind. With that in mind let's look at Acts 2 and unpack some key passages from it. I will do that by using an alliteration of Sound, Spirit, and Structure.

First there was . . .

The Sound of a rushing wind

- Listen (Read Acts 2:1-13)

- What was happening was indescribable but this is the best human words can do. The coming of the Holy Spirit is compared to the sound of mighty wind and the sight of tongues of flame. It was a sound. The shingles didn't fly off and the curtains didn't flap in the breeze and the lamps didn't get extinguished. It was the sound of power and might. And that was exactly what was happening. Power and might were arriving and descending on the people of God in a new a wonderful and PERMANENT way, along with tongues of fire. Albert Winn says *"The Spirit is like the wind: uncontrollable, mysterious, powerful, and seen only in his effects. In Hebrew and in Greek the same word means both wind and spirit. The Spirit is also like the flame: cleansing and consuming, awesome and dangerous."*
- The wind was a fresh new breeze of abundant life. The flames that appeared over each person in that one place were the refining fire that would burn away the old and bring in the new.
- We need that new breeze, LORD, BREATH ON US!

The Spirit fell

- It was amazing!!!! Just 50 days prior to this these same people had been cowering and hoping that what they heard about Jesus being risen from the grave was not a cruel rumor, or worse, a ploy to flush them out to be captured by the ones who had crucified their Lord. Instead the glorious events just kept getting better. They had seen Jesus rising into the clouds and now here was this supernatural work of God who was sending his Holy Spirit as promised.
- Notice how the Holy Spirit came to the entire group. They were **ALL TOGETHER** in one place, and the sound filled the **ENTIRE** house where they were staying and the tongues of fire rested on **EACH ONE** of them and they were **ALL** filled with the Holy Spirit. This was a new thing. The Holy Spirit had always been part of the Trinity, but now the Holy Spirit came permanently rather than just the once and done infillings that happened in the Old Testament.
- And then they ALL began speaking in other tongues AS THE SPIRIT GAVE THEM UTTERANCE. Winn points out that the gift of tongues here is unique in that everybody heard a different language. They didn't need it because they knew the common language of the empire which was Koine Greek and they also knew Aramaic which was the main language of the Jewish people. The truth is the Good News they heard after they heard the sound of the rushing wind would not have needed to be in the language of the Parthians, Medes, Elamites, Mesopotamians, Judeans, Cappadocians, Pontians, Asians, Phrygians, Pamphylia, Egyptians, Libyians, Cyrenians, Romans, Cretans, and Arabians. BUT the Holy Spirit was meeting each and every one of the people in Jerusalem that day on their own terms and he did that by speaking in their own language.
- F. B. Meyer says that the fact that everyone heard the good news in their own tongue was *"a sign of Babel's undoing"*. Albert Winn suggests the same thing. With this, *"The coming of the Spirit was the dawn of a new age when men of all nations would be brought into the people of God. The ancient breach made among men at the Tower of Babel, when God confused their language in Genesis 11:1-9, is healed by the gift of the Spirit."*
- Galilean fishermen and housewives and carpenters and common laborers became Spirit filled preachers sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ. It was so wild and wonderful that some wet blankets who didn't know a good thing when it was right in front of them (and there is always someone like this in every crowd) thought they were drunk. Well, they were filled with the Spirit rather than new wine.
- Peter was one of the biggest transformations. Just two months before he was much better at cussing like a sailor (after all, he was a fisherman) and he became a preacher. He stands up and stops them with *"Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and give ear to my words. For these people are not drunk, as you suppose, since it is only the third hour of the day. Acts 2:14-15.* And he continues with an amazing sermon pulling from Holy History and scripture to show this was God's plan all along. That is how the Holy Spirit works. Peter's sermon, no less than the tongues, is the Holy Spirit's work. He takes the ordinary, like the utterance of a regular Joe, or the sermon of a Galilean fisherman, and makes it the extraordinary word of Almighty God.
- That didn't stop on the Day of Pentecost Church! It still happens today! It can and will happen for you and I. Charles Eerdman says *"Many persons seem to suppose that Pentecostal power is tested by striking gifts"*

or ability in public speech; but the best proof is found in the daily life of the believer. . . .” The fresh wind of the Holy Spirit still blows through ALL of the people of God. Are you seeking it with expectancy?

- Back to Peter’s sermon. After he ended the bold proclamation that minced no words, it says in verse 37 that the people *were cut to the heart*. His words had struck the right nerve and they knew change was necessary. This is because the Good News always calls for a decision. And Peter pointed out the need to REPENT! BE BAPTIZED! And LEAVE YOUR CORRUPT SOCIETY AND ENTER THE MESSIAH'S COMMUNITY! And they did. 3,000 of them! I think it was Charles Eerdman who wrote, “*The Good News is not told for sentiment or entertainment or to satisfy curiosity. It drives men into a corner where they must either believe and obey this Lord or reject him. After that has happened, life cannot go on just as it was.*”
- This is what we need to be about today. Two thousand years later the task is the same for the Spirit filled people of God: Let’s tell the world that that God has done something unique and powerful in Jesus Christ and that humanity cannot ignore it; they must take sides. They need to either accept or reject Jesus
- LORD, SEND YOUR ANOINTING ON US AS WE TAKE THE WORD TO THE WORLD!
- Finally and very quickly,

The Structure of a growing Body of Christ Followers emerged

- Twelve disciples suddenly became 3,000 disciples and more, and more, AND MORE! The original 12 were suddenly leading people who didn’t know how
 - to serve
 - or to worship
 - or to give
 - or to tell
- But they learned quickly. Acts 2 ends with, *And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. And all who believed were together and had all things in common. And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.* Acts 2:42-47.
- The transformation was amazing! People who looked out for number one prior to this now had the priority of others in mind as *they were together and had all things in common, were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all as any had need.* (vv.44-45). It is to this that Meyer is referring when he says *because when we are joined to Christ we become one with all who are his.*
- Oh that we had this kind of unity in the Church today!

Conclusion: We can have it! A fresh wind is still blowing! It didn’t stop with the day of Pentecost. It didn’t stop with the death of the original apostles. It didn’t stop when the Church went off the rails from time to time over the centuries. It didn’t stop because God’s plan is unstoppable. His Church is still his called out ones who still preach the Good News. The fresh wind of his Holy Spirit still blows over us, and that Good News needs to be taken to a hurting world. Let’s do it. Amen.