

**June 4, 2006 (Pentecost Sunday)**  
**“Are You Pentecostal?”**  
**Acts 2:1-21 NLT**

[Click here for the notes that were in the bulletin.](#)

On the day of Pentecost, seven weeks after Jesus' resurrection, the believers were meeting together in one place. 2 Suddenly, there was a sound from heaven like the roaring of a mighty windstorm in the skies above them, and it filled the house where they were meeting. 3 Then, what looked like flames or tongues of fire appeared and settled on each of them. 4 And everyone present was filled with the Holy Spirit and began speaking in other languages, as the Holy Spirit gave them this ability.

5 Godly Jews from many nations were living in Jerusalem at that time. 6 When they heard this sound, they came running to see what it was all about, and they were bewildered to hear their own languages being spoken by the believers.

7 They were beside themselves with wonder. "How can this be?" they exclaimed. "These people are all from Galilee, 8 and yet we hear them speaking the languages of the lands where we were born! 9 Here we are--Parthians, Medes, Elamites, people from Mesopotamia, Judea, Cappadocia, Pontus, the province of Asia, 10 Phrygia, Pamphylia, Egypt, and the areas of Libya toward Cyrene, visitors from Rome (both Jews and converts to Judaism), 11 Cretans, and Arabians. And we all hear these people speaking in our own languages about the wonderful things God has done!" 12 They stood there amazed and perplexed. "What can this mean?" they asked each other. 13 But others in the crowd were mocking. "They're drunk, that's all!" they said.

14 Then Peter stepped forward with the eleven other apostles and shouted to the crowd, "Listen carefully, all of you, fellow Jews and residents of Jerusalem! Make no mistake about this. 15 Some of you are saying these people are drunk. It isn't true! It's much too early for that. People don't get drunk by nine o'clock in the morning. 16 No, what you see this morning was predicted centuries ago by the prophet Joel:

17 'In the last days, God said,  
I will pour out my Spirit upon all people.  
Your sons and daughters will prophesy,  
your young men will see visions,  
and your old men will dream dreams.  
18 In those days I will pour out my Spirit  
upon all my servants, men and women alike,  
and they will prophesy.  
19 And I will cause wonders in the heavens above  
and signs on the earth below--  
blood and fire and clouds of smoke.  
20 The sun will be turned into darkness,  
and the moon will turn bloodred,

before that great and glorious day of the Lord arrives.

21 And anyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.'

The well known author and preacher Fred Craddock tells a rather funny story about a lecture he was giving: A few years ago, when he was on the west coast speaking at a seminary, just before the first lecture, one of the students stood up and said, "Before you speak, I need to know if you are Pentecostal." The room grew silent. Craddock said he looked around for the Dean of the seminary! He was nowhere to be found. The student continued with his quiz right in front of everybody. Craddock was taken aback, and so he said, "Do you mean do I belong to the Pentecostal Church?" He said, "No, I mean are you Pentecostal?" Craddock said, "Are you asking me if I am charismatic?" the student said, "I am asking you if you are Pentecostal." Craddock said, "Do you want to know if I speak in tongues?" He said, "I want to know if you are Pentecostal." Craddock said, "I don't know what your question is." The student said, "Obviously, you are not Pentecostal." He left.

When someone asks, "Are you Pentecostal?" We usually think of a particular church or denomination. We may think they want to know if we speak in tongues or belong to a church that speaks in tongues during a worship service (and we would define tongues as a strange unknown language).

Some people take offense at being called "Pentecostal." Not that they should, but some do.

A family that happened to be very strong in their Baptist faith, decided they wanted to get a pet. They had one requirement -- the pet had to be Baptist, also!

So one day they drove to the pet store where they proceeded to ask the owner, "Do you have any Baptist dogs for sale, by any chance?"

Surprised by the question, the pet shop owner looked around his shop and thought about it for a while and finally nodded, saying, "Wait... a.... minute..... yes, I think we just might have a dog that could fit your description."

The owner walks over to a group of cages and brings out a small dog to the family, and the father says,

"We need to see if this is a real Baptist dog." So the father says to the dog, "Go find a bible." Unbelievably, the dog runs out of the pet store, down the street, and into a church.....returning with.....of all things....a bible in its mouth! He runs up to the family and plops down the book at their feet.

Genuinely impressed, the father continues, "Let's see if this dog knows its books of the bible, too... 'Turn to the book of Psalms,'" he commands the dog.

The dog immediately opens the bible with its snout and paws through the pages....stopping when it reaches Psalms.

Very pleased, the father buys the dog for his family and they bring it home. The next day, the family has visitors. Proudly, the family shows off their little Baptist dog and the things it could do.

Finally, the friends of the family ask, "Nice! But, can it do any other tricks that normal dogs do?" The Baptist father wondered and said, "Hmm, I don't know. We've never tried any other commands." He then orders the dog, "Heel."

Suddenly the dog leaps onto the father's lap and places its paw on the man's head and starts to pray. "Wait..... a..... minute!" exclaim the friends of the family. "That dog isn't Baptist!..... It's Pentecostal!"

And so I ask you: Are you Pentecostal? What are we talking about this morning? Is the church supposed to use the word Pentecost only as a noun or can it be used as an adjective? You remember your elementary Grammar class. A noun names a person, place, or thing (like "Church") and an adjective: modifies or qualifies a noun (like "Pentecostal" Church). The word "Pentecost" is a noun because it represents a date, a place, an event in the history of the church. The day of Pentecost should not be simply a memory, something back there somewhere. Today, however, the word is "Pentecostal." (i.e.) we are more likely to use the word as an adjective; it describes a certain type of church or denomination.

I looked in a dictionary and it gave the definition of "Pentecost" as a Christian festival celebrated on the seventh Sunday after Easter that commemorates the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the apostles.

In other words it defined Pentecost as something that happened in the past.

The same dictionary gave this definition of "Pentecostal": Emphasizing the Holy Spirit: belonging or relating to any Christian denomination that emphasizes the workings of the Holy Spirit, interprets the Bible literally, and adopts an informal demonstrative approach to religious worship

In other words it defined Pentecostal as a particular denomination.

But if "Pentecostal" means emphasizing the Holy Spirit and His works then shouldn't that define all churches. Let me use the word Pentecost ...maybe that will help us. A *Pentecost* church is a Church that is alive with the Holy Spirit, and if that is so, then that describes us – it better describe us ... if the church is alive in the world it is Pentecostal... And you thought we were Nazarenes!

Do you know that the original name of our denomination was the Pentecostal Church of the Nazarene? It was called that because it was a church alive with the Holy Spirit. The

denomination changed the name because of what people began to consider Pentecostal churches, which did not define us. We do not speak tongues that is an unknown language during our services and we do not consider the speaking in tongues as the only evidence of being filled with the Holy Spirit. Did I say anything negative about people who speak in tongues? No! I simply said it is not done in our public worship and that we do not believe it is the only evidence of being filled with the Spirit of God.

But if a Pentecost Church is one that is filled with and alive with the Spirit of God and if a Pentecostal person is one who is filled with and alive with the Spirit of God then we are Pentecost Nazarenes!

The question is: How do we keep this aliveness, this fire burning, this spirit moving? What must exist in us, around us, and through us, if we are to be Pentecostal? Or a Pentecost Church? Simply this: We must be continually being filled with the Holy Spirit and led by the Holy Spirit. Let's look at what that means. First a little background information:

The day of Pentecost was an annual feast [already] celebrated [by the Jews] on "the day after the seventh Sabbath" after Passover (Lev 23:15-16). [that would mean on a Sunday, the day after the Jewish Sabbath, seven weeks after Passover]. Since the date was determined by the passing of a "week" of weeks (seven weeks), it was often called the Feast of Weeks. The word "Pentecost" means "fifty," so named because this feast was celebrated fifty days after Passover. It was originally the Feast of the Firstfruits of the grain harvest. By this time Jews had associated Pentecost with the giving of the Law (Torah) at Mount Sinai [interesting because the era of the law would now be given over to the era of the Spirit – given on the same feast day, the day of Pentecost]. ... Jesus was crucified at Passover time, and He ascended forty days after His resurrection. The Holy Spirit came fifty days after the Resurrection, ten days after the Ascension. The identification of Pentecost with "firstfruits" likely has a real significance here, since the three thousand who came to faith in Christ this day were the "firstfruits" of (the church, of which) many thousands ... would follow... What happened this day would forever change the world.

Jesus had promised the Holy Spirit to His disciples and this was the fulfilling of that promise. On that day they were all together in an upper room when...Acts 2:2 NIV

*Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting.*

Suddenly, as the believers were gathered, they heard a sound or noise like the blowing of a violent wind (it was not necessarily movement of air, but perhaps a sound like that of wind). The word for "wind" (*pnoes*) is similar in sound and spelling to the word for "spirit" (*pneuma*). The wind is a good analogy for the Spirit: it is not seen, though its effects are, and it can be found everywhere in never-ending supply.

Then (Acts 2:3 NLT), *what looked like flames or tongues of fire appeared and settled on each of them.*

To the great sound of wind was added a visual image: what looked like flames or tongues of fire appeared and settled on each of them. Why tongues of fire? ... "Fire" symbolizes God's purifying presence, which burns away the undesirable elements in people's lives and sets their hearts aflame (with the love and power of God) to ignite the lives of others.

Acts 2:4 NLT

*And everyone present was filled with the Holy Spirit and began speaking in other languages, as the Holy Spirit gave them this ability.* (Everyone was filled – in the OT only certain people were filled for a certain time and for a particular purpose. Now all can be filled with God's Spirit. The ones that were filled were given the ability to speak in the different languages of all the people that were in that area from many other parts of the world. This was so that they could proclaim the Word of God in these languages so people could hear it in their own native language. [See vs5 -6] *Godly Jews from many nations were living in Jerusalem at that time... and they were bewildered to hear their own languages being spoken by the believers.* This miracle of the ability to speak languages they previously did not know was for the purpose of proclaiming Jesus.

We sometimes wonder why we don't see miracles like the sound of wind and flames of tongues of fire appearing. Christians read about supernatural events like the foreign languages spoken at Pentecost and wonder, "Why doesn't God still do miracles like this?" We will even pray to see "signs and wonders." Yet, we don't pray to see more miracles of a changed life. Isn't it better to see someone who's life is changed. Why isn't that as impressive to us. When an abusive father is genuinely transformed into a caring gentle - man, is that any less wonderful than seeing tongues of fire? Which is more impressive long term: the sound of a mighty rushing wind coming upon a group of praying Christians once or a self-centered woman changed into a compassionate servant who devotes the rest of her life to helping others? The point on the day of Pentecost was not that people could hear about Jesus in their native language spoken by someone who didn't know that language prior to being filled with the Spirit. The point is that people were hearing Jesus proclaimed by people who had the power of the Holy Spirit and it changed their lives.

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### 1. Be Filled With The Holy Spirit:

How? What should we do? When Peter finished preaching his sermon on the Day of Pentecost the people asked him the same question.

Acts 2:37-39 NLT

*Peter's words convicted them deeply, and they said to him and to the other apostles, "Brothers, what should we do?"*

*Peter replied, "Each of you must turn from your sins and turn to God, and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. Then you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.*

The Spirit marks the beginning of the Christian experience. No one belongs to Christ without His Spirit (Rom 8:9 NLT) *But you are not controlled by your sinful nature. You are controlled by the Spirit if you have the Spirit of God living in you. (And remember that those who do not have the Spirit of Christ living in them are not Christians at all.)*

## 2. Be Continually Filled With The Spirit

Jesus told His disciples (Acts 1:8 NIV), "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." On the day of Pentecost the promise of Jesus was fulfilled. However, as we continue to read Acts we see that the filling of the Holy Spirit is not a one-time experience only. Paul urges the Christians of Ephesus (Eph 5:18) *"be filled with the Spirit."* The emphasis here is on continuing to be filled or to be continually being filled. The words are ... in the present tense, indicating constant replenishment with the Spirit -- believers are not "once-and-for-all" filled but rather are continually being filled with the Spirit as they continue to walk with God.

## 3. Be Led By The Spirit

The Spirit is the power for the new life. He begins a lifelong process of change as believers become more like Christ (Phil 1:6 NLT) *And I am sure that God, who began the good work within you, will continue his work until it is finally finished on that day when Christ Jesus comes back again.*

Those who receive Christ by faith begin an immediate personal relationship with God. The Holy Spirit works in them to help them become like Christ. *"Be filled with the Spirit... you are not controlled by your sinful nature. You are controlled by the Spirit... And ... God, who began the good work within you, will continue His work..."*

First turn from sin and give your life to Jesus Christ and you will receive the Holy Spirit. Then be continually filled and led by the Spirit. If you are alive and led by the Holy Spirit's continual filling...that would make you... Pentecostal!

