

“...In You”

(Acts 2:1-13)

(Series: Reimagining Church; Message Six)

When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. ²Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. ³They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. ⁴All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.

⁵Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven. ⁶When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard their own language being spoken. ⁷Utterly amazed, they asked: “Aren’t all these who are speaking Galileans? ⁸Then how is it that each of us hears them in our native language? ⁹Parthians, Medes and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, ¹⁰Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome ¹¹(both Jews and converts to Judaism); Cretans and Arabs—we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues!” ¹²Amazed and perplexed, they asked one another, “What does this mean?”

¹³Some, however, made fun of them and said, “They have had too much wine.” (Acts 2:1-13)

Message

D.L. Moody, a 19th century evangelist, went to England to preach the Gospel. Everywhere he preached the Gospel, people were coming to God; it was rather amazing since Dwight wasn’t considered to be very well educated.

A church leader, Biblical scholar and Moody skeptic, R.W. Dale, went to investigate and sat through one of his revival meetings and observed what was happening. R.W. approached D.L. afterwards: *“Moody...I’ve seen your mission, and I’ve come to the conclusion...it is of God. I’ll tell you why - because I can see no possible relationship between you and the results you’re achieving. It can only be God.”*

Moody took that as affirmation of the Spirit’s work in his life. To some it might sound insulting; but I wondered this week, has anyone every said something similar about me? Or about You?

Last Sunday, we left 120 Christ-followers in Acts 1 waiting and praying. They were huddled in an upper room, bewildered, **confused**, nervous, **over-whelmed**, and feeling inadequate to the task that Jesus was calling them to...

Yet, they were committed to following Jesus - they were obediently in the upper room, preparing for his coming, staying together, and praying... But they had yet to realize what Jesus had planned when he said, *“All authority is given to me in heaven and earth, therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son*

and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to obey everything I've commanded you. I'm going to be with you always, even until the end of the age." (**Matthew 28:18-20**)

Ten days before they were speechless: *"Don't leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. John baptized with water, but in just a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit...and you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you and you'll be my witnesses."*

Incredibly, this unimpressive, uneducated little group will change the course of **history**. But for the moment they are simply huddled in "one place." More than likely, they are praying together (It's just what they did!)

And there was a [Jewish] festival going on in Jerusalem called Pentecost. It's like our Thanksgiving - but without football, turkey, cranberry sauce, and shopping.

Tens of thousands of Jews came from all over the world to bring their **first fruits** and give God **thanks** for the **harvest**; So there are thousands of God-fearers in the **streets** and in the **Temple**.

Luke writes, *"Suddenly, a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them."* (**Acts 2:1-3**)

The One Jesus had **promised** would show up had just **shown up!**

THE SPIRIT

The Holy Spirit isn't an impersonal force, a gentle breeze or a rushing wind. He is not a mysterious vapor or a vanishing mist. He is not a ghost or a flame. He is not a junior partner of the Trinity or the third string quarterback. The Holy Spirit is fully and completely **God**.

When Luke describes the Spirit he uses the word **pneuma** - a word used throughout Scripture for the Spirit of God (lit. one who breaths life into people). The word for **wind** and the word for **Spirit** are the same word in the Greek.

Jesus: *"The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear it's sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit."* (**John 3:8**)

When God told the prophet Ezekiel to speak to the wind and the dry bones in the valley of his vision, it was the breath of God that breathed upon them. It was the fresh wind of the Spirit of God that filled them with new life.

Throughout Scripture, whether a *burning bush* or a *pillar of fire*, **fire** denotes the **presence** of God (John the Baptist says of Jesus - *"I baptize you with water. But One more powerful than I will come...He'll baptize with the Holy Spirit and fire"* **Luke 3:16**).

With the wind and fire, with the breath and presence of God, the Holy Spirit ignites each of these humble, desperate Christ-followers with hope, life and power. Jesus said, *"You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you."* They did. They were instantly able to something they weren't able to do minutes before.

Where the Spirit is present, there is vitality, energy, freshness, joy, power, courage, peace, compassion and grace - real life is flowing freely. The Spirit infuses a passion you never thought possible. He enables you to do things you never imagined you'd be able to do.

The Spirit ignites in this little band of discouraged, deflated, locked-in-an-upper-room believers a passion for **lost** people in the streets below and gives them the supernatural ability to speak in the native language of everyone of them. Not some coded, mysterious prayer language; but every language on earth. A message of hope and grace to a people desperately in need of some Good News.

People were amazed: "Are not all these men who are speaking Galileans?" If they're all speaking different languages, how did they know they were **Galileans**?

Their **accent**. Their vocabulary. They figured it out. You's or you'll, sneakers or tennis shoes, pop or soda, fire flies or lightening bugs, drinking fountains or bubblers, suckers or lollypops, round-a-bouts or traffic circles... People can tell a lot about us simply by the words we use. Word of these Galileans spread.

How can these uneducated, uncouth Galileans speak the language of Parthians, Medes, Elamites, residents of Mesopotamia, Judea, Cappadocia, Pontus, Asia, Phrygia, Pamphylia, Egypt, parts of Libya near Cyrene, Rome, Cretans and Arabs?

Never underestimate the power of God; never underestimate the power of His Spirit; never underestimate the power of proclaiming the Word of God in the **language** people can **understand**. The Church must continue to speak, to evangelize, the Gospel in language people can understand.

Luke writes in 2:13 - "And some laughed, and some accused them of drinking too much."

Not all the people who watched these disciples that day embraced what they said. Some mocked. Some criticized. But they were watching; and they were reacting.

People are [also] watching what happens here at Covenant. Are they talking about what we are doing here? Is anyone **amazed**? Is anyone **perplexed**? Are some making fun of us or being critical? Is anyone saying anything?

Are we're doing something here that makes people sit up and take notice; are we doing something here that can only be explained by the presence and power of God's Spirit. If we are, we'll experience all of those responses; only when we do nothing do we get no response.

You are feeding how many people? You're helping people in how many countries? How many people are volunteering from your church in local ministries? You're giving how much? You people are crazy. You must be drinking the Kool-Aid or hallucinating!

Understand, when the Spirit **moves**, the Church is **stirred**. It has to be. And the world will be amazed, perplexed and often critical.

THE STATEMENT

We must never forget that the Church is in the eternity business. Here is the bottom line: Are there people - here and now in this world - already experiencing eternity because you've shared the Gospel with them? Will there be people living forever with Jesus because of what **we** - Covenant Church - are doing **here** right now?

How much are you willing to **give up** so people can hear the Good News and experience the presence of God in their life? What price are you willing to pay to be a disciple of Jesus Christ? How much are we willing to sacrifice - how uncomfortable are we willing to be - so the story of Jesus and his love gets told and modeled to a hurting and helpless world?

In **Matthew 16:15f**, Jesus asks his disciples who he is. Peter says, "*You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God.*" Jesus says, "*Upon that rock right there, that statement/testimony, that 'salvation is found in Me (the Son of God),' I'm going to build my church.*"

"Here, Peter. I'm going to toss you the keys." And then he did

Peter, who not two months before denied Jesus three times, stands up - Peter, now filled with the Spirit - with a power he has never before experienced - preaches his first sermon.

Peter: "*Let me explain this a little bit. Remember when God spoke through the prophet Joel and said, 'I'm going to pour out my Spirit?' This is it!*" And then he tells them about **Jesus**. It always comes back to Jesus!

People are moved. They are "*cut to the heart.*" They ask, "*What do we need to do?*" (The Spirit has prepared them for the Touch of God).

Peter says, "*If you believe this to be true, repent; turn from your sinful (self-centered; it's all about me) life style, and embrace God's forgiveness because of Jesus.*" Because this promise is for you. For your children. Your grandchildren. Your great-grandchildren.

It's for people in far-off places like Cutlerville, Byron Center and Wayland; like Kent and Ottawa county - everywhere the Spirit of God moves.

The real miracle here is not the amazing wind and fire. Or the ability to speak in other languages, or Peter's great message or the amazing response. The real miracle here is that God is no longer just *out-there* somewhere. The Holy Spirit is no longer just making occasional visits.

The miracle here is that God is **moving** in. He is pouring out his Spirit. He was taking up **residence** in us.

I can only imagine how incredible it was to hang out with Jesus every day for three years - to be with him, talk to him, walk with him, listen to him teach. At Christmas, we celebrate Immanuel - God **with** us!

We just talked about Jesus' ascension. We acknowledged that Jesus is no longer physically "with us - walking beside us;" now, following Pentecost, we celebrate Christ's Spirit "**in** us."

Jesus came to die for our sins so we can live forever with him. But now, at Pentecost, the very power of God has come in you; in me, in us

Listen to **Colossians 1:27** - "*To them (i.e., rescued ones) God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles (i.e., the Good News is for everyone) the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.*"

Is Paul talking about heaven? No, I don't think so. But he is talking about our eternity. I think he's talking about the hope of a change, a transformation, a **radically** different way of living here and now that reflects the **glory** of God. This is Christ in you. That's the hope. That hope begins now - the moment Christ comes *in you* and takes control of your life.

Peter hung out with Jesus every day, but not until Pentecost, not until Christ was "in him", could Peter do the things that Peter would do.

THE SPECIFICS

The first word that goes with [Christ] "in you" (or "in us") is power.

Some years ago there was an ice/sleet/snow storm. The ice mixture collected on trees and power lines, sidewalks and parking lots. Some huge branches came down in my front yard; I went out and bought a chain saw. It was awesome.

The first day I cut up some huge limbs; second day, a few more... I'm out there working hard when my neighbor walks across the drive, takes the saw from me, flips this switch, pulls this cord, and this little motor starts up. It was amazing. (Just kidding!)

But sadly, that's how many Christians live their lives: I can do this! I can do this by myself! And Jesus says, "You need to flip the switch. You need to turn control over to me. I am *in you*. My Spirit's power is in you! But you need to tap it!"

Paul: "*I pray you'll begin to understand the incredible greatness of his power for us who believe him. This is the same power that raised Christ from the dead and seated him at the place of honor at God's right hand in the heavenly realms*" (**Eph. 1:19-20**).

The power is in you...to make the right **decisions**, to forgive when you don't feel like it, to walk away from temptation, to say the right thing at the right time.

The power in you to love **unconditionally**, to stare fear in the face, to walk confidently into the future, to handle bad news with a deep-seated joy and faith. The same power that blew a rock off a tomb and gave life to a dead man is in you.

Paul writes: "*It stands to reason, doesn't it, that if the alive and present God who raised Jesus from the dead moves into your life, he'll do the same thing in you that he did in Jesus, bringing you alive unto himself.*" (**Romans 8:11**; *The Message*)

When God lives and breathes in you, and he does, you are delivered from the power of death. With his Spirit in you, you have the same **power** to live this life as Jesus' disciples in Acts 2.

The second word that goes with [Christ] "in you" is complete.

Paul writes: *“For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form and you have been given fullness in Christ, who is the head over every power and authority.” (Col. 2:9-10).*

With Christ’s Spirit, we have everything we need to live this life in **complete joy**. We often say, “God, give me more patience.” God responds: *“I already gave it to you.”* “God, give me more joy, more gentleness.” *“It’s already in you - because the fullness of Christ is in you.”* I need to unleash the Spirit to produce those things in me; I’m already complete.

Scripture says: *“His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life.” (2 Peter 1:3)* (Notice who wrote that? Peter - the guy who felt like an incompetent failure - the one who felt unaccepted, insecure, and insignificant, a disciple now infused with the Spirit’s power - says he has everything!)

Who am I when I’m **in** Christ and Christ is **in** me? I am born of God; I am a **child of God**; Christ’s friend; justified; united with Christ; in one Spirit with him; bought with a price; a member of Christ’s body; redeemed and forgiven of all my sins; complete in Christ; free forever from condemnation. I am totally secure; assured God works all things together for good; established, anointed and sealed by God; confident God will finish the good work, he started in me; a citizen of heaven; hidden with Christ

I have not been given a spirit of fear, but one of power, love and self-discipline; I can find mercy and grace in my time of need; the evil one cannot touch me.

I am the salt of the earth; the light of the world; a branch of the true vine; I am chosen to bear fruit; a witness of Christ; a temple of God; a minister of reconciliation; a co-worker with the Father; seated in the heavenly realms; God’s workmanship created for good works. I can approach God with freedom and confidence.

Paul writes in **Philippians 4:13** - *“I can [now] do all things through Christ who strengthens me...”*

Acts 1 to Acts 2; from powerless to powerful, from overwhelmed to overwhelming, From Christ leaving to be with His Father to Christ in me - empowering and completing me for His Mission. Do you long to make an **eternal difference** in someone’s life? The only way is if the Spirit is **in** your **life**. Good News is - if you love **Jesus** - He is already there waiting to be tapped.

If we come together like the disciples in **Acts 2**, we will **change** the course of **history**.