

PENTECOST "Tongues of Fire"

May 20, 2018



THIS WEEK'S SCRIPTURES

Deuteronomy 16:9-11; Acts 2:1-41
John 14:6-7, 15-27; 15:26-27, Genesis 2:7,
Ezekiel Luke 1:26-35, Luke 4:1, 14, 18
1 Corinthians 12:4-11 and Romans 12:3-8,
Matthew 28:16-20; 2 Thessalonians 2:13

DAY 1

Read [Deuteronomy 16:9-11](#); [Acts 2:1-41](#)

Jewish law required Jews to come to Jerusalem to celebrate three annual festivals, including the Festival of Weeks. During the year of Christ's death and resurrection, this festival occurred about 50 days after the resurrection of our Lord. It was during the Festival of Weeks that the Holy Spirit anointed the disciples with tongues of fire and ignited them for the mission Jesus had left in their hands and hearts. A Christian pastor, The Reverend Dr. Lloyd J Ogilvie wrote that the Incarnation and Pentecost are like lightning and thunder. Just as we often see lightning before we hear the sound of thunder, Christ came to us like lightning as God in the flesh of a baby, but the thunderous power that fell upon the community was not heard until Pentecost almost 33 years later.

- **Why do you think God chose a special festival time to empower the disciples and give life to the church?**
- **Reflect on Dr. Ogilvie's analogy. Do you think it is accurate? Why or why not?**

- **Why do you think that the Holy Spirit is revealed in forces like wind, breath and fire?**

DAY 2

Read John 14:6-7, 15-27; 15:26-27

Jesus told the disciples that he was the way, and the truth, and the life. As he prepared to leave his disciples, he tried to equip them for a time when he would no longer be physically present. He promised to ask the Father to send them an advocate who would guide them into all truth and who would never leave them. He also told them that the Holy Spirit would testify about Jesus and that the disciples should do the same.

- **What truth do think Jesus was talking about?**
- **As a disciple, have you ever testified about the truth of Jesus Christ to others? If you have, how did they respond? If you have not, search your heart to identify what has kept you from being a witness to the truth of Jesus?**
- **Ask the Holy Spirit to empower you to be a faithful witness for Jesus and then look for an opportunity to share the Way, the Truth, and the Life with another who does not know the Lord.**

DAY 3

Read Genesis 2:7, Ezekiel Luke 1:26-35, Luke 4:1, 14, 18

The Holy Spirit seems to be the least understood person of the Trinity - God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. We forget that the Holy Spirit was present during creation, the incarnation and the ministry of Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit was not an afterthought, nor a lesser part of the Trinity. The Spirit is our Advocate, Counselor, Comforter, and

Sustainer. The Spirit is God's active presence residing in the heart of every believer. Some of the scriptures that tell us about the power of the Spirit, like the story of Ezekiel in the Valley of Dry Bones, seem impossible or like a modern day superhero story. Our scientific and educated minds want to reject what science cannot explain and so we sometimes view the Holy Spirit more like a mysterious mythical figure than a person of the Holy Trinity. When we do this, we are mistaken.

- **Does acknowledging the Spirit make you uncomfortable? Are you more comfortable talking about Jesus and the Father?**
- **Reflect upon the Jesus and then the Holy Spirit. Why do think so many people are comfortable accepting Jesus Christ but reluctant to acknowledge how the Spirit works to help them grow in grace and holiness?**
- **Reflect on the reasons that Jesus asked his Father to send the Spirit to his disciples? Pray for the Holy Spirit to be an active presence in your life and for the willingness to listen for the voice of the Spirit.**

DAY 4

Read 1 Corinthians 12:4-11, Romans 12:3-8

The Apostle Paul speaks of spiritual gifts and how we are to use them. In the passage from 1 Corinthians, Paul teaches us that these gifts are distributed by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit empowers us with unique gifts that we are to use in community because our combined gifts are much greater than any one of us using our gift alone. There are many ways for us to discover our gifts, but first we need to believe that every single Christ-follower has been gifted to serve in some capacity. Some people are gifted to work quietly behind the scenes. Other are gifted for more visible or public work. Every gift matters and every gift has a

kingdom purpose. If you are not sure what spiritual gift you have been given, several assessment tools have been developed to help you identify your gifts.

- **Reflect on Paul's writings about spiritual gifts. Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal your special gift if you have not already identified it.**
- **If you would like to take a spiritual gift assessment, note that on the connect card on Sunday and turn it in or contact us [via email](#) or phone at 584-8165. We would be glad to help you identify your special gift and find a way to use it!**
- **Pray for the Holy Spirit to encourage and strengthen you to use your gifts for God's purpose.**

DAY 5

Read Matthew 28:16-20; 2 Thessalonians 2:13

God's presence in the Old Testament was often a fearful one. We read about how the Israelites begged Moses to go up Mount Sinai alone because they feared that if they saw God they would die. God was a figure regarded by many as a distant, unknowable, and judgmental. In Jesus, God walked among humanity, proclaimed the Good News, healed the sick, and instructed his followers about the kingdom of God on earth as it is in heaven. He was approachable, gentle, compassionate and a visible physical presence among his followers, but he was only on earth in the flesh for thirty-three years. The Holy Spirit is with us and within us every day, working to transform our hearts. The Spirit is available to guide, chastise, and empower us with a constant presence.

- **Jesus promised to be with us till the end of the age. What do you think about the relationship between Christ's promise and the Holy Spirit? How is Jesus with you today?**

- **Paul wrote about the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit. Where do you see the presence of the Holy Spirit in your life? How does the Spirit's presence sanctify you?**
- **Sanctification is a lifelong process. Take some time to thank God for the work of the Spirit and for the patience with which God does his slow transformational work in you.**

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