

Last week we looked at the significance of the Festival of Pentecost, especially the concept of firstfruits- how Christ is the firstfruits of our resurrection, and how the HS is the firstfruits of our glorification. That helped us understand why Christ chose to pour out his Spirit on Pentecost after he ascended to heaven. This outpouring was a very unique, special, one-time event. But that does not place it outside of the realm of relevance for Christians today. This morning we will continue looking at Acts 2 and discover four features of this unique Pentecost that encourage us as believers today to be prepared for other outpourings of the HS.

As we dive into this, remember from last week that the HS came with wind and fire, the disciples declared the works of God in as many as 15 different languages or dialects, some people were amazed, and others thought they were drunk. Here's what happened next:

FEATURE 1: vs 14-21

Act 2:14 But Peter, standing with the eleven, lifted up his voice and addressed them: "Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and give ear to my words.

Act 2:15 For these people are not drunk, as you suppose, since it is only the third hour of the day.

Act 2:16 But this is what was uttered through the prophet Joel:

Act 2:17 "'And in the last days it shall be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams;

Act 2:18 even on my male servants and female servants in those days I will pour out my Spirit, and they shall prophesy.

Act 2:19 And I will show wonders in the heavens above and signs on the earth below, blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke;

Act 2:20 the sun shall be turned to darkness and the moon to blood, before the day of the Lord comes, the great and magnificent day.

Act 2:21 And it shall come to pass that everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.'

The gift of the HS is the ongoing fulfillment of God's promise- verses 14-21.

In spite of the scoffing, Peter stands up with newfound boldness that is the opposite of the intimidated and scared disciple who denied Christ less than two

months before this at Jesus' trial. He has a sense of humor too- he says they can't be drunk because it's only 9am.

Peter starts his sermon by tying these events back to the prophecy of Joel. There were three basic items that Joel foretold about this outpouring of the HS: its distinctiveness, its extent, and its results.

No believer in the OT had been completely without the help of the HS, but what happened at Pentecost was incredibly distinct: there was outward, tangible, immediate, unmistakable evidence of his presence, so much that it makes the previous ministry of the HS look scarce and minimal. Joel's prophecy called for something distinct, and there is no doubt that this event fits the bill. In fact, there are five Hebrew words that all basically mean to 'pour out' and Joel chose the exact one that had the same nuance as the Greek word for 'flow out' that Jesus would use.

Joh 7:38 Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, 'Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.'"

Joh 7:39 Now this he said about the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were to receive, for as yet the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.

So there is no doubt that the coming of the HS on Pentecost, shortly after the ascension of Jesus, is the distinct fulfillment of Joel's prophecy. But it is not the only fulfillment of it. There will be a final downpour of the HS in the end times when Israel is restored. Like many prophecies, there is an aspect that happens now and an aspect that happens later.

About the extent of this pouring out of the HS in Acts, it is on 'all flesh' just as Joel said. The Hebrew word for 'all flesh' is used 32 times in the OT, and 23 of those refer to Gentiles alone. So there is no doubt that Joel's prophecy includes Gentiles. It also is impartial to gender, age, race, ethnic origin, or class of society.

As for the results, all people could know the Lord, immediately and personally. It also meant that the time of the last days had begun. History is in final countdown. Keep in mind that Joel wrote that in the 9th century BC- over 800 years before this happened. People were probably starting to wonder when Joel's prophecy would be fulfilled, just like many today may be starting to wonder when Jesus will return. But God does not forget his promises, regardless of how much time passes.

FEATURE 2: vs 22-37

Act 2:22 *"Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs that God did through him in your midst, as you yourselves know—*

Act 2:23 *this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men.*

Act 2:24 *God raised him up, loosing the pangs of death, because it was not possible for him to be held by it.*

Act 2:25 *For David says concerning him, "'I saw the Lord always before me, for he is at my right hand that I may not be shaken;*

Act 2:26 *therefore my heart was glad, and my tongue rejoiced; my flesh also will dwell in hope.*

Act 2:27 *For you will not abandon my soul to Hades, or let your Holy One see corruption.*

Act 2:28 *You have made known to me the paths of life; you will make me full of gladness with your presence.'*

Act 2:29 *"Brothers, I may say to you with confidence about the patriarch David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day.*

Act 2:30 *Being therefore a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that he would set one of his descendants on his throne,*

Act 2:31 *he foresaw and spoke about the resurrection of the Christ, that he was not abandoned to Hades, nor did his flesh see corruption.*

Act 2:32 *This Jesus God raised up, and of that we all are witnesses.*

Act 2:33 *Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this that you yourselves are seeing and hearing.*

Act 2:34 *For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he himself says, "'The Lord said to my Lord, "Sit at my right hand,*

Act 2:35 *until I make your enemies your footstool.'"*

Act 2:36 *Let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified."*

Act 2:37 *Now when they heard this they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?"*

The gift of the HS brings assurance of God's power over everything, including death- verses 22-37.

Peter's eloquence and boldness come out even more as he tackles a second OT prophecy, Psalm 16:8-11 (quoted in Acts 2:25-28, 34-35). He is assembling

ample biblical evidence for this skeptical crowd. And as he does this, he turns the focus toward Jesus. This is why he chooses Psalm 16- because David, both as a psalmist and as a prophet, predicted the resurrection of Christ. And once Christ ascended to the Father, he sent the HS and fulfilled Joel's prophecy. That could not have happened without Christ and his victory over death and the grave, as David prophesied. If the Son of God can overcome death, nothing lies outside of his ability to accomplish.

FEATURE 3: vs 38-41

Act 2:38 And Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Act 2:39 For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself."

Act 2:40 And with many other words he bore witness and continued to exhort them, saying, "Save yourselves from this crooked generation."

Act 2:41 So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls.

The gift of the HS is given when we repent- verses 38-41.

Now Peter boldly calls the crowd to action: repent and be baptized. Peter himself is a prime example of the change that comes from true repentance. 50 days ago he couldn't confess Christ to a few soldiers or even a servant girl, and now he is facing thousands of scoffing, jeering, hostile men without hesitation or apology. The only explanation for such remarkable change is an inner work of transformation by the HS that happened when Peter repented. Repentance opened the door for the release of a spiritual gift in Peter's life. And in turn, Peter is telling this crowd that every person can receive the HS. The HS does not dwell in dirty houses. If you want him to reside in your heart, you have to repent of your sin. And if you do repent, he moves in lock, stock, and barrel, gifting and empowering you in new ways.

Peter's final motivation that he gives this crowd to move them to repentance and baptism is "save yourselves from this crooked generation." A remnant of people in every generation sees the crooked ways of their generation. The Jews within earshot of Peter that day did too. They saw the corruption, greed, favoritism, and manipulation of their day and they wanted all that to come to an end. I have no doubt that all of you feel the same way about our generations today. There are many things we may try to do to accomplish that,

but how does Peter tell us to save ourselves from our crooked generation? One word- repent. You will not rise above the crookedness of your generation, let alone change your generation, without the HS, and you won't get the HS if you don't repent. You won't stand out as different from your crooked generation if you don't repent. You won't be bold if you don't have a clear conscience before God, and you won't have a clear conscience before God if you don't repent.

FEATURE 4: vs 42-47

Act 2:42 And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.

Act 2:43 And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles.

Act 2:44 And all who believed were together and had all things in common.

Act 2:45 And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need.

Act 2:46 And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts,

Act 2:47 praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.

The gift of the HS is the basis for our perseverance in the faith- verses 42-47.

These verses reveal the fact that this magnificent event on Pentecost was not a one-hit wonder. It sparked the development of a group of people that would band together based on their shared belief in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. This group of people, who later came to be called Christians, has never ceased to grow and spread across the globe. The reason for the continuance of Christianity is that the gift of the HS was not a one-time transaction on that day of Pentecost, he is not a one-time gift for any believer, he is a gift that Jesus keeps on giving. The fruit of that gift for the first Christians is plainly stated in verse 42: they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. They could not have that devotion let alone continue that devotion without the HS. The HS drew them to each of those four practices. Think about your own life- why is it that you crave good biblical teaching? Why is it that you crave fellowship? Why is it that you feel the priority of taking the Lord's supper together regularly? Why is it that you feel drawn to pray? Why is it that you feel dry and empty if you go without these things?

Because the HS is drawing you to each of them. The HS is the reason you are in church today.

So to wrap this up, we have seen that:

- The gift of the HS is the ongoing fulfillment of God's promise.
- The gift of the HS brings assurance of God's power over everything.
- The gift of the HS is given when we repent.
- The gift of the HS is the basis for our perseverance in the faith.

It is these four features of this unique Pentecost that encourage us as believers today to anticipate and be prepared for further outpourings of the HS. Those outpourings may or may not be accompanied by miraculous evidence, but nonetheless those outpourings will pull us together as a church, to be devoted to the apostles' teaching, fellowship, breaking bread, and prayer.

The gift of the HS is a divine gift- it is not a gift that is there for the taking, or a power that we can somehow capture or muster on our own. Our trust must not be in our capacity to receive such a gift, but only in God's power to give it. This gift depends completely on the initiative and grace of God. There are basic conditions we must meet, but in the end we place our trust in what God can do.

Benediction: Heb. 13:20-21

Now may the God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, equip you with everything good that you may do his will, working in us that which is pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.