

## “The Spirit of Pentecost”

Acts 2:1-18

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Rev. Jeong Park

Fair Oaks United Methodist Church

Many churches across the world celebrate today as Pentecost Sunday. In our church calendar, Pentecost is a celebration of the receiving of the Holy Spirit on the seventh day after Easter. Why does Pentecost matter? **One reason: The Holy Spirit.** After the Ascension of Jesus, when his disciples were anxious, they received the gift of the Holy Spirit and they experienced transformation of life. They changed their attitude and perspective. Their experience was powerful, from sadness to joy, despair to hope, and survival to renewal. The church was born and began out of the event of Pentecost. Without the Holy Spirit, Christian faith is not alive. Without the Holy Spirit, we don't understand God's grace and mercy. For example, we know the Creator God through the Old Testament stories. We learn the love of God through Jesus Christ's life. Without the Holy Spirit, we do not understand God's presence, *God is with us, protects us and guides us.* Pentecost means that Jesus' followers were able to receive the gifts and power of the Holy Spirit. Have you received or felt the gift of the Holy Spirit? This morning, I am going to talk about the Spirit of Pentecost.

Today our Scripture reading describes the descent of the Holy Spirit in a dramatic way. In verse 2, it says “and suddenly, there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them.” The images of fire, a violent wind and speaking in tongues describe the nature of God. In many religions, God is often understood as mysterious, unapproachable, and causes fear but at the same time, God is always attractive, close and fascinating. Imagine you were one of the disciples on the day of Pentecost, what would your feelings be? How can you summarize the whole experience of the Holy Spirit? Two words: ***Energy and excitement.*** Fire especially is a symbol of great energy, passion and excitement.

Let me tell you about my experience with Jacob. Last week, Jacob had a long nap in the afternoon. He wouldn't go to bed at night. He seemed so bored. I suggested that we go to the playhouse and go camping in our backyard and have a campfire in the portable fire pit which I bought for camping. Thanks to our church and trustees, we have a nice playhouse to go to for camping. He was so excited! I took my camp chairs and we started a small campfire. We saw many stars in the night sky. While looking at the campfire, Jacob wanted to sing

some songs. I was quite surprised at his suggestion. Can you believe this? He is just three-years-old, but he joyfully sang or hummed *Twinkle Twinkle Little Star* and some other theme songs of his favorite animated shows like *Thomas The Train* and *Fireman Sam*. The campfire brought us a gift of joy, fun and energy and excitement. Most of all, it made a three-year-old boy sing and transformed boredom to excitement. He enjoyed the night time!

My point is not to praise camping or campfire, but I want to tell you what really happened to the disciples on the day of Pentecost. Actually, I am not interested in the images of fire, a violent wind or speaking in multiple languages. But I am more interested in their powerful transformational experience. What was the consequence after the disciples were filled with the Holy Spirit? Simply speaking, what was the change? Pentecost was a transformational experience for Jesus' followers to move from sadness to joy and from survival to renewal. This is the spirit of Pentecost!

Pentecost reminds us of three important lessons for our Christian faith. First of all, the Ever-present Jesus Christ. The gift of the Holy Spirit is a great reminder and affirmation that Jesus became alive again and forever will be present in us. The spirit of Pentecost is to continue Jesus' passionate ministries through energy and excitement of the Holy Spirit. Secondly, empowerment. The Holy Spirit came upon Jesus' disciples when they were together in one place. Here 'one place' means the church "coming together". The Spirit of Pentecost is a communal experience as the church building up one another and empowering each other in love and care. The gift of the Holy Spirit is not dividing the community, but bringing us unity, and encouraging one another as brothers and sisters in Christ. Lastly, the Spirit of Pentecost enables us to dream dreams. When we receive the gift of the Holy Spirit, the Spirit changes our attitude and perspective. We will find hope for the future. We won't stay in the past or in the present, but the Holy Spirit will help us to move forward in our visions.

What is the Spirit of Pentecost? It is the Holy Spirit who enables us to accept that Jesus Christ is forever present within us. ***Do we need this Spirit of Pentecost for our life? Does our church need this Spirit? Yes! Definitely we need it!*** God is ready to pour out the Spirit upon all of us, as long as we humbly respond to God saying, "Yes, Lord". God's gift always comes before us, but if we do not open the locked door, the gift is sitting at the door. On this day of Pentecost, let us open our doors, and receive the gift of the Holy Spirit in our hearts. Amen.