

## Session #2

### MIGHTY IN SPIRIT – MIGHTY IN DEED Acts 2

The second chapter of Acts introduces us to something new! Here we meet **the Holy Spirit** and begin to discover His ministry in and through the believer. The coming of the Spirit introduced the followers of Jesus to a **whole new dimension** of living!

#### I. Notes on Acts 2:1-4 (see chart on page 13).

*<sup>1</sup>When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. <sup>2</sup>Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent **wind** came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. <sup>3</sup>They saw what seemed to be tongues of **fire** that separated and came to rest on each of them. <sup>4</sup>All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other **tongues** as the Spirit enabled them.*

A. The day was significant: Pentecost (Feast of Weeks, Feast of Harvest).

- 1) Pentecost was one of the major Holy Days for the Jews. The celebration commemorated two important realities.

##### a. **Firstfruits.**

Falling in late spring, Pentecost marked the beginning of the harvest. It was a day of joy for the bountiful harvest God was providing.

*<sup>15</sup> 'From the day after the Sabbath, the day you brought the sheaf of the wave offering, count off seven full weeks. <sup>16</sup> Count off fifty days up to the day after the seventh Sabbath, and then present an offering of new grain to the LORD. <sup>17</sup> From wherever you live, bring two loaves made of two-tenths of an ephah of fine flour, baked with yeast, as a wave offering of firstfruits to the LORD. (Leviticus 23:15-17).*

##### b. The giving of **the law.**

The Hebrews arrived at Mt. Sinai “in the third month after the Israelites left Egypt” (Exodus 19:1). Thus about 50 days had passed from Passover to the giving of the Law. Because of this chronological association, the Feast of Pentecost began to also be a celebration of the giving of the Law.

- 2) It is easy to see the fuller meaning of why God chose this particular feast day as the occasion for the pouring out of His Spirit.
  - a. The coming of the Holy Spirit would make possible the ingathering of the firstfruits of the **harvest** of converts (Jews and Gentiles) into the New Community that was being formed. The 3,000 converts (Acts 2:41) on that day were the promise of the greater harvest still to come (cf. Matthew 9:36-38).
  - b. The coming of the Holy Spirit would inaugurate a new giving of the Law. The prophets had foretold of this event.

<sup>26</sup> *I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh.*

<sup>27</sup> *And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to **keep my law** (Ezekiel 36:26-27).*

<sup>33</sup> *"This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time," declares the LORD. "I will put my law in their minds and write it **on their hearts**. I will be their God, and they will be my people" (Jeremiah 31:33).*

B. The symbolism was strong: wind, fire and tongues.

### 1) Wind

In both Greek and Hebrew languages the word used here can be translated as either: **wind**, **breath**, or **spirit**.

- a. Genesis 2:7.
- b. Exodus 14:21; 15:8.
- c. Job 38:1; 40:6
- d. Ezekiel 37:9-10, 14
- e. John 3:8; 20:22

### 2) Fire

As fire, God consumes all that is wood, hay and stubble. And that which is not destroyed by fire is refined and **purified**.

- a. Exodus 3:2; 19:18.
- b. Malachi 3:1-3.
- c. Matthew 3:11-12.
- d. Hebrews 12:29.

### 3) Tongues

It is clear that “tongues” in Acts 2 is to be understood as the miraculous ability to suddenly speak **human languages** one has never studied (see Acts 2:5-11).

The miracle of Pentecost was a reversal of the curse that had come on the world at the **tower of Babel** (Genesis 11:1-9). Then, sinful pride brought confusion and division to the human race. But at Jerusalem, on the day of Pentecost, men from “every nation under heaven” (Acts 2:5) heard the wonders of God in their own languages! Barriers of race and language were transcended and a **new community** was established!

The “Pentecostal” tongues of Acts 2 are different from the “Corinthian” tongues of I Corinthians 12-14 in several important respects.

<b>“Pentecostal” tongues (Acts 2)</b>	<b>“Corinthian” tongues (I Cor. 12-14)</b>
- Languages (syntax, grammar, vocabulary, etc.)	- Unknown tongues, ecstatic utterances
- No interpretation necessary	- There must be interpretation or the gift is not to be used (14:28)
No limit on the number (120) of speakers (2:4)	- Only 2 or 3 at a time (14:27)
- Speaking to men for the purpose of evangelism	- Speaking to God for personal edification (14:2)
- Fully conscious and rational	- In a trance?

## II. The condition of the disciples.

To fully appreciate the significance of the infilling of the Holy Spirit, it is important to understand the spiritual condition of those on whom the Spirit came.

### A. What they had already experienced:

For three years these disciples had experienced the best **discipleship program** in the history of the world! They had experienced God in significant ways:

#### 1) **Faith** and **repentance**.

The disciples had heard the Gospel call, left everything and placed their full confidence and trust in Jesus.

*<sup>15</sup>"The time has come," he said. "The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news!" (Mark 1:15).*

2) Total **commitment**.

No cost was too great to keep the disciples from following their Lord and master. Wherever He led them, they followed.

<sup>16</sup>*As Jesus walked beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen.*

<sup>17</sup>*"Come, follow me," Jesus said, "and I will make you fishers of men."*

<sup>18</sup>*At once they **left their nets** and followed him. (Mark 1:16-18).*

<sup>28</sup>*Peter said to him, "We have **left everything** to follow you!" (Mark 10:28).*

<sup>33</sup>*In the same way, any of you who does not **give up everything** he has cannot be my disciple. (Luke 14:33).*

3) They knew the **true identity** of Jesus!

God Himself had opened their eyes to see the true identity of the One they followed.

<sup>15</sup>*"But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?"* <sup>16</sup>*Simon Peter answered, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."*

<sup>17</sup>*Jesus replied, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not **revealed to you** by man, but by my Father in heaven." (Matthew 16:15-17).*

4) Their names were **written in heaven!**

Jesus indicates that their discipleship on earth was ratified in heaven. These men were for real!

<sup>20</sup>*However, do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven." (Luke 10:20).*

5) They had met the **risen Lord!**

The disciples experienced personally the Risen Christ! They saw and touched the glorified Savior! Their faith had become sight.

## B. What they lacked.

Yet in spite of their orthodox theology, total commitment, faith in Jesus Christ and personal experience of his risen presence, as the book of Acts opens, these disciples were:

- 1) Still struggling with **doubt** (Matthew 28:17; Mark 16:11, 13, 14).
- 2) Filled with **fear** (Mark 16:8).
- 3) In a survival mode... meeting behind **locked doors** (John 20:19).
- 4) No evidence of any obedience to the **Great Commission**.

### TABLE TALK

- 1). Look again at A and B above. In the light of all that the disciples had experienced, do you find it strange that they still lived with doubts and fears?
- 2) Don't you think a personal encounter with the risen Lord would send someone out to tell the world about it? Why didn't it have this effect on the disciples?
- 3) How does the experience of the disciples relate to your experience?
- 4) What's missing?

## C. Expectant waiting.

Acts 1 gives us a picture of the hearts of the disciples prior to the coming of the Spirit. Here we see those preconditions necessary for the coming of the Spirit in power.

- 1) **Trust** in the finished work of Jesus:
  - As Lamb of God.
  - As ascended Lord.
  - As risen Savior
  - As coming King.
- 2) **Faith** in an explicit promise.

*Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift **my Father promised**, which you have heard me speak about. (Acts 1:4).*

3) **Surrender** of the will.

The manner in which a replacement for Judas was chosen (Acts 1:15-26) gives clear evidence to the fact that the disciples had (finally!) laid down their own agendas and given up their rights and preferences, so that the will of their Lord was supreme. **Not my will**, but Yours be done.

4) **United** prayer.

*These all with one mind were continually devoting themselves to prayer, along with the women.... (Acts 1:14 NASB).*

### III. What are the marks of Spirit-filled living?

There has been much confusion throughout history surrounding the question of what happens when the Spirit comes.

- Signs and wonders?
- Tongues?
- Get weird?
- Some feeling or emotion?
- Called into full-time ministry?
- Don't expect anything because it all "happens" at conversion?

A. In Acts we see two primary marks of the Spirit's coming:

1) **Power.**

<sup>49</sup>*I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high." (Luke 24:49).*

<sup>8</sup>*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" (Acts 1:8).*

Before we are empowered to **do** something the Spirit empowers us to **be** something: witnesses (= martyrs).

The power of the Spirit is the supernatural ability to lay down my life, give up my rights and think of others more highly than I think of myself. It is the power to love as Jesus loved!

Jesus turned the world's understanding of power upside down. While the world celebrates the **love of power** those who are filled with the Holy Spirit celebrate the **power of love!**

## 2) Purity.

The disciples were not just filled with a Spirit. They were filled with the **Holy** Spirit! The adjective denotes not just who He is. It also explains what He does: He makes things holy, pure, set apart... He is the **sanctifying** Spirit.

*<sup>8</sup>God, who knows the heart, showed that he accepted them by giving the Holy Spirit to them, just as he did to us. <sup>9</sup>He made no distinction between us and them, for he **purified their hearts** by faith. (Acts 15:8-9).*

*<sup>7</sup>For God did not call us to be impure, but to live **a holy life**. <sup>8</sup>Therefore, he who rejects this instruction does not reject man but God, who gives you his Holy Spirit. (1 Thessalonians 4:7-8).*

A pure heart is a single heart, an **undivided** heart, a heart where Christ alone reigns supreme. The self has been dethroned and Christ rules without a rival. Heart purity then means that my life will be characterized by **self-denial** and **agape-love** for others.

- Loving others more than myself (I Corinthians 10:24).
- Thinking of the interests of others first (Philippians 2:4).
- No selfish ambition (Philippians 2:3).
- No self-seeking (I Corinthians 13:5).
- Pleasing others, not myself (Romans 15:1-2).

### TABLE TALK

1. Prior to this lesson, what did you understand to be the mark of the infilling of the Holy Spirit?
2. This lesson claims that there are two primary ways to recognize when someone is filled with the Holy Spirit of God:
  - \* **Power:** they will have the supernatural ability to lay down their lives and their rights for others – they will be characterized by agape love.
  - \* **Purity:** they will be holy, set apart – they will love God with an undivided heart.

Do you agree or disagree? Why?
3. Why aren't more Christians filled with the Spirit?

## B. Other ministries of the Holy Spirit.

Beyond the two primary marks of the infilling of the Holy Spirit, the New Testament mentions other ministries of the Holy Spirit.

### 1. Conviction of sin.

*<sup>8</sup>When he comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment (John 16:8).*

Spirit-filled living makes me **more aware** of inner impurities, not less!

### 2. Spiritual **fruit.**

*<sup>22</sup>But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, <sup>23</sup>gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law (Galatians 5:22-23).*

Life in the Spirit will produce the character qualities of Jesus. This is the not result of "**work.**" Rather, it is the natural expression of the Spirit of holiness working within.

### 3. Spiritual **gifts.**

*<sup>4</sup>There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit. <sup>5</sup>There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. <sup>6</sup>There are different kinds of working, but the same God works all of them in all men.*

*<sup>7</sup>Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for **the common good.** <sup>8</sup>To one there is given through the Spirit the message of wisdom, to another the message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, <sup>9</sup>to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, <sup>10</sup>to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues. <sup>11</sup>All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he gives them to each one, just as **he determines** (I Corinthians 12:4-11).*

Spirit-filled people know their place in the body of Christ! And their greatest **joy** comes in serving in the area of their giftedness.

4. Brings **assurance** of salvation.

*<sup>15</sup>For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, "Abba, Father" (Romans 8:15-16).*

Life in the Spirit manifests a deep, **humble** awareness that I am His and He is mine.

5. Brings glory to **Jesus**.

*<sup>14</sup>He (the Holy Spirit) will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it known to you (John 16:14).*

The Spirit never calls attention to Himself! When He is most at work is when He is most **unnoticed!**

#### IV. When does the Spirit come?

A. A Question of Great Importance.

Both from a **doctrinal** and an **experiential** perspective, the question of when believers should expect to be filled with the Spirit is of tremendous significance. At its heart the question is this:

- Am I filled with the Spirit when I become a Christian or should I seek a second, deeper experience?
- Should I expect the Spirit to fill me in a moment? Or is this something that I grow gradually into?

The way we answer this question has profound implications for how we understand Christian discipleship, pastoral care, growth, preaching, the victorious life, Christian maturity, etc.

B. Point of clarification.

We receive the Holy Spirit when we are first born into the family of God.

*<sup>5</sup>Jesus answered, "I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit. <sup>6</sup>Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. <sup>7</sup>You should not be surprised at my saying, 'You must be born again.' <sup>8</sup>The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone **born of the Spirit**." (John 3:5-8).*

*<sup>9</sup>You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ. (Romans 8:9).*

As a believer in Jesus, the question is not, how much of the Holy Spirit do I have? Rather, the real question is, **how much of me does the Spirit have?**

- Am I **filled** with the Spirit?
- Does the Spirit **control** my life?
- Am I **walking** in the Spirit?

This is why the infilling of the Holy Spirit is not optional. It is a **command** of God (Ephesians 5:18).

C. The book of Acts seems to indicate **two stages** in our Christian walk.

1) The disciples prior to Acts 2

These disciples had experienced Jesus (faith, repentance, the cross, the resurrection) yet their lives were not characterized by **victory**. They continued to struggle with lack of power and lack of purity.

2) Others who seemed to follow a similar pattern:

a. The Samaritans.

*<sup>14</sup>When the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had accepted the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them. <sup>15</sup>When they arrived, they prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit, <sup>16</sup>because the Holy Spirit **had not yet come** upon any of them; they had simply been baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus. <sup>17</sup>Then Peter and John placed their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit. (Acts 8:14-17).*

b. The disciples in Ephesus.

*<sup>1</sup>While Apollos was at Corinth, Paul took the road through the interior and arrived at Ephesus. There he found some disciples <sup>2</sup>and asked them, "Did you **receive the Holy Spirit** when you believed?" They answered, "No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit." <sup>3</sup>So Paul asked, "Then what baptism did you receive?" "John's baptism," they replied. <sup>4</sup>Paul said, "John's baptism was a baptism of repentance. He told the people to believe in the one coming after him, that is, in Jesus."*

<sup>5</sup>On hearing this, they were baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus. <sup>6</sup>When Paul placed his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied. <sup>7</sup>There were about twelve men in all. (Acts 19:1-7).

c. Some examples in Church history.

- Liturgical churches. Many have a doctrinal understanding that equates baptism with adoption into God's family and **confirmation** with the infilling of the Holy Spirit.
- Deeper Life movements. Coming from many and varied theological traditions (Keswick, Holiness, Wesleyan, etc.), numerous voices have called on believers to trust God for a deeper **work of grace** in their hearts.
- Charismatic/Pentecostal churches. In the past century especially, Pentecostalism has preached a second definite work of grace that is generally called **the baptism of the Holy Spirit**. Most Pentecostals believe that the mark of the Spirit's infilling is speaking in tongues.

#### IV. Living and Walking in the Spirit.

How then does one enter this new dimension of Spirit-filled living?

A. **Confess** my need.

God will only fill a vessel that is empty. If we don't acknowledge our need, we'll never experience His power! To confess is simply to agree with reality, to acknowledge the truth:

- |                                  |                               |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| • I am weak.                     | • I have no fruit.            |
| • I am full of doubts and fears. | • I don't know my gifts.      |
| • I am impure.                   | • I am confused.              |
| • I am defeated.                 | • My heart is doubled-minded. |

B. **Desire** the Spirit's fullness.

Are you thirsty? If you can **live without the Spirit**, you will.

<sup>37</sup>On the last and greatest day of the Feast, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, "If anyone is **thirsty**, let him come to me and drink. <sup>38</sup>Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him." <sup>39</sup>By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were

*later to receive. Up to that time the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified. (John 7:37-39).*

Warning: your desire must not be for some experience, emotion or feeling. Rather, your desire is for purity and power to lay down your selfish ambitions. Simon the Magician wanted the Holy Spirit but for the wrong reasons (Acts 8:9-24). His rebuke was well justified!

C. Come to a place of **full surrender**.

Only when Christ is exalted as Lord over all is He able to send His Spirit to fill our surrendered hearts. Ultimately, Jesus will be **Lord of all** or He will not be **Lord at all!**

<sup>32</sup>*We are witnesses of these things, and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey him (Acts 5:32).*

D. **Ask**.

For many, the explanation of our spiritual mediocrity is simple: we have never asked God to fill us.

<sup>13</sup>*If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him! (Luke 11:13).*

E. **Believe**.

If you ask for something that is clearly in the will of God, then “believe that you **have received it**, and it will be yours.” (Mark 11:24).

<sup>14</sup>*This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. <sup>15</sup>And if we know that he hears us—whatever we ask—we know that **we have** what we asked of him. (1 John 5:14-15).*

Beware the error of thinking that justification is by faith (i.e. by believing) but that sanctification is by **works!** Spirit-filled, victorious living is a work of grace even as is our initial salvation. It is all of grace! Received freely by **faith!**

### PERSONAL TIME WITH GOD

1. What have I learned today about the Spirit-filled life?
2. Am I filled with the Spirit of holiness?
3. How would I know if I was filled with the Spirit?
4. Am I ready to take the steps outlined above?

<b>WHEN THE SPIRIT COMES</b>																				
<b>Acts 2</b>																				
1	4	5	13	14	21	22	22	36	37	40	41	42	47							
<b>Wind, Fire &amp; Tongues</b>		<b>Reactions</b>		<b>Joel's Prophecy</b>			<b>His Life</b>		<b>His Death</b>		<b>His Resurrection</b>		<b>His Exaltation</b>		<b>Invitation</b>		<b>3,000 Converts</b>		<b>The new Community</b>	
										<b>The Gospel of Jesus</b>										
										<b>The Explanation of Pentecost</b>						<b>The Effect of Pentecost</b>				
1												13	14	40	41	47				
<b>The Event of Pentecost</b>												<b>The Event of Pentecost</b>		<b>The Effect of Pentecost</b>						