

Acts 2:1-21

Pentecost, May 19, 2024

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When the day of Pentecost arrived, they were all together in one place. ² And suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. ³ And divided tongues as of fire appeared to them and rested on each one of them. ⁴ And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance. ⁵ Now there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men from every nation under heaven. ⁶ And at this sound the multitude came together, and they were bewildered, because each one was hearing them speak in his own language. ⁷ And they were amazed and astonished, saying, "Are not all these who are speaking Galileans?" ⁸ And how is it that we hear, each of us in his own native language? ⁹ Parthians and Medes and Elamites and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, ¹⁰ Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, ¹¹ both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabians-- we hear them telling in our own tongues the mighty works of God." ¹² And all were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, "What does this mean?" ¹³ But others mocking said, "They are filled with new wine." 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. ¹⁵ For these people are not drunk, as you suppose, since it is only the third hour of the day. ¹⁶ But this is what was uttered through the prophet Joel: 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; ¹⁸ even on my male servants and female servants in those days I will pour out my Spirit, and they shall prophesy. ¹⁹ And I will show wonders in the heavens above and signs on the earth below, blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke; 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. ²¹ And it shall come to pass that everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.'

We just wrapped up our Wednesday morning Bible Class series on the Book of Acts this past Wednesday. The Book of Acts, which in most of your Bibles is probably fully titled, "The Acts of the Apostles"—we saw time and again would be better named, "The Acts of the Holy Spirit." Yes, there's involvement of the Apostles in the book, but really only a few of them, and none of them take up the *entire* book. But the one actor that we see present throughout all of Acts is indeed the Holy Spirit. He is the central, driving force behind everything we read in the book. And yet, while that is true, the central *figure* in the Book of Acts is actually *Jesus*.

And we see that here during the events of Pentecost. Pentecost is that festival day of the church year that we have set aside for preaching on the Holy Spirit. And that's appropriate, since that first Pentecost was the day where Jesus' promise was fulfilled that He would pour out the Holy Spirit on the Apostles. He had told them in our Gospel reading, "***The Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.***" (John 14:26) So, today, we thank and praise the Holy Spirit for His work not only on Pentecost, but even among us still today. But to *do* so, we *have* to focus on Jesus. Because Pentecost, along with the Book of Acts and all the work of the Holy Spirit is all focused on *Jesus*. So, today's theme is:

The Holy Spirit is All About Jesus

- I. This is proved by His Day
- II. This is to prepare us for Judgment Day

Sometimes, we'll say things like, "I'm all about that," or "I'm all for that." It's a common saying that means we really, really like something. We're *all* about it! But that's really just an exaggeration to get a point across, because we're never really *all* about *anything*. If you were truly "all" about something, it would mean you wouldn't have anything left to give to anything else, but we tend to be "all about" many different things at the same time. But the Holy Spirit is one that can say that He is **All About Jesus**, and He's not exaggerating. And **This is proved by His Day**, the day of Pentecost.

The Holy Spirit is often thought of as the silent member of the Trinity. He works behind the scenes, so to speak, and we tend to focus more on God the Father or on God the Son. Well, here on that first Pentecost, the Holy Spirit finally gets center stage, and yet even on *this* day the spotlight remains on Jesus. Consider the Apostles who are gathered there, identified as "**the eleven**" in our text. They're all gathered together in a house when the Holy Spirit steps onto the scene, and then you have the evidence: the mighty rushing wind and the tongues of fire and the speaking in different languages. But *why* were they all there in the first place? It's because of Jesus! It's because Jesus *told* them to be there. "**And while staying with them he ordered them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, he said, 'You heard from me; for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.'**" (Acts 1:4-5) So, the disciples are there, and it was all because of Jesus.

The Holy Spirit is there because of Jesus too. In the Gospel of John, when Jesus is preparing the Disciples for His death and resurrection and subsequent ascension, He tells them, "**But when the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness about me.**" (John 15:26) So, the Holy Spirit is there *because* Jesus sent Him; again, **This Day is All About Jesus**.

And even the crowds were there because of Jesus! We're told in our text that there were in Jerusalem at that time people from "**every nation under heaven.**" They're from all these different countries listed in our text, coming from every direction, a multitude gathered together in Jerusalem. They're gathered because it's the Festival of Pentecost, which is one of the three great festivals in the Jewish calendar when every Jew was supposed to make a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, regardless of where they lived. They would arrive, and they would offer the first-fruits of their harvests, and they would sacrifice unblemished lambs as a burnt offering to the Lord. And this festival along with the others were given by God as pictures of Jesus, as Paul writes to the Colossians that these festivals were "**shadows of the things to come, but the substance belongs to Christ.**" (cf. Colossians 2:16-17) So, even though the people didn't realize it yet, they were there because of Jesus. **It was All About Jesus.**

There's a day on the calendar for each one of us that we all look forward to, although we likely looked forward to it much more when we were younger than when we're older—I'm talking about our birthdays. We like those days because they're all about us. Usually you get some presents, usually some extra-special attention from your loved ones. In our family, it also means you get to pick out what the family will eat for supper. And I don't think any of us would appreciate it so much if our special days revolved around another member of the family instead. Well, here we are on Pentecost, the Holy Spirit's Day—and we've seen that it's **All About Jesus**. But that's no problem for the Holy Spirit! Because, everything that the Holy Spirit does and says is **About Jesus**.

And we see that in these events. The Holy Spirit fills the Apostles and gives them the words to say. And it might have been the sound of the rushing wind that drew the crowds, and the different languages might have gotten them to stay and see what was going on, but it was the *words* that were being spoken that left them astonished. They said, ***“We hear them telling in our own tongues the mighty works of God.”*** Three-thousand people were converted that day, which is probably the largest mass conversion ever seen; and it was brought about because of Jesus. Because even though we only have four verses of Peter’s sermon in our text this morning, he goes on to tell about Jesus of Nazareth, the one who was declared to be God through His mighty works and wonders and signs, whom they crucified, and who is dead no longer, but that God had raised Him up. Speaking by the Holy Spirit, Peter spoke **All About Jesus**.

The Holy Spirit still speaks to us today, and He does so no differently than He did on that first Pentecost. He speaks in words that we can understand, using the words of the Apostles written down for us in Scripture, proclaiming to us the wonderful works of God, all that He has accomplished for us through Jesus. And the reason He does so, the reason the Holy Spirit is **All About Jesus** is to prepare us for a different day—**Judgment Day**. And this is spoken of in our text as well.

Peter quotes from the Prophet Joel starting in verse 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; even on my male servants and female servants in those days I will pour out my Spirit, and they shall prophesy. And I will show wonders in the heavens above and signs on the earth below, blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke; the sun shall be turned to darkness and the moon to blood, before the day of the Lord comes, the great and magnificent day. And it shall come to pass that everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.”***

I want you to imagine you’re in high school; your parents are going away, and before leaving they tell you you’re not allowed to have anyone over. They leave, and you immediately get word out that you’re going to throw a party at your house because your parents aren’t around. You have the party, and the house is a mess when you go to bed, but you figure you’ll wake up early and get the house all cleaned up long before your parents get home. But then you oversleep, and you wake up and see that your parents sent a message a few hours before that they were going to come home early that morning. You jump out of bed and start scrambling trying to get the house cleaned up, but before long you realize that it’s hopeless. There’s just no way you’re going to get the house tidied up in time.

What do you do? Who are you going to call for help? You’re certainly not going to call your parents! “Hey, mom and dad, can you stay away a little longer, I’ve got to clean up before you get home.” Or, “Hey, mom and dad, can you come home and help me clean up from my party before I get in trouble with you?” That of course makes no sense. You don’t call upon the person for help who is also the reason why you *need* that help. Unless that person is Jesus. And that’s what the Holy Spirit teaches us.

The Holy Spirit shows us the crisis that we’re in, the mess that we find ourselves in because He tells us in that reading from Joel about the Last Day. Well, first he speaks about the ***“last days,”*** and then he speaks about the Last Day, Judgment Day. Sometimes people will talk about the last days, saying

things like, “I know we’re in the last days, look at the signs! Look at everything that is happening, the end is near.” And it’s true, we *are* in the last days, but this isn’t some recent development. We’ve been in the last days for the past 2,000 years. The writer to the Hebrews writes in his epistle, **“Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son.”** (Hebrews 1:1-2) The **“last days”** are the time of the New Testament church; it’s the time between Jesus’ first coming and His second coming.

The day of Pentecost was in those last days, and in part of these verses Joel was prophesying about Pentecost. That’s why Peter points to this prophecy as being fulfilled among them; it was now the last days, and the Holy Spirit was poured out, and the Apostles were prophesying, that is, speaking the Word of the Lord to the people. But Joel isn’t *only* focused on Pentecost, he speaks about *all* of the last days, from Pentecost through Judgment Day. So, he includes a couple other details as well.

In verses 19-20, there’s that terrifying description of blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke, the sun being darkened and so on. That’s an event that would happen in the last days, an event that Jesus also spoke about in the Gospel of Matthew. **“Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken.”** (Matthew 24:29) Jesus there was talking about the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD. And that would be a *terrible* day, filled with blood and fire and vapor of smoke so that the sun would be darkened through its horrible haze.

And this was a warning to the people of Israel, but it was also a warning to us. Because the destruction of Jerusalem, as terrible as it was, was nothing compared to the *Last Day*, which Joel describes as **“the day of the Lord. . . the great and magnificent day.”** The book of Revelation picks up this imagery from our text to talk about that Day: **“When he opened the sixth seal, I looked, and behold, there was a great earthquake, and the sun became black as sackcloth, the full moon became like blood, and the stars of the sky fell to the earth as the fig tree sheds its winter fruit when shaken by a gale. The sky vanished like a scroll that is being rolled up, and every mountain and island was removed from its place. Then the kings of the earth and the great ones and the generals and the rich and the powerful, and everyone, slave and free, hid themselves in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains, calling to the mountains and rocks, “Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who is seated on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb, for the great day of their wrath has come, and who can stand?”** (Revelation 6:12-17)

That’s a terrifying description, and it should be! Far worse than being caught red-handed in the mess of your own sins by your parents is being caught red-handed in the mess of all your rebelliousness on the Last Day by Jesus. For then, every deed will be laid bare. Then, you will have no excuse for the things you have done. There’ll be no good explanation for the times you hated or harmed others, for your selfishness, for when you couldn’t look away, for your laziness regarding God’s Word—no good reasons at all. No answers! It’s a terrifying thought. And so, it’s no surprise that the people of the earth would call upon the mountains to fall on them, because it would be *far better* to be crushed by all that weight of earth than to be destroyed by the wrath of Jesus Christ. Jesus is the one who is coming, the Holy Spirit says, and He’s going to find us in our sins. So, how are we going to be prepared for That Day? Who are we going to call on? Well, that’s what the Holy Spirit has come to teach us.

He teaches us to call upon Jesus, to ***“call upon the name of the Lord.”*** The very one that we should be afraid of because of *our sins*, you can call upon for help because of His grace. This is what the Holy Spirit teaches us. God the Spirit is **All About Jesus** to make us **All About Jesus**. And I don't mean that in order to be saved on the Last Day that every single waking moment and thought has to be dedicated to Him or that we have to live a perfect life—we can't do that, as much as we'd like to. That's not what it means to be **All About Jesus**. That's not what it means to ***“call upon the name of the Lord.”***

It means to cast *all our hope* on Jesus. It means to call upon Him for forgiveness and life and redemption—for rescue! It means that when He comes again, we can call upon Him. We can call upon *His* name—the name of the one who baptized us, naming us as His own; the name of the one whose blood has covered us; the name of the one whose perfect life is given to us in place of all of our sins; the name of the one, Jesus, who is coming to make us His own, to take us to be with Him; the name of the one who died and rose and ascended and has sent His Holy Spirit to us—the Holy Spirit who is **All About Jesus** to bring us to be **All About Jesus**. So that we call upon Jesus' name, both now and on That Day.

And so, on that Final Day, we won't need to call on the mountains to cover us or the hills to fall on us; we can call upon Jesus. ***“And . . . everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.”*** Thanks be to God the Holy Spirit for teaching us this way of escape, in Jesus' name. Amen.

“And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.” (Philippians 4:7) Amen.