

Sermon Notes

WORSHIP SERVICE - 3.23.2025

PART 7 - PENTECOST EXPLAINED

I. INTRODUCTION

Main Point: Pentecost fulfilled God's promises, ushering in the last days and the universal outpouring of His Spirit to all people without distinction.

Acts 2:14-21

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.'

II. THE PENTECOST MIRACLE EXPLAINED

1. PETER'S BOLDNESS

- But Peter, standing with the eleven, lifted up his voice and addressed them:
 - One of the remarkable things we see in this passage is Peter's transformation and boldness.
 - We saw in Acts 1 that Peter was seen as the leader of the Apostles.
 - He is listed first in all four lists of the apostles in Matt, Mark, Luke, and Acts. (Matt 10:2-4; Mark 3:16-19; Luke 6:14-16; Acts 1:13)
 - He stands with the other apostles, and facing the crowd, he lifts his voice and addresses them.
 - Peter in Acts is a different man than the one we saw in the final week of Christ's earthly ministry leading to his crucifixion.
 - There we saw him cowering before the servant girls of Caiaphas, denying his Lord three times. (Luke 22:54-62)
 - We catch a glimpse of how Jesus tenderly restores Peter. . (John 21:15-19)
 - But on this day, Peter possesses a new boldness.
 - The power of the Holy Spirit emboldened him for proclamation.
 - Just a few weeks ago, he had turned his back on Christ, denying him.
 - Now, he is boldly proclaiming Christ.
 - This is nothing less than the grace of God and the willingness of God to forgive even the worst of sinners.
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- Peter stands and addresses those who had assembled.
 - The word translated "addressed" is the same Greek word that is translated "utterance" In Acts 2:4.
 - The implication is that Peter's address is also the work of the Spirit.
 - "Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and give ear to my words.
 - He commands attention as he speaks to his fellow Jews.

2. PETER'S REFUTATION

- The crowd that had gathered to witness this phenomena wanted an explanation.
- Some of them were asking, "What does this mean?"
- Others, mockingly said, "They are filled with new wine."
- Peter responds, refuting the ridiculous notion that what they are witnessing is a bunch of drunkards.
- 15 For these people are not drunk, as you suppose, since it is only the third hour of the day.
- He dismisses their mocking claim as implausible and gets to the explanation.

3. PETER'S EXPLANATION

- Peter explains that the strange speech they are hearing is not from drinking but another source altogether.
- Much like he did in Acts 1, when he called the apostles together to select Judas's replacement, he expresses that this is all part of God's plan. It's all happening according to Scripture.
- 6 But this is what was uttered through the prophet Joel:
- What they are witnessing is nothing less than what Joel prophesied would happen.
- The promises they would have been reading and rehearsing during Pentecost where under the new covenant, God would put his Spirit within them, is fulfilled right before their eyes.
- "This," the phenomena they are witnessing, is "what" Joel prophesied approximately 800 years before!

III. THE DAWNING OF A NEW ERA

1. BACKGROUND OF JOEL'S PROPHECY

- Joel is a prophet to the people of Judah.
- While he doesn't make mention of a particular king of Judah, many commentators believe he was around during the reign of Jehoshaphat (835-795 BC) or later.
- Joel's prophecy is a call to repentance in the face of divine judgment.
- He's warning Judah of impending judgment and calling them to return to the Lord with their whole heart.
- In Joel 2, we have two major sections of prophecy concerning the Day of the Lord.
 - Verses 1-17, Call to Repentance.
 - Verses 18-32, God's Promise of Restoration
 - The section Peter quotes is from Joel 2:28-32.
 - That section is the promised restoration and outpouring of God's Spirit on all flesh.
- Joel's prophecy was partially fulfilled when Israel returned from exile.
- Its ultimate fulfillment, however, is in the events of Pentecost and the future consummation of Christ's kingdom.

2. THE LAST DAYS INAUGURATED

- Peter makes one significant change of wording under divine inspiration.
- Joel 2:28a "And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh;
- Acts 2:17a And in the last days it shall be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh,
- In Joel's prophecy, God was telling his people that this outpouring of the Spirit would happen in a future time following the restoration of Israel.
- Peter modifies Joel's prophecy to show that the future era that Joel prophesied was being inaugurated.
- He interprets the fulfillment of Joel's prophecy in light of Christ and the Spirit's coming.
- The "last days" was a common expression in Scripture that refers to the time of the Messiah and the fulfillment of God's promises.
- With Christ's ascension and the Spirit's coming, the last days have begun.

- Hebrews 1:1-2 Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, 2 but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world.
- 1 Peter 1:20 He was foreknown before the foundation of the world but was made manifest in the last times for the sake of you
- The last days does not mean the immediate end of history, but it is a term for the entire time between Christ's first and second coming.
- We are living in the glorious Messianic age of the blessing of God's Spirit being poured out.

3. THE UNIVERSAL NATURE OF THE SPIRIT'S OUTPOURING

- The defining mark of the last days is the Spirit being poured out on all people.
- Isaiah prophesied about the Spirit being poured out from on high with Messiah's righteous reign. (Is. 32:15)
- The Lord promises that in the new covenant, he will put His Spirit within his people. (Ezek. 36:27)

- Under the old covenant, we see the Spirit coming upon a few people selectively and temporarily.
 - Namely judges, prophets, priests, and kings for a specific task. (Judges 3:10; 6:34; 14:6; 1 Samuel 10:6; 16:13; Ezekiel 2:2)
 - An individual was filled with God's Spirit and given ability, intelligence, knowledge and craftsmanship skills for the design and construction of the tabernacle (Exodus 31:2-3).
 - But there was no widespread pouring out of the Spirit on every one of God's people.
 - Joel prophesied of a time when the Spirit would be poured on all flesh, the Spirit would be widely available transcending age, gender and social status.
- Now, the Spirit is poured out without distinction upon all of God's people.
 - ...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.
 - The universality of this outpouring signifies the fulfillment of God's redemptive plan.
 - Outward status is not a factor.
 - Men, women and children; male and female
 - Young and Old
 - Any societal class
 - Patrick Schreiner in his Acts Commentary says this "indicates a democratization of the people of God. The Spirit pierces cosmic social and hierarchical divisions."
 - The Spirit is poured out indiscriminately—age, gender, class, makes no difference.
 - The promise of the Spirit is a fulfillment of Moses's desire, "Would that all the Lord's people were prophets, that the Lord would put his Spirit on them!" (Num 11:29)
- The Spirit is not poured out on all people irrespective of their inward readiness to receive the Spirit.
 - What this means is that the Spirit will be poured out on all people irrespective of their outward status.
 - We will see in Peter's preaching, there is a condition to receiving the Spirit.
 - The offer is for all people, but the gift is only for those who properly respond to Christ.
 - Acts 2:38-39 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. 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."

4. PROPHECY, DREAMS AND VISIONS

- Joel's prophecy speaks of the indiscriminate outpouring of the Spirit resulting in the phenomena where all God's people will prophesy, have visions and dreams.
- In Scripture these phenomena were used by God to communicate directly to his people.
- Prophesying in Scripture involved speaking on behalf of God. It sometimes involves foretelling. Prophets spoke God's authoritative word.
- Visions were means of divine revelation as seen in Ezekiel and Daniel. They were highly symbolic.
- Dreams were another means of communication in the OT. (Joseph and Daniel)

- The fulfillment of Joel's prophecy and all of the prophetic promises of the universality of the Spirit upon all of God's people, means that in the last days, God will communicate with his people directly.
 - God will make himself known to his people directly through his indwelling Spirit.
 - OT prophets were able to know God intimately and personally in a way others did not, and now we will all know God intimately and personally.
 - Now, all of God's people are called to prophetic ministry.
 - We see in Acts, the apostles and other disciples speaking God's truth, we have some instances of visions recorded like with Peter and Paul, there are no explicit dreams recorded.
 - What does that mean?
 - Not all have the gift of prophecy as Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 12, all have the same Spirit but the Spirit apportions gifts to each one individually as he wills (1 Cor 12:4-11).
 - If prophecy is God speaking, then how do we understand this universal prophetic ministry given to all who have God's Spirit?
 - How is every believer to prophesy?
 - We all prophesy in that we have the same general responsibility God's prophets had to speak God's word faithfully.
 - As God's people, armed with God's Word, empowered by God's Spirit, we are commissioned to take God's message to the ends of the earth.
 - Don't get caught up with the manifestations as means of special revelation forgetting that we already have all of the special revelation we need to know God and to come to Christ for salvation.
 - Scripture is the primary way God speaks to us today.
 - 1 Timothy 3:16 All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness,
 - God's Word is what we need to prophetically declare in these last days.
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- Does God speak to us in visions and dreams today? He might.
 - But how do we test those subjective things?
 - Any prophecy, vision or dream must be tested by God's Word.
 - 1 John 4:1 Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, for many false prophets have gone out into the world.
 - John Owen wrote, "*If private revelations agree with Scripture, they are needless, and if they disagree, they are false.*" (A Discourse of the Holy Spirit)
 - There is a real danger in subjective revelation.
 - God does not work independently from his written Word.
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- For all God's people to prophesy means we are proclaiming His Word and message.
 - 2 Corinthians 5:20 Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.
 - All of us have this responsibility and privilege as Spirit-empowered witnesses.
 - We must declare God's Word to the world. That is Christ's mission worked out through his people.
 - The prophetic last days ministry of every believer is amazing.
 - Everyone is included in God's worldwide mission— young and old, male and female, rich and poor, no one is an observer.

5. APOCALYPTIC SIGNS

- V19-21 Peter also mentions that part of Joel's prophecy of future cosmic cataclysmic events that will unfold before the Day of the Lord.
- These signs have an already/not yet fulfillment.

- Some of the signs parallel the ministry of Jesus.
- At his death in Luke 23:45, there were wonders in the heavens, the sun darkened followed by the tearing of the veil. His blood was shed on the cross.
- The fire, smoke, and darkness partially mirror the description of the coming of the Spirit in 2:1-4, replicating creation imagery—the Spirit's coming and work is seen as a recreation of all things.
- Fire and cloud accompanied the Lord's ascension that the apostles witnessed (1:9-11).
- The cosmic upheaval can also describe the destruction of the world/kingdoms of this world under divine judgment and the emergence of a new kingdom.
- Partial fulfillment in the destruction of the temple and Jerusalem in 70AD.
- The future fulfillment of these things will take place at the consummation of Christ's kingdom at the end of the age at his return.

6. THE URGENCY OF THE GOSPEL CALL

- In light of the fulfillment of God's promise and the signs accompanying the last days, everyone should call on the name of the Lord for salvation.
- These events demand a response.
- 21 And it shall come to pass that everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.'
- The people are not just to remain bewildered and amazed.
- They aren't supposed to allege drunkenness.
- They are to repent and believe upon Jesus!
- Peter doesn't spend much time on the phenomena—He's gets right to Jesus!
- Everyone, everywhere, needs to turn to him for salvation.
- The 'last days' is to be filled with the worldwide proclamation of the gospel.
- The 'last days' are a long stretch of time in which God is graciously extending an opportunity for everyone to call upon the name of the Lord for salvation.
- But the time will come to an end.
- Today is the day of salvation.
- There is an urgency to the gospel message.
- Pentecost is not just about signs and wonders—it was about salvation through Jesus Christ.
- The Spirit of God has been poured out upon you to empower you to proclaim Christ's death and resurrection and herald the good news.
- The Spirit of God continues his work today, opening and illuminating minds and hearts, sanctifying believers, and empowering them for Christ's mission.
- Have you called upon the name of the Lord for salvation? The time to call upon him for salvation is now!
- If you have been filled with God's Spirit, fulfill your prophetic ministry as Christ's ambassador.
- Proclaim Christ and His Word to everyone without discrimination, the gospel is for all people, boldly proclaim him, trusting that the Spirit of God will convict and convert hearts.

APPLICATION AND REFLECTION

In light of today's message....

- What did I learn about the gospel?
- How can I apply what I learned about the gospel to my life?
- With whom can I share the gospel this week?