

Natalie W. Bell
May 24, 2026
Pentecost

The Power of the Spirit
Acts 2:1-21

When the day of Pentecost had come, they were **all TOGETHER** in one place.
² And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent **wind**, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. ³ Divided **tongues, as of fire**, appeared among them, and a **tongue** rested on each of them. ⁴ All of them were **filled with the Holy Spirit** and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them **ability**.

⁵ Now there were devout Jews from every nation under heaven living in Jerusalem. ⁶ And at this sound the crowd gathered and was bewildered, because each one heard them speaking **in the native language of each**.
⁷ **Amazed and astonished**, they asked, “Are not all these who are speaking Galileans?” ⁸ And how is it that we hear, each of us, in our own native language?
⁹ Parthians, Medes, 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, both Jews and proselytes, ¹¹ Cretans and Arabs—in our own languages we hear them speaking about God’s deeds of power.” ¹² All were **amazed and perplexed**, saying to one another, **“What does this mean?”** ¹³ But others sneered and said, “They are filled with new wine.”

¹⁴ But Peter, standing with the eleven, raised his voice and addressed them, “Men of Judea and all who live in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and listen to what I say. ¹⁵ Indeed, **these are not drunk**, as you suppose, for it is only nine o’clock in the morning. ¹⁶ No, this is what was spoken through the **prophet Joel**:

¹⁷ ‘In the last days it will be, God declares,
that I will **pour out my Spirit upon 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 upon my slaves, both men and women,
in those days **I will pour out my Spirit**;

and they shall prophesy.

¹⁹ *And I will show portents in the heaven above
and signs on the earth below,
blood, and fire, and smoky mist.*

²⁰ *The sun shall be turned to darkness
and the moon to blood,
before the coming of the Lord's great and glorious day.*

²¹ *Then everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.'.....*

The **CONTEXT** of this story is so important.

The believers were gathered together, **watching, waiting, PRAYING, And Expecting** something to happen—that's when God's power broke in!

I wonder, do **WE have this expectation** today?

Do we come to **church**, expecting the Holy Spirit to show up?

Especially as a new united church?

Do **WE** expect to be led—to **new places**? Missions and ministries?

And what about in our **INDIVIDUAL** lives?

Do we expect to be **CHANGED**?

Just before this story,

Before Jesus ascends to heaven, the disciples ask Jesus—
is this the time when you will restore our people?

And Jesus says: **wait for the gift that's been promised,**
*in a few days you will be **baptized** by the Holy Spirit...*

Jesus had told them during his final days, that he was leaving,
but the **Holy Spirit** would come to be with them.

Then after the resurrection, he says the **same thing**,

But he tells them to expect something **MORE**.

He says you will **receive POWER** when the Holy Spirit comes upon you.

That's the story of Pentecost!

The Spirit is giving us **truth, counsel, and POWER**.

Do **you need God's power** in your life?

I know I do!

Jesus knew that after his death his followers might be tempted to forget his ministry.

So he promised them His Spirit—**the Holy Spirit**.

And in Greek Jesus uses the word **Paraclete** for Spirit—which means **helper, advocate, and counselor**.

But here's something interesting about the Greek phrases he uses.

Jesus promises **another Counselor to be with you forever**.

In Greek there are two words for **another**—one word means **different**, and the other word means **JUST LIKE the first one**.

Jesus says *allos*—which means **just like the first one**.

Like, if you are reading a book that you love, and you loan it out saying, it's ok, you keep it, I'll get another—

you mean you'll **get another COPY of THAT book**.

That's what Jesus promises—The Holy Spirit is **HIS own Spirit**.

And this Spirit, is as powerful as **wind and fire!**

That's what they witnessed that day!

Where do **YOU need** this power in your life today?

Where do **WE** need it as a **church?**

What if we allowed God's Spirit to work in us,

To talk to us on Sunday,

And to actually **CHANGE what we think, do, and feel** all week long!

We **don't talk** about the Holy Spirit as often as we should—

Even though the Holy Spirit is a vital part of the **Trinity**.

The Holy Spirit came on a day known as Pentecost,

Which was already a **Jewish festival--- 50 days after Passover**,

Commemorating the **Harvest** and the 10 **commandments**.

It was a remembrance of God's presence, covenant, **and POWER**.

But instead of celebrating the Harvest and the Law,

the believers **BECAME** the Harvest—with new gifts and new purpose!

And Jesus' promise of the Holy Spirit was fulfilled!

His followers in Jerusalem **could all speak---**

Not about something strange ...but about **God's power.**

Suddenly people from all over saw **simple Galileans speaking in all the foreign languages** represented in Jerusalem that day.

These believers, who had lost their Lord and Savior on the cross,
Now found themselves filled with wonderful **NEW gifts and purpose,**
They were becoming people who could **share** the good news,
And be **used by God in amazing ways!**

As a result, the **church was born!**

And 3,000 people were baptized as believers in Jesus Christ!

And the word about Jesus spread like wildfire!

This happened through **ordinary people JUST LIKE US!**

No special qualifications, except loving Jesus.

And the miracle at Pentecost is just the **beginning** of the story—
The entire **Book of Acts** tells about the power of the Holy Spirit
in those early believers, and the first church.

In Acts we see the Spirit **guiding, leading, and helping,**

By giving them **courage, and hope.**

In Acts, we see the Spirit **creating a completely new community!**

Isn't that **a power we need** in our church, today?

Pentecost is the **birthday** of the church--

Because it created this **new way of living, and relating and worshiping.**

The Holy Spirit brought them **POWER—**

But.....it was a power that they **didn't control.**

It blew in like **wind**...like the mighty breath of God.

We still can't control the Spirit—it blows where it will!

But we can open our hearts to its **power!**

We all desperately need God's power, don't we?

In a ministry article, Laura Bailey wrote: *Too frequently we're just coasting along, **living on FUMES** from day to day,*

then wondering why we aren't experiencing the optimal Christian life.

*We **neglect to keep our spiritual tanks filled**, and when we do,*

*we **refuel** with quick prayers, a Bible verse or two,*

and a weekend church service, which isn't enough.

June 7, 2019, Proverbs 31 Ministries.

We need more, don't we?

We need the Holy Spirit, to **keep our spiritual tanks filled**,

So we can live on more than just 'fumes'!

I wonder, are you living on fumes right now?

Are you ready to be filled with something more?

The Holy Spirit is the Answer.

The Holy Spirit gives us individual spiritual gifts!

The Holy Spirit makes us The Church.

The Spirit gives us meaning and purpose,

Because the Spirit **teaches, guides, comforts and counsels**.

It's like the Rev. Joan Gray's great **metaphor** for Christian life.

She says we can be **rowboats, or sailboats** in the church.

We can either **use all of our OWN energy** trying to create our own purpose and do our own thing....

like **rowboats**....relying on our OWN power.

Or we can **let go and let God's Spirit** FILL OUR SAILS,

We can be **sailboats**, relying on God's power!

We can **follow God and join what God is doing** in the world,

Instead of just trying to do our own thing.

How can we tap into the power of the Holy Spirit?

What if we start by asking God for this power?

What if we surrender our need for control?

What if we do, what they were doing on Pentecost ---we pray!

I wonder how YOU feel today-- like a rowboat or a sailboat?

Are you willing to let The Spirit be the power in your life?

Are we willing to let the Spirit fill us—so we don't have to just run on fumes?

Doing this is ***challenging***—we will have to ***say No*** some opportunities, in order to ***say Yes*** to others.

We'll have to ***OPEN our hearts and minds***—to truly ***listen*** to God, and to one another.

But we can do it!

And it leads to new life, new possibilities, new ministry and mission!

Today on Pentecost, we ***remember and celebrate***

God's power---the ***wind in our sails!***

Will we ***allow*** the Holy Spirit's power to fill us—even now?

Streams in the Desert devotional says this on June 5th:

*It is not within our power to **create** the wind or to **change** its direction, but we can **raise our sails to catch** it when it comes.*

*We do not create electricity, yet we can tap into it....can't the **same wonders** be done today that were done many years ago?*

The answer is a resounding YES!

God still does wonders! Right in our midst!

God is just ***waiting for us to raise our sails,***

And receive the power of the Holy Spirit—

Friends, hear the ***Good News of the Gospel,***

the Holy Spirit is the ***wind*** in our sails,

And the ***fire*** in our hearts.

And for the gift of the Spirit, all God's people said, Amen.