

**“Like a Mighty Rushing Wind”**

*Sermon Notes*

- **The activity of the Holy Spirit is the source of church growth and vital for Christian life and ministry.**

*\* In today's reading, the events of Pentecost unfold in two stages.*

1. The first stage: the \_\_\_\_\_ of these events is the sovereign will of the Holy Spirit in fulfilling the divine purpose which God alone ordains.
  
2. The second stage: the \_\_\_\_\_ of these events is the response of the witnesses to the Holy Spirit's work, revealing their character and hinting at their destiny.

**Next Week: Acts 2:14-21 “This is What Was Uttered Through the Prophet Joel”**

# Community Group Study Guide

For the Week of June 25th - July 1st

## Context

1. The Acts of the Apostles was written by Luke the evangelist to Theophilus, an early Gentile convert to Christianity (Luke 1:1-4, Acts 1:1-4). Is there evidence to suggest that Luke himself was a witness to the events described in Acts 2:1-11? (See Acts 16:10-17; 20:5-15; 21:1-18; 27:1-28:16; Col 4:14; Phlm 24; 2 Tim 4:11). If not, how was he able to provide a convincing witness to these events?
2. In the immediately preceding passage, Matthias is chosen to fill the vacancy among the twelve left by Judas Iscariot, to serve as a witness to the resurrection (Acts 1:21). What reason did Peter give for taking this action? (Acts 1:15-20) Why does a reliable witness matter?
3. We learn that the events of Pentecost attracted the attention of a wide diversity (Acts 2:5) and large number (Acts 2:41) of witnesses. How does the scope of the event contribute to the reliability of the witness detailed in this passage?

## Observation

4. The first four verses in our text (Acts 2:1-4) describe the actions of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. While our English version of Acts 2:1 speaks of the arrival of Pentecost, the original Greek phrase is "the fulfillment of the day of Pentecost." In Acts 1:15 Peter spoke of the fulfillment of Scripture. In Acts 2:2, it is the house which is filled with sound, and in Acts 2:4, it is the believers who are filled with the Holy Spirit. What is the connection between these different fulfillments?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
5. The following eight verses (Acts 2:5-13) speak of the response of the crowd to the miraculous arrival of the Holy Spirit. Although all witness the same events (Acts 2:6-8), two contrasting responses are evident in verses 12 and 13. Why do the response of some differ from the response of others? (See 1 Cor 1:18-19).

6. In verse 3, divided tongues "as of fire" appear and rest on each of the gathered believers. In verses 6-7 a great multitude formerly dispersed throughout the earth has assembled at one place and hears the believers speaking in his own native language. The message that each observer hears speaks of the greatness of God in his or her own native tongue. Compare this with a parallel event in which a great multitude who all spoke the same language and dwelt in the same place were attempting to "make a name for ourselves," and as a result their languages were confused and they were dispersed over the face of the earth (Gen 11:1-9). What is the ultimate purpose of language? Fire can represent judgment or purification. What do you think the fire signifies here at Pentecost?

7. Pentecost was one of three Jewish festivals celebrated annually. The feast of unleavened bread was celebrated at the time of Passover as a reminder to the people of their rescue from slavery in Egypt (Num 9:1-5). This feast was being celebrated at the institution of the Lord's supper (Luke 22:1-23). Pentecost itself, also known as the feast of Weeks was celebrated fifty days after the feast of unleavened bread to celebrate the end of the grain harvest and the offering of first fruits in recognition of the gracious provision of God (Deut 16:10-11). A final festival, the feast of tabernacles (also known as the feast of booths or the feast of ingathering) was held at the end of the agricultural season after the day of atonement, and reminding the people of the obligations and blessings of their covenant relationship with Yahweh (Lev 23:39-43). What do you think is the significance of the connection between the Old Testament feasts and their New Testament counterparts? Can we expect another great New Testament festival in the future? (See Zech 14:16-19).

## Meaning

8. What changed on the day of Pentecost? What remained the same? What do the events at Pentecost tell us about God's plan for salvation?

## Application

9. One of the topics upon which the Evangelical Free Church does not demand unity is the persistence of supernatural gifts of the Holy Spirit - such as speaking in tongues, prophecy and healing (1 Cor 12:8-10). Although they are not described, two other narratives involving speaking in tongues are described in Acts (10:46 and 19:6). Is speaking in tongues a distinguishing characteristic of a true believer? Does the gift of tongues in our passage serve to unify or to divide? Do you think that the events in today's readings are the subject of Paul's comments in 1 Cor 14:2-19? Should speaking in tongues be part of corporate worship?
  
10. The events of Pentecost describe a great awakening to the good news of the Gospel, and could properly be referred to as the first great awakening. It is evident that there have been times in the history of the church when individuals turn to God in record numbers. Is this something that should be expected in the future? (See Matt 24:5) Is this something that we can bring about by our own effort? If not, what is our role? (see Matt 24:45-50).