

A Fresh Fire

I grew up in the church but didn't really give my life to Jesus until I was fifteen. I went to a different church than both my parents. My dad went to a catholic church and my mom went to a mega-church that was more Baptist based. I remember after a few years of working in full-time ministry I had not visited another church in quite a while. My mom's church had a Saturday night service and I decided to go with her just for fun. The Sanctuary was huge, and we were in worship having a good old time. Well, about halfway through the worship set, the worship leader told everyone in that huge sanctuary to sit down. I thought "boy that was a fast worship set." But then the worship music continued. I whispered over to my mom and said, "Why are we sitting during the worship?" She said, "Oh we do that for the elderly." I said, "Why can't they just sit down?" It honestly didn't make sense to me.

I think everyone has been in a church that you would consider the frozen chosen. No life, no one raising their hands in worship, no one says amen or "good word preacher!" Just silent and in order. We have also been to churches that were the polar opposite. We have been to those churches that were very charismatic. I've been to churches where conga lines broke out. I've been to churches where the people shout the preacher down and it's a good thing. I love the churches that when the preacher says a good word the people stand up and have an expression on their face like something stinks. There are all kinds of flavors of churches.

Today is Pentecost Sunday which celebrates fifty days after the Sabbath following the resurrection of Jesus. It is the day in which the Holy Spirit was deposited and came down to move in power among the people of God. Many times when Christians hear Pentecost, they get really scared because they think it means Pentecostal. And Pentecostal churches scare a lot of people. It feels out of control. Here is a random fact about me, your pastor. Let me set it up with a question that you can think about: what kind of girls do you think I found attractive at my public high school? If you said the apostolic girls with the long jean skirts, no makeup, and long straight hair...you are correct. As a matter of fact, Nikki wore a long ponytail and a long jean skirt the other day. I said, "Baby, you are looking real apostolic right now." You think I'm joking, I am not haha. Pentecost and Pentecostal have gotten a bad wrap and there have been a lot of abuses all throughout the world. But just because people have abused the power of God, or the order of church service, doesn't change the truth of God's Word. God gave us the Holy Spirit for power, gifts, comfort, wisdom and more. We cannot let the failures of others dictate how we are going to respond from the Scriptures. So today I want to preach a message about Pentecost and I have titled it "A Fresh Fire." What happened in the Upper Room over two thousand years ago is still needed today. I want to teach a message of the importance and power of Pentecost and how your life can radically transform when you purpose to pursue God's power on top of His presence.

If you have a Bible go with me to Acts 2 and we are going to read the account of the day of Pentecost that ushered in the Holy Spirit and launched the church of Jesus Christ.

When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. 2 And suddenly there came from heaven a noise like a violent rushing wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. 3 And there appeared to them tongues as of fire distributing themselves, and they rested on each one of them. 4 And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit was giving them utterance.

5 Now there were Jews living in Jerusalem, devout men from every nation under heaven. 6 And when this sound occurred, the crowd came together, and were bewildered because each one of them was hearing them speak in his own language. 7 They were amazed and astonished, saying, "Why, are not all these who are speaking Galileans? 8 And how is it that we each hear them in our own language to which we were born? 9 Parthians and Medes and Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, 10 Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the districts of Libya around Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, 11 Cretans and Arabs—we hear them in our own tongues speaking of the mighty deeds of God." 12 And they all continued in amazement and great perplexity, saying to one another, "What does this mean?" 13 But others were mocking and saying, "They are full of sweet wine." 14 But Peter, taking his stand with the eleven, raised his voice and declared to them: "Men of Judea and all you who live in Jerusalem, let this be known to you and give heed to my words. 15 For these men are not drunk, as you suppose, for it is only the third hour of the day; 16 but this is what was spoken of through the prophet Joel: 17 'And it shall be in the last days,' God says, 'That I will pour forth of My Spirit on all mankind; 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 bondslaves, both men and women, I will in those days pour forth of My Spirit And they shall prophesy. 19 'And I will grant wonders in the sky above And signs on the earth below, Blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke. 20 'The sun will be turned into darkness And the moon into blood, Before the great and glorious day of the Lord shall come. 21 'And it shall be that everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.' – Acts 2:1-21

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In the Scriptures, God mandated three pilgrimage feasts for the Jewish people: [Passover](#), Shavuot, and [Sukkot](#). Originally, Shavuot marked the beginning of the grain harvest in Israel, when the first fruit offerings of the summer wheat crop were brought to the Temple. Modern Shavuot celebrations traditionally consider this day the anniversary of God's gift of the Torah to the Jewish people. Passover and Shavuot are both tied to important gospel events! First, Jesus and His disciples observed the Last Supper during Passover, the same night Jesus was arrested. His death and resurrection occurred soon after.

Second, in [Acts 2](#), fifty days after Passover, God gave the gift of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost – the Greek name for Shavuot. On that day, people from all over the known world – “Parthians, Medes, and Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea, and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya around Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabs” ([Acts 2:9–11](#)) – heard the gospel proclaimed, each in their native language.

#1 – There are big contrasts with the day of Pentecost.

According to tradition, the Ten Commandments, the Law was given on Shavuot. When the law was given, sadly many began to worship other idols and 3,000 people were killed. You can find that in the book of Exodus. But in the New Testament, the Holy Spirit was given and 3,000 people were saved. In the Old Testament when the Law was given, God wrote on tablets of stone. But Jeremiah 31 says that God's law is now written on the hearts of man. Shavuot happened after the Exodus (deliverance) and marked the beginning of God's nation. Pentecost happened after the resurrection (deliverance) and marked the beginning of the church.

Not only was the law a contrast with the day of Pentecost but there was a language given on the day of Pentecost. They spoke in tongues. In Genesis 11 at the tower of Babel, the world spoke one language and the people were unified. They were building a tower to reach the heavens. God said that because of their unity nothing they purpose to do would be impossible for them, so God came down and confused their languages. Peoples of the world started speaking different languages. Isn't it interesting on the day of Pentecost God came down in the form of the Holy Spirit and gave a new unified language of tongues. So many places in the New Testament call for the church to be one or the church to be united. When the church of Jesus stops with all the divisions and arguments, we can be unified and see true revival and reformation in the land.

#2 – Many Christians are comfortable going to the cross but scared of the upper room.

God is called our Comforter but He has never called us to be comfortable and complacent. Well over 300 times in the Bible we are called to be courageous or to fear not. Because of our human nature, when we give our lives to Jesus, we naturally find a comfortable rhythm in our faith. We play it safe and every once and a while may try something new, but typically stay in our lane. Many Christians are so afraid of the power of God they would rather attend a church that avoids preaching about the power and moving in the power of God. Some preachers go as far as ridiculing Pentecostal and charismatic preachers. Not only will they not speak or move in God's supernatural power, but they will argue against it. We are called to obey; we are not called to make logical sense of everything. God tells us to heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons. He said through James, if any of you are sick bring them to the church and the elders will lay hands on the sick and the sick will recover.

I was listening to a preacher talk about his first experience in a Pentecostal church as a little boy. He said "everyone was totally normal, until the music started. Then people started shouting, and dancing and running. When the preacher started preaching, the people would shout him down and say things like "amen, put another ball in that hole pastor!" And when the sermon was done, everyone went back to being normal again." I want to make a shouting church normal again. I want to make the power of God normal and what is expected in a church service again. Where the presence of God is, the power of God is soon to follow.

I love how John Osteen who was Joel Osteen's father would hold up his bible before every sermon and declare "This is my bible, I am what it says I am, I can do what it says I can do, I have what it says I have..."

#3 – There is a need for fresh fire in the Holy Ghost today.

43 Everyone kept feeling a sense of awe; and many wonders and signs were taking place through the apostles. 44 And all those who had believed were together and had all things in common; 45 and they began selling their property and possessions and were sharing them with all, as anyone might have need. 46 Day by day continuing with one mind in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they were taking their meals together with gladness and sincerity of heart, 47 praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved.

– Acts 2:1-21; 43-47 NASB1995

#4 – The believers in the upper room Waited, Worshipped, and Witnessed.

The reason we are not seeing fresh fire in our culture today is because people are not using the gift from God as intended. In fact, most people are grieving or quenching the Holy Spirit. Galatians 5:16 says, *But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh.* 1 Thessalonians 5:18-20 says, *18 in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. 19 Do not quench the Spirit; 20 do not despise prophetic utterances.* Ephesians 4:30-31 says, *30 Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. 31 Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice.*

TESTIMONY – I was at a conference over ten years ago and heard a testimony that rocked my world. I believe this testimony happened in Ohio at a High School. A young lady had been away at a church camp over the weekend and was radically touched by God. She was baptized in the Holy Spirit and had an incredible encounter with God. When that Monday came, she was still moved by the power of God and finding trouble to concentrate at school. The teacher sent her to the bathroom to wash her face and snap out of it. After a long period of time, the young lady did not return. The teacher sent another young lady to go check on the first. After a long period of time, the second young lady did not return. So, the teacher sent another. Finally, when the third young lady did not return, the teacher went to go see what was happening. She walked into the bathroom to see three young ladies on the floor of the bathroom praising God and speaking in tongues. The teacher didn't know what to do, so she called admin and they picked the girls up and took them to the gym. Remember this is a high school. When high school students hear that there are some girls freaking out in the gym, they wanted to go see the show. One by one students were sneaking into the gym and getting touched by the power of God. Not only students but teachers and staff as well. By the end of the day, the school had shut down as dozens and dozens of students and staff were getting saved and filled with the Holy Ghost. This happened at a modern public high school. The need for Pentecost is still here today.

