

Hope Christian Church  
D. Todd Cravens  
15 May 2016

Sermon Series: *Jesus Said What?*



# You Will Be Baptized with the Holy Spirit - Part 1

Pentecost Sunday

**(Acts 1:4-5 ESV)**

*<sup>4</sup> 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; <sup>5</sup> for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now."*

### (Acts 2:1-4 ESV)

<sup>1</sup> When the day of Pentecost arrived, they were all together in one place. <sup>2</sup> And suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. <sup>3</sup> And divided tongues as of fire appeared to them and rested on each one of them. <sup>4</sup> And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.

## Introduction

If you are new here at Hope church, you should know that lately we have been spending our time together focusing on specific sayings of Jesus that are particularly striking or notable. The title of the sermon series is "Jesus Said What?" Today is Pentecost Sunday so it seemed right to me that we focus on something that Jesus said about this particular day. The phrase that catches my attention, and that I pray will capture yours, is,

### Acts 1:5 (ESV)

*"You will be baptized with the Holy Spirit."*

This is a phrase absent from our vocabulary. I suspect the reasons for this is because the phrase has been much abused throughout various segments of the church. This is a sad fact. We never talk about this, but Jesus did, therefore, we will this morning.

What is this baptism of the Holy Spirit? Is it just a unique historical event that happened on one day in church history? Or is this something that can be repeated? Should we forget about it or pray for it? Is the baptism of the Holy Spirit merely another way of describing what happens when a person first believes in Jesus? Or is it sudden empowering of those who already are believers in Jesus that enables them to boldly proclaim the gospel? Or, as some Pentecostals such as the Assemblies of God say, is it the definitive experience of a believer marked by speaking in tongues? I pray that when you leave today, you'll have a better understanding of how to answer these questions.

When I planned out this sermon series months ago, I planned for us to mark this day, first, because I grew up in a tradition that largely ignored the Christian calendar, and, second, in order to bring balance to our unconscious neglect of the third person of the Trinity. What I didn't plan for or expect was the degree to which the Lord would grab hold of me through this text. I often say that reading the Bible is dangerous, and it is because if you take it seriously, then you will be changed.

## Pentecost

For much of the evangelical Christian community Pentecost represents *the birthday of church*. It is the day on which Jesus chose to pour out his Spirit upon the first Christians in a way that was not possible before his atoning death, powerful resurrection, and glorious ascension. It is

the day on which thousands of Jewish worshippers of God from many nations first believed that Jesus truly is messiah. It was the day God did an extraordinary work and the good news that Jesus was the Christ began to spread throughout the world.

Pentecost is one three national feasts of Israel in which everyone was expected to travel to Jerusalem in order to corporately worship God joyfully celebrate his goodness and provision for them. There were pilgrims present that day from at least 16 different countries (Acts 2:8-11).

Pentecost means 'fiftieth,' referring to the fiftieth day after Passover.<sup>1</sup> It was also called the *feast of weeks*, since it was to be observed on the first day following seven full weeks of harvesting wheat, which began at Passover.<sup>2</sup> Pentecost is a feast of harvest.



However, what happened on this particular day changed everything. On this day God did something remarkable. He transformed the wheat harvest into world harvest. He transformed a celebration of produce into the salvation of peoples. On this day, the disciples of Jesus exploded with power and growth. On this day, the number of Christians in the world went from 120<sup>3</sup> at nine o'clock<sup>4</sup> in the morning to about 3,000 by noon.<sup>5</sup> The day of Pentecost was an unprecedented day in the history of the church. On that day, God performed an extraordinary work.

As such, it is right for us to mark the day. It's one great day in history. So let's celebrate the birthday of the church. Let's sing, eat cake, have fun for a little while, and tomorrow we'll go back to work and school and everything will go back to normal. We'll all go back to facing the same struggles, fighting the same sins, and our spiritual fervor for the person and name of Christ will remain the same. Right?

No. That's not right. That's not what I'm praying for. That's not what I want. I pray none of you will go home today unmoved and unchanged. Far from it.

---

<sup>1</sup> See Ex 23:16; Lev 23:15-22; Num 28:26-31, Dt 16:10.

<sup>2</sup> Richard N. Longenecker, "The Acts of the Apostles," in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary: John and Acts*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelein, vol. 9 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1981), 269.

<sup>3</sup> Acts 1:15; 2:1.

<sup>4</sup> Acts 2:15.

<sup>5</sup> I say noon, because I doubt Peter's sermon was longer than three hours.

## How Did This Happen?

How did such an extraordinary explosion of growth happen? *It happened because of persistent prayer followed by the powerful proclamation of the gospel of Jesus enabled by the baptism of Holy Spirit.*

### (Acts 2:1-4 ESV)

<sup>1</sup> When the day of Pentecost arrived, they were all together in one place. <sup>2</sup> And suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. <sup>3</sup> And divided tongues as of fire appeared to them and rested on each one of them. <sup>4</sup> And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.

## All Together In One Place

Note first of all, “**they were all together in one place.**” Where were they? They were gathered in “the upper room” (Acts 1:15), which may have been the same upper room in which Jesus observed Passover with his disciples. The place is unimportant, but the main point is that they were all **together**. They were not alone as individuals off in their prayer closet by themselves. They were *together*. The miracle of Pentecost is a *corporate* miracle, not a private one.

Who was “all together?” All the eleven disciples were there, along with “the women”—who are not named, along with all of Jesus’ family, including Mary and all four of Jesus’ brothers (Acts 1:13). They number about 120 persons (Acts 1:15). (This image dates to about 1310-1320.)



What were they doing? They were “*devoting themselves to prayer*” (Acts 1:14). If you have devoted yourself to prayer then you’re dedicating significant amounts of time in prayer. They were *devoted to prayer*. They, together, were earnestly seeking God’s will. They, together, were crying out to God with deep devotion and sincerity. This was not “popcorn” prayer, this was *persistent, pleading prayer* to which they agreed to devote themselves.

## Suddenly the Spirit Came

Then, as they were all together, praying, **suddenly** there came a sound like a tornado which filled the house and probably scared the living daylights out of them. Luke reports that this happened **suddenly**. They were not controlling this, neither were they expecting this. They were completely surprised by this mighty, rushing wind. No one planned this, except God alone. No outreach committee organized this event. No one rented the ballroom at the local Jerusalem Hyatt in order to house the expected sellout crowd. This happened *suddenly*.

This is important for understanding the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is as sovereign as is God himself, since the Holy Spirit is God's Spirit. Nobody controls him. He's like a wind, blowing first here and then there, completely uncontrolled and uncontained by anyone or anything. The Spirit of God is like the wind. "He blows where he chooses. You hear his sound, but you do not know where he came from or where he is going."<sup>6</sup> He is the sovereign Spirit of Jesus<sup>7</sup> freely moving where he wishes. When he comes, he comes sovereignly and suddenly.

## Tongues of Fire Rested On Them

Just as the wind filled the house, so the Holy Spirit filled their hearts. A flickering column of fire manifested before the whole group and then divided and a portion of that fire came and rested upon each one of them—all the disciples, all the women, including Mary, the mother of Jesus, and all of Jesus' brothers. "***And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit.***" As the flickering columns of fire rested upon them, they were filled with the Holy Spirit.

Fire in the Old Testament was symbolic of the presence of God. When God first appeared to Israel at Mt. Sinai and gave the law, he appeared to them in the form of fire.<sup>8</sup>

(Exodus 19:18 ESV)

*<sup>18</sup> Now Mount Sinai was wrapped in smoke because the Lord had descended on it in fire. The smoke of it went up like the smoke of a kiln, and the whole mountain trembled greatly.*



And from that point onward, every night God reminded the whole nation that he was with them by appearing to them in a great pillar of fire.

(Exodus 13:21-22 ESV)

*<sup>21</sup> And the Lord went before them by day in a pillar of cloud to lead them along the way, and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light... <sup>22</sup> The pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night did not depart from before the people.*

The pillar of fire reminded them that God was with them. It's light was a constant reminder of his presence among them. When the tabernacle was constructed, God commanded that a candle be lit inside from sunset to sunrise as a reminder that his presence was among them—even though they could not see him.

God is present with us this morning. I am going to light a candle right now to remind you that the Lord is with us. The pillar of fire that divided and rested upon these followers of Jesus on

---

<sup>6</sup> John 3:8.

<sup>7</sup> Acts 16:6-7.

<sup>8</sup> It is interesting that Jews celebrate Pentecost as the day that God gave the law.

the day of Pentecost, is the Spirit of the same God who delivered Israel out of the iron furnace of slavery in Egypt. He is the same Spirit whom Jesus promised that he would send from the Father.<sup>9</sup> He is the same Spirit about whom Jesus said, "*He will glorify me.*"<sup>10</sup>

## The Effect of the Tongues of Fire

And what was the effect of these "tongues of fire" resting upon them and filling them with the Spirit? It was to do just that, to glorify Jesus among the 16 different countries<sup>11</sup> represented among all the pilgrims who had traveled to Jerusalem to celebrate the feast of weeks.

(Acts 2:4 ESV)

*<sup>4</sup> And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.*

And what did they speak about? They proclaimed the "*mighty works of God*" (Acts 2:11). The mightiest work of God was raising Jesus from the dead, so they proclaimed the greatness of God as demonstrated through the life and resurrection of Jesus. They boldly proclaimed the gospel of Jesus, that through him, all sin can be forgiven and intimate friendship with God can be enjoyed. This is exactly what Peter preached (his sermon is found in Acts 2:14-40).

The result of what happened that morning was a great harvest of human souls, the salvation of 3,000 souls on that one day (Acts 2:41) and then the global spread of the gospel to all of those nations as those pilgrims returned to their home countries after the feast was over. This is an extraordinary work of God. And how did it happen? It happened as a result of earnest, *persistent prayer followed by powerful proclamation of the gospel enabled by the baptism of the Holy Spirit.*

## The Baptism of the Holy Spirit

Why do I refer to what happened on this day as "*the baptism of the Holy Spirit?*" I call it that because that's what Jesus called it. Jesus had predicted this day. Just ten days<sup>12</sup> prior to this day, immediately prior to his ascension, Jesus had been with them and he told them this would happen.

(Acts 1:4-5 ESV)

*<sup>4</sup> 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;"<sup>5</sup> for John*

---

<sup>9</sup> Jn 15:26; 16:7.

<sup>10</sup> Jn 16:14.

<sup>11</sup> Acts 2:9-11.

<sup>12</sup> See Acts 1:3, cf. 2:1. Jesus appeared to the disciple for forty days, then on the day of Pentecost, the fiftieth day, the Holy Spirit was poured out.

*baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now."*

What Jesus is here describing is exactly what happened on the day of Pentecost. These 120 disciples were baptized with the Holy Spirit. To fully understand this, Jesus takes us all the way back to John the baptist. He reminds them of John and of what John had said about Jesus and Jesus reaffirms this.

**(Luke 3:16 ESV)**

*<sup>16</sup> John answered them all, saying, "I baptize you with water, but he who is mightier than I is coming, the strap of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire."*

Just as John completely submersed them in water, so Jesus would completely submerge them in the Holy Spirit. Just as John drenched them with a baptism of water, so Jesus would drench them with a baptism of the Holy Spirit. The ministry of John was a powerful, but the ministry of Jesus will be an exponentially more powerful, and purifying, and life-giving. John baptized with water only, but Jesus would baptize with the Holy Spirit and fire.

The connection to fire is obvious. On the day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit appeared in the form of fire, resting upon each person, filling them, and enabling them to proclaim with extraordinary boldness the mighty works of God. They were filled with the Spirit and filled with power to proclaim the gospel. This is exactly what Jesus said would happen just before he ascended into heaven.

**(Luke 24:49 ESV)**

*<sup>49</sup> "And behold, I am sending the promise of my Father upon you. But stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high."*

This promise was fulfilled on the day of Pentecost. The "***promise of the Father***" Jesus was talking about sending, is the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is "the promise of the Father." Jesus sent the Holy Spirit to his followers on the day of Pentecost. It was the Holy Spirit who "***clothed them with power from on high.***" Jesus poured out his Spirit upon them.

The Spirit rested upon them like ***tongues of fire*** and filled them with extraordinary ability enabling them to ***proclaim the mighty works of God*** in languages they did not naturally know so that the gospel could begin to spread to more than all the nations and languages represented in Jerusalem on that day. What enabled this to happen, according to Jesus, was the "***baptism with the Holy Spirit.***"

## A Definition of the "Baptism of the Holy Spirit"

So what does the "baptism of the Holy Spirit" mean? How do we define it? The first principle in biblical interpretation is context. As one of my seminary professors often says, "Context is king."<sup>13</sup> The meaning and definition of a word or phrase is framed first by the context in which the author uses that word or phrase.

You don't first run to a lexicon to determine what a specific author means. You first examine how that author uses the word or phrase in the context in which it is used. This provides you with the definition of what that author means when he uses that word or phrase. A different author may have a slightly different meaning of the same word or phrase even though he's using the exact same word or phrase. So how should we define "baptism with the Holy Spirit," by looking at how it is used in the context of Acts 1 and 2? I would define it as,

A sudden, powerful filling of the Holy Spirit which enables an extraordinarily bold proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

This is not the definition I would have given you had you asked me to define the baptism of the Holy Spirit prior to this week. Prior to sitting with this text this week I would have said something like this, "The baptism of the Holy Spirit is what happens when a person becomes a believer in Jesus by putting his or her faith in Jesus and is transferred out of the kingdom of darkness and into the kingdom of light." That definition does not fit with how Jesus uses the term in Acts 1 and how it is fulfilled in Acts 2.

## Salvation of Disciples Is Not In Context

The definition I would have previously given, refers to the moment of salvation. The salvation of the 120 disciples upon whom the Holy Spirit is poured out is nowhere in view in the context of this passage in Acts 1-2. Therefore such a definition that describes the moment of salvation cannot be accurate.

The miracle of the day of Pentecost is not that Jesus' 120 disciples finally got saved, but that the Holy Spirit used those 120 fearful, confused disciples to powerfully proclaim the gospel to unbelievers from 16 different countries and 3,000 of *them* got saved! It is very clear these disciples are already believers.

Fairly early in Jesus' ministry after returning from a rather successful preaching campaign, Jesus said to the disciples,

**(Luke 10:20 ESV)**

<sup>20</sup> "...do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven."

---

<sup>13</sup> Thomas Schreiner.



Then on the night before his crucifixion, he said to them,

(John 15:3 ESV)

<sup>3</sup> *Already you are clean because of the word that I have spoken to you.*<sup>14</sup>

Furthermore, on the very first day of Jesus' resurrection, he appeared to the disciples,

(John 20:21-22 ESV)

<sup>21</sup> *Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you."* <sup>22</sup> *And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit."*

This took place 50 days prior to the day of Pentecost, so whatever this means, it cannot mean that the "baptism of the Holy Spirit" that the disciples experienced on the day of Pentecost was their initial salvation experience, the day they first received the Holy Spirit, were born again, and first became believers. In this instance, the "baptism of the Holy Spirit" cannot be defined as an experience equivalent with the moment of salvation. This is not what Jesus means by the phrase, neither is it what Luke means.<sup>15</sup>

## Implications for Us

The implications of this for us are huge.

1. **There is supernatural power available to proclaim the gospel.** We ought not to fear that in moments when we are given the privilege of bearing witness to the truth of the gospel of Jesus—crucified, risen, and reigning—we need not rest in our own power, but in the supernatural power of the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit.

(Luke 24:48-49 ESV)

<sup>48</sup> *"You are witnesses of these things. <sup>49</sup> And behold, I am sending the promise of my Father upon you. But stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high."*

When we have opportunity to bear witness to the work of God in our lives and the truth of the gospel of Jesus, the Holy Spirit who dwells within us, has the ability to deliver to us in those moments, supernatural power that will enable us to boldly proclaim that witness.

2. **The promise of this baptism remains open to us.** The outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost was indeed unique. However, the purpose of the baptism of the Holy Spirit was to bring the lost to salvation and to spread the gospel to the ends of

---

<sup>14</sup> See also Jn 13:10.

<sup>15</sup> We would need more time to define the phrase when similar words are used by Paul.

the earth. That has not yet happened. Jesus said,

**(Acts 1:8 ESV)**

<sup>8</sup> *But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.*

The mission is not yet complete. There are still some “ends of the earth” that have not yet received the gospel. There are still 6,659 people groups who have not yet heard the good news of the gospel of Jesus.<sup>16</sup> That means that there are three billion people who have not yet had the opportunity to be saved.

The purpose of this baptism with the Holy Spirit is to powerfully proclaim the gospel of Jesus, both at home (in Jerusalem) and to the end of the earth. There are still those who need to hear, therefore this promise remains open to us. *The mission is not yet complete, therefore the promise of this power still stands open to us.*

3. **God sends extraordinary help in crucial moments of need.** Jesus told his disciples, “...wait for the promise of the Father...” (Acts 1:4). I sense we as a church are in a crucial moment of need. I can think of ten thousand ways we are in need of extraordinary help.

Some of us are fighting deep, internal emotional and spiritual battles. Some of us are facing massive physical difficulties. Some of us are struggling to keep believing. Some of us have spouses who are on the edge of trusting Jesus, but just can't seem to fully have faith in him. Some of us are fighting against internal temptations and sin. We are in significant financial need. There is a constant battle for the souls of our young people. We are standing in the face of a rising tide of cultural sinfulness that threatens to sweep away anyone who refuses to join in the celebration. If there ever was a time when we need a fresh outpouring of the power of the Holy Spirit, I think it's now. I'm waiting for him to come. We need him to come in power.

**(Isaiah 30:18 ESV)**

<sup>18</sup> *Therefore the Lord waits to be gracious to you, and therefore he exalts himself to show mercy to you. For the Lord is a God of justice; blessed are all those who wait for him.*

Father, baptize us with your Holy Spirit. Empower us to be bold witnesses.

---

<sup>16</sup> Source: [www.joshuaproject.net](http://www.joshuaproject.net).