

Natalie W. Bell  
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 Pentecost

***The Power of the Spirit***  
***Acts 2:1-21, 37-38***

*When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. <sup>2</sup> 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. <sup>3</sup> Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. <sup>4</sup> All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability.*

*<sup>5</sup> Now there were devout Jews from every nation under heaven living in Jerusalem. <sup>6</sup> And at this sound the crowd gathered and was bewildered, because each one heard them speaking in the native language of each. <sup>7</sup> Amazed and astonished, they asked, "Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? <sup>8</sup> And how is it that we hear, each of us, in our own native language? <sup>9</sup> Parthians, Medes, Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, <sup>10</sup> Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, <sup>11</sup> Cretans and Arabs—in our own languages we hear them speaking about God's deeds of power." <sup>12</sup> All were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, "What does this mean?"*

*<sup>13</sup> But others sneered and said, "They are filled with new wine."*

*<sup>14</sup> 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. <sup>15</sup> Indeed, these are not drunk, as you suppose, for it is only nine o'clock in the morning. <sup>16</sup> No, this is what was spoken through the prophet Joel:*

*<sup>17</sup> '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.*

*<sup>18</sup> Even upon my slaves, both men and women,  
 in those days I will pour out my Spirit;  
 and they shall prophesy.*

*<sup>19</sup> 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 First Converts***

*37 Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and to the other apostles, "Brothers,<sup>[1]</sup> what should we do?" 38 Peter said to them, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.*

These early believers were gathered together, ***watching, waiting, praying, Expecting*** something to happen—which is when God's power broke in!

I wonder, do ***we*** expect the Holy Spirit to show up in our hearts and lives?

Just before our story, in the first chapter of Acts,  
Before he ascends to heaven, the disciples ask Jesus—  
so is this the time when you will restore our people?  
And Jesus tells them: ***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 on earth, that he was leaving,  
but the ***Holy Spirit*** would come to be with them.  
The Counselor, the Advocate, the one to guide, teach and remind them.

Then after the resurrection, he tells them the ***same thing***,  
But he tells them to expect something even ***more***.  
He says you will ***receive POWER*** when the Holy Spirit comes upon you.

What kind of ***power*** do you need in your life right now?  
How do you need God to work? To move? To help?

The Holy Spirit is that power of God!

Before his death, Jesus promised them His Spirit—***the Holy Spirit***.  
In Greek Jesus uses the word ***Paraclete*** for the Spirit—  
which means helper, advocate, counselor.

But here's something interesting about the Greek in John 14.  
 In John 14:16 Jesus promises *another Counselor to be with you forever*.  
 In Greek there are two words for **another**—one means **different**,  
 and the second means **just like the first one**.

Jesus says *allos*—which means another **just like the first one**.  
 That's what Jesus promises to his followers----**A copy of his Spirit!**  
 The Holy Spirit is **his Spirit**.  
 After all, the Holy Spirit is God,  
 And Jesus is God!

So, where do **you need** this Spirit power in your life today?

In Acts 2 the Spirit shows up as **wind and tongues of fire**.  
 What if we could **tap into** that kind of power?

**What if we allowed** God's Spirit to work in us,  
 To do more than just talk to us on Sunday,  
 But to actually **change what we think, and do, and feel**  
 Monday through Saturday!

We **don't talk** about the Holy Spirit as often as we could—  
 Even though the Spirit is God, part of the Trinity  
 We claim belief in this Spirit  
 every time we say "Holy Ghost" in the **Apostle's Creed**.

And we celebrate this special day about the Spirit-- Pentecost,  
 Which was actually a **Jewish festival---Shavuot, 50 days after Passover**,  
 Commemorating the **Harvest**  
 and the giving of the 10 **commandments** on Mt. Sinai.  
 It was a remembrance of God's presence, covenant, **and power**.

But instead of coming to celebrate the Harvest and the Law,  
 the believers **became** the Harvest—with new gifts and new purpose!

Jesus' followers in Jerusalem **could all speak in different languages---**  
 Not about just anything ...but about **God's power**.  
 Suddenly people from all over saw **simple Galileans speaking**  
**in all the languages** represented in Jerusalem at the Festival.

These believers, who had lost their Lord and Savior on the cross,  
 Now found themselves filled with ***new gifts and new purpose***,  
 They were being ***used by God in new and amazing ways!***

And as a result, the ***church was born***.  
 And 3000 people were baptized as believers in Jesus Christ!  
 And the word about Jesus spread and spread.

This happened through ***people just like us!***  
 No previous foreign language experience,  
 No special qualifications,  
 except knowing 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 in the church.

In Acts we see the Spirit ***guiding, leading, helping*** them,  
 giving them ***courage, and hope***.

We see the power of an ***earthquake*** to open prison doors and chains for Paul.  
 The power of ***baptism*** to change lives, in story after story.  
 The power of including everyone in the kingdom,  
 as Peter learns that God is for ***all people***, not just the Jews.  
 In Acts, we see the Spirit ***connecting people and creating community***  
 in totally new ways!

Isn't that a power we all need today?

The miracle of Pentecost is like the Holy Spirit saying,  
 "Ladies and Gentlemen, ***start your engines***"  
 because everyone's heart was ignited with the Spirit.

This is how Pentecost is the ***birthday*** of the church,  
 It put into motion everything we know about the body of Christ.

When the Spirit descended upon all those followers, and new converts in  
 Jerusalem, not only did they speak and hear the good news....

They created a **whole new way of life**—that we see in Acts 2:41-47.

*They devoted themselves to the apostles' **teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.** 43 Awe came upon everyone, because many wonders and signs were being done by the apostles. 44 All who believed were together and had all things in **common**...Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, 47 **praising** God and having the goodwill of all the people. And day by day the Lord **added to their number** those who were being saved. When these believers gathered in Antioch they were called Christians.*

The Holy Spirit brought them **power**—  
But it was a power that they **didn't control**.  
It blew in like the **wind**...like the mighty breath of God.  
**We still can't control** the Spirit—it blows where it will!

So, how do we **tap into this power**—of Pentecost?

What if we just have to open our hearts to it?  
To ask God for this power, and then receive?  
What if we open our eyes to seeing where this power is already at work?  
Kind of like when we share God-sightings in worship!

The truth is, we need the Holy Spirit, to **keep our spiritual tanks filled!**  
We need that incredible power, instead of just living on 'fumes'!  
Are you living on fumes right now?  
Or are you ready to be filled with God's power?

The Holy Spirit is the One who gives us all of our spiritual gifts!  
It's what makes us The Church.  
With the Spirit, we can suddenly do things we could barely dream or imagine!

It's like the Rev. Joan Gray's great **metaphor** for Christian life.  
She says that we can be **rowboats, or sailboats**.

We can either **use all of our 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!

And today, Pentecost, is the day when we ***remember and celebrate***  
That power---that ***wind in our sails!***  
The question is, will we ***allow*** the Spirit's power to fill us?

On June 5<sup>th</sup>, *Streams in the Desert* devotional says this:  
*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?*

Receiving that power in our sails is just a prayer away.  
A simple prayer we can all pray, anytime:  
***Come, Holy Spirit.***

Friends, hear the ***Good News of the Gospel***,  
the Holy Spirit is the ***wind*** that fills our sails,  
***Let's call on God, and receive*** the power of the Holy Spirit!  
And let all God's people say, Amen.