

Acts 2:1-24 When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. 2 Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. 3 They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. 4 All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues[a] as the Spirit enabled them. 5 Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven. 6 When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard their own language being spoken. 7 Utterly amazed, they asked: "Aren't all these who are speaking Galileans? 8 Then how is it that each of us hears them in our native language? 9 Parthians, Medes and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia. 10 Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome 11 (both Jews and converts to Judaism); Cretans and Arabs—we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues!" 12 Amazed and perplexed, they asked one another, "What does this mean?" 13 Some, however, made fun of them and said, "They have had too much wine." Peter Addresses the Crowd 14 Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd: "Fellow Jews and all of you who live in Jerusalem, let me explain this to you; listen carefully to what I say. 15 These people are not drunk, as you suppose. It's only nine in the morning! 16 No, this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: 17 "In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams. 18 Even on my servants, both men and women I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy. 19 I will show wonders in the heavens above and signs on the earth below, blood and fire and billows of smoke. 20 The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and glorious day of the Lord. 21 And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.' 22 "Fellow Israelites, listen to this: Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders and signs, which God did among you through him, as you yourselves know. 23 This man was handed over to you by God's deliberate plan and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross. 24 But God raised him from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him.

"NOW HEAR THIS" IS A NAUTICAL COMMAND OFTEN USED IN THE U.S. NAVY TO INSTRUCT PEOPLE TO PAY ATTENTION TO THE ORDERS OR STATEMENTS THAT FOLLOW.

JESUS ALSO WAS CONCERNED WITH PEOPLE PAYING ATTENTION TO WHAT HE SAID, WITH THE DESIRE FOR THEM TO UNDERSTAND HIS MESSAGE.

HE OFTEN SPOKE ABOUT HEARING OR LISTENING. ONE OF THE PHASES JESUS REPEATED WAS: "LET ANYONE WITH EARS TO HEAR -LISTEN."

THERE ARE ABOUT AT LEAST A DOZEN OTHER VERSES IN THE NEW TESTAMENT THAT STATE THE IMPORTANCE OF HEARING OR LISTENING.

WHILE THE PHRASE "NOW HEAR THIS", IS NOT FOUND ANYWHERE IN THE BIBLE-ITS INTENTION TO GET US TO LISTEN IS FOUND IN EVERY BOOK.

AND WITH THE COMMAND TO HEAR AND LISTEN, GOD'S EXPECTATION IS ALSO FOR US TO OBEY.

TODAY IS PENTECOST, THE DAY WE CELEBRATE WHAT IS OFTEN CALLED THE BIRTHDAY OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH.

IT WAS THE DAY THE 120 APOSTLES AND OTHER FOLLOWERS OF JESUS WERE JOINED TOGETHER BY MORE THAN JUST MEMORIES OF, AND PROMISES MADE, BY JESUS.

WE CELEBRATE THIS DAY WITH THE COLOR RED TO SYMBOLIZE THE TONGUES OF FIRE THAT CAME AND RESTED ON EACH MAN AND WOMAN GATHERED THERE.

WHAT A POWERFUL AND AMAZING SIGHT IT MUST HAVE BEEN.

ALL WERE GATHERED TOGETHER IN JERUSALEM TO WAIT FOR WHAT WOULD HAPPEN, AS JESUS COMMANDED.

THEY WERE THERE TO CELEBRATE THE JEWISH FESTIVAL OF PENTECOST, WHICH IS A CELEBRATION OF THE SPRING WHEAT HARVEST.

JEWISH PENTECOST ALSO COMMEMORATED THE GIVING OF THE TEN COMMANDMENTS, AND THUS THE COVENANT OF THE LAW BETWEEN GOD AND HIS PEOPLE.

BUT ON THAT PARTICULAR PENTECOST THE JEWS GATHERED IN AN UPPER ROOM WERE WAITING FOR SOMETHING NEW TO HAPPEN.

JESUS HAD PROMISED THE HOLY SPIRIT WOULD COME TO HIS FOLLOWERS ON THAT DAY.

SUDDENLY THERE WAS THE SOUND LIKE HURRICANE FORCE WIND, WHICH FILLED THE ENTIRE HOUSE, AND YET DID NOT DAMAGE LIKE A REAL WIND COULD.

THEN THE TONGUES OF FIRE TOUCHED EACH ONE THERE AND THEY WERE GIVEN THE ABILITY TO SPEAK IN OTHER LANGUAGES.

LISTEN TO HOW SOMEONE ELSE DESCRIBES THE EFFECTS OF GOD'S SPIRIT:

“THE HOLY SPIRIT HAD BROKEN INTO THEIR CLOSED-UP EXISTENCE. IT FILLED THEM UP WITH ITS HOLY POWER, AND NOW IT PUSHED THEM OUT.

LIKE LITTLE FLEDGLING BIRDS IN A NEST, THE SPIRIT PUSHED THEM OUT LIKE A MOTHER BIRD. OUT INTO THE STREETS OF JERUSALEM THEY Poured.”

WHAT A SIGHT THAT MUST HAVE BEEN- TO SEE A LITTLE OVER A HUNDRED PEOPLE RUSH OUTSIDE THE HOUSE.

OH YES, THERE CERTAINLY WERE AMAZING SIGHTS TO SEE FOR THOSE PRESENT IN JERUSALEM AND NEARBY THAT HOUSE THAT DAY.

BUT PENTECOST IS ABOUT MUCH MORE THAN WHAT WAS SEEN, IN FACT WHAT FOLKS HEARD WAS MORE IMPORTANT.

REMEMBER HOW LUKE DESCRIBES THE INITIAL APPEARANCE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT:

“AND SUDDENLY FROM HEAVEN THERE CAME A SOUND LIKE THE RUSH OF A VIOLENT WIND, IT FILLED THE ENTIRE HOUSE WHERE THEY WERE SITTING.”

NOTICE IT WAS THEIR EARS AND NOT THEIR EYES THAT GOD ADDRESSED FIRST WITH THE COMING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

SOUND, THAT IS HEARING WHAT GOD IS SAYING OR DOING IS OFTEN MORE IMPORTANT THAN SEEING.

INDEED, CREATION ITSELF CAME INTO BEING NOT THROUGH WHAT GOD DID, BUT WHAT GOD SAID: “LET THERE BE....”

THE NEW THING GOD WAS DOING IN THE WORLD THROUGH THE FIRST CHRISTIANS ALSO BEGAN WITH SOUND OF THE WIND.

THEN THE TONGUES OF FIRE, AS IF CARRIED BY THE WIND, FELL UPON ALL WHO WERE GATHERED TOGETHER IN THE NAME OF JESUS.

BUT IT WAS NOT ONLY THE SOUND OF THE WIND THAT MATTERED, BUT THE SOUND OF DIFFERENT LANGUAGES, THE TONGUES OF FIRE PRODUCED IN EACH PERSON UPON WHOM THEY FELL.

IN FACT, ACTS RECORDS THAT IT WAS THE SOUND THOSE EMPOWERED BY THE SPIRIT MADE, MORE THAN THEIR ACTIONS THAT CAUGHT THE ATTENTION OF OTHERS.

“ALL OF THEM WERE FILLED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT AND BEGAN TO SPEAK IN OTHER LANGUAGES AS THE SPIRIT GAVE THEM ABILITY...

AND AT THIS SOUND THE CROWD GATHERED AND WAS BEWILDERED, BECAUSE EACH ONE HEARD THEM SPEAKING IN THE NATIVE LANGUAGE OF EACH.”

TRULY, THE VARIOUS LANGUAGES COMING FROM JEWS WHO WERE CLEARLY NATIVE TO THE HOLY LAND AND NOT FOREIGN BORN, WAS GOD'S WAY OF GETTING PEOPLE'S ATTENTION.

OF COURSE, THE REALLY SIGNIFICANT THING WAS NOT HOW THEY WERE TALKING BUT THE MESSAGE ABOUT JESUS THEY WERE DELIVERING.

MANY HEARD THEIR SPEECH AND WERE AMAZED AT BOTH THE WORDS SPOKEN AND THE MESSAGE GIVEN, AND WONDERED AT ITS MEANING.

OTHERS HEARD THE SOUND BUT NOT THE MESSAGE, SO THEY CONCLUDED ALL THOSE PEOPLE TALKING HAD HAD TOO MUCH WINE.

BUT THEN PETER RAISED HIS VOICE TO BE HEARD ABOVE THE OTHER SOUNDS-IT GREW QUIET EXCEPT FOR HIS VOICE.

HE REMINDED THE SCOFFERS OF THE EARLY HOUR WHICH SPOKE AGAINST ANYONE BEING DRUNK.

THEN HE GOT THEIR ATTENTION BY DRAWING ON HOLY SCRIPTURE AND THE PROPHECY OF JOEL

HE REMINDED THOSE WHO WOULD LISTEN THAT JOEL SPOKE ABOUT THE OUTPOURING OF GOD'S SPIRIT THAT WOULD COME.

HE REMINDED THEM ABOUT JOEL'S PROCLAMATION THE SPIRIT WOULD FALL ON MEN AND WOMEN, OLD AND YOUNG ALIKE.

PETER AFFIRMED THE MESSAGE THAT THIS WOULD BE A SIGN TO CALL UPON GOD'S NAME IN ORDER TO BE SAVED.

THEN HE EXPLAINED THE REASON FOR THE COMING OF THE SPIRIT OF GOD ON THAT PARTICULAR DAY.

HE ASKED THEM TO LISTEN TO THE MESSAGE ABOUT JESUS OF NAZARETH, REJECTED BY THE JEWISH LEADERSHIP AND THE CROWD, AND HANDED OVER TO ROME TO BE CRUCIFIED.

PETER TESTIFIED TO HIS DEATH AND THEN TO THE FACT MANY WITNESSED HE WAS RAISED BY GOD TO LIFE AGAIN.

IN THE VERSES FROM ACTS 2 NOT READ THIS MORNING PETER GAVE HOPE TO ALL WHO HEARD HIM.

HE EXPLAINED JESUS WAS THE PROMISED MESSIAH, AND GOD'S PROMISES TO ISRAEL WERE FULFILLED IN HIM.

THEN LUKE WRITES: "NOW WHEN THEY HEARD THIS, THEY WERE CUT TO THE HEART..."

THEREFORE, THEY ASKED WHAT THEY COULD DO, AND WERE TOLD TO REPENT IN THE NAME OF JESUS CHRIST SO THEIR SINS COULD BE FORGIVEN.

AND OF THOSE WHO HEARD PETER'S WORDS THAT DAY- AROUND THREE THOUSAND PEOPLE LISTENED AND BELIEVED, AND WERE SAVED AND BAPTIZED.

THIS IS WHY THE CHRISTIAN PENTECOST IS CALLED THE BIRTHDAY OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH.

YES, THERE WERE FOLLOWERS OF JESUS AROUND BEFORE THEN, BUT THE HOLY SPIRIT BROUGHT THEM TOGETHER IN A MORE POWERFUL WAY.

OUR PENTECOST COMMEMORATES GOD PLANTING THE NEW COVENANT IN CHRIST BLOOD WITHIN EACH ONE WHO BELIEVES IN AND IS SAVED BY JESUS.

IT CELEBRATES THE HARVEST OF SOULS THAT BEGAN THAT DAY IN JERUSALEM AND THEN SPREAD THROUGHOUT THE WORLD, AND IS STILL SPREADING.

IT WAS THE VOICE OF JESUS SPEAKING THROUGH HIS SPIRIT EMPOWERED FOLLOWERS THAT BIRTHED HIS CHURCH.

REVELATION 3:20 SERVES AS A REMINDER ABOUT THE SIGNIFICANCE JESUS PLACES ON HEARING:

"BEHOLD I STAND AT THE DOOR AND KNOCK, IF YOU HEAR MY VOICE AND OPEN THE DOOR, I WILL COME INTO YOU AND EAT WITH YOU AND YOU WITH ME."

AGAIN, WE ARE REMINDED BY OUR SAVIOR ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF HEARING AND OBEYING. AND PART OF OUR LISTENING INCLUDES WITNESSING ABOUT JESUS TO OTHERS.

IN ROMANS 10:14-15 WE ARE REMINDED ABOUT OUR CALLING AS INDIVIDUALS AND A CHURCH TO SHARE THE GOOD NEWS ABOUT JESUS.

IT SAYS: "HOW THEN WILL THEY CALL ON HIM IN WHOM THEY HAVE NOT BELIEVED?"

AND HOW ARE THEY TO BELIEVE IN HIM OF WHOM THEY HAVE NEVER HEARD?

AND HOW ARE THEY TO HEAR WITHOUT SOMEONE PREACHING?

AND HOW ARE THEY TO PREACH UNLESS THEY ARE SENT? "AS IT IS WRITTEN, "HOW BEAUTIFUL ARE THE FEET OF THOSE WHO PREACH THE GOOD NEWS!"

THIS PASSAGE IS NOT JUST ABOUT PRIESTS AND PASTORS. IT INCLUDES ALL CHRISTIANS WHO TALK ABOUT JESUS, NOT ONLY IN SERMONS, BUT THROUGH OTHER TYPES OF SPEECH, AS WELL AS DEEDS.

THE WAY ALL CHRISTIANS ARE SENT BEGINS WITH GOD, AND OUR LISTENING TO GOD'S SPIRIT WITHIN US, FOR IT IS THE HOLY SPIRIT WHO INSPIRES AND GUIDES US, WHEN WE ARE WILLING.

FURTHERMORE, OUR WORDS DO NOT USUALLY NEED TO BE LOUD OR DISRUPTIVE TO GET OTHER'S ATTENTION.

GENTLE OR KIND WORDS, A SIMPLE EXPRESSION OF FAITH THAT WITNESSES TO OUR LOVE FOR JESUS AND HIS FOR THE WORLD- IS OFTEN HEARD BETTER THAN OTHER WORDS.

SOMETIMES WE FORGET THIS. AND ENTHUSIASTIC BELIEVERS CAN APPEAR AGGRESSIVE OR BE INTRUSIVE IN WAYS THAT PUSH PEOPLE AWAY RATHER, THAN DRAW THEM NEARER TO JESUS.

THIS IS WHY LISTENING FOR AND OBEYING GOD'S DIRECTION IS IMPORTANT- SO WE CAN SPEAK FOR JESUS IN WAYS THAT BEST SUIT EACH PERSON OR CIRCUMSTANCE.

PERSONAL HUMILITY AND LOVE FOR OTHERS AS JESUS LOVES US, ALSO ARE NECESSARY TO HELP OTHERS HEAR.

SO, PENTECOST IS NOT JUST ABOUT THE BIRTH OF THE CHURCH. EACH YEAR IT OFFERS US A TIME FOR COMMITMENT OR RENEWAL.

WHILE THERE HAVE NOT BEEN TONGUES OF FIRE SEEN AGAIN SINCE THAT DAY, THE SOUND OF THE SPIRIT CAN STILL BE HEARD WITHIN AND POURING FROM CHRISTIANS.

TRULY, GOD CAN AND WILL BREATHE NEW LIFE INTO THE CHURCH.

THE SPIRIT STILL SPEAKS TO US, AND JESUS DESIRES FOR US TO HEAR AND OBEY HIS CALL.

ONE WAY WE OPEN OUR HEARTS AND SOULS TO JESUS, AND THE SPIRIT'S TOUCH AND VOICE, IS WHEN WE COME TO THE LORD'S TABLE IN HUMILITY AND FAITH.

YES, THE HOLY SPIRIT IS ALIVE AND ACTING IN THE CHURCH AND IN ALL INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE RECEPTIVE.

SO MAY WE LISTEN FOR AND WELCOME THE PRESENCE AND POWER, THE VOICE AND MOVEMENT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT WITHIN US, WITHIN THIS CONGREGATION, AND WITHIN ALL CHURCHES.

LET ME CLOSE WITH A VERSE FROM A PENTECOST HYMN AS A PRAYER FOR THIS DAY.

"COME, O SPIRIT, WITH YOUR SOUND LIKE A WIND RUSHING; COME FROM HEAVEN AND STIR OUR HEARTS, EACH DISCIPLE TOUCHING!

MOLD OUR ACTIONS TO YOUR WILL, YOU OUR SERVICE GIVING; MOVE WITHIN OUR FELLOWSHIP, TRANSFORM NOW OUR LIVING." THROUGH CHRIST OUR LORD WE PRAY. AMEN

SERMON SUMMARY: ACTS 2:1-24

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