

THE PASSION OF THE SPIRIT-Pentecost

Welcome Holy Spirit Series • Week 3

SERIES OVERVIEW

Six-week series focusing on the person of the Holy Spirit. Previous weeks covered:

- Week 1 — The Promise of the Holy Spirit
- Week 2 — The Power of the Holy Spirit
- Week 3 — The Passion of the Holy Spirit

Key Scripture

John 14:15–18 (NLT)

‘15 If you love me, obey my commandments. 16 And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, who will never leave you. 17 He is the Holy Spirit, who leads into all truth. The world cannot receive him, because it isn’t looking for him and doesn’t recognize him. But you know him, because he lives with you now and later will be in you. 18 No, I will not abandon you as orphans—I will come to you.’

Key attributes of the Holy Spirit established in prior weeks:

- Holy Spirit is divine — God
- Holy Spirit is personal — makes decisions, can be grieved
- Holy Spirit is powerful — the ‘verb’ of the Trinity, the power force

WHAT IS PENTECOST?

Pentecost is the progression of God’s plan to redeem us, dwell with us, and empower us as image bearers living outside the garden.

The Word

- From the Greek *pentēkostē* — meaning “fiftieth”
- The Jewish feast falling fifty days after Passover
- Also called the Feast of Weeks / Shavuot (Hebrew)
- One of the great pilgrimage festivals — explains the international crowd in Acts 2

Jewish Roots

- Originally celebrated the wheat harvest — a firstfruits offering to God
- By the first century also associated with the giving of the Torah at Mount Sinai
- Carried the weight of covenant: God meeting the people, establishing relationship

THE IMPLICATIONS OF PENTECOST

The Harvest Imagery is Fulfilled

At Pentecost Israel brought firstfruits of grain. When 3,000 come to faith in one day, it is the firstfruits of the spiritual harvest — the beginning of the Gospel reaching every nation.

The Sinai Parallel

At Sinai: law written on stone tablets — an external code.

At Pentecost: the Spirit writes God's law on human hearts.

- Jeremiah 31 predicted this
- Ezekiel 36 predicted this

Old covenant: "Here is the standard."

New covenant: "I will put the desire and power to meet it inside you."

The Timing Was Deliberate

- Fifty days after Passover = fifty days after the crucifixion
- Jesus was the Passover Lamb — his death was no coincidence
- The Spirit arrives at the feast of harvest and covenant
- The feasts were always pointing forward

The Reversal of Babel

- Genesis 11: languages scattered as judgment — division was the consequence of pride
- Pentecost: people from every language hear God's message in their own tongue
- Not a reversal of diversity but a reversal of division
- The Gospel is for every tribe, tongue, and nation — Pentecost makes that undeniable

The Spirit's Permanent Residency

- Old Testament: Spirit came upon people selectively and temporarily (prophets, kings, judges)
- After Pentecost: the Spirit indwells every believer, all the time
- God's presence no longer localised in a temple or mediated through a priest
- Every person who belongs to Christ becomes a temple of the Holy Spirit

Pentecost is not a standalone event — it is the fulfillment of an enormous amount of prior history.

MAIN PASSAGE: ACTS 2

Key question as we read: When the Holy Spirit shows up, what are people inspired to do? How is life with the Spirit different from life without? What is the passion of Holy Spirit?

Acts 2:1–6 (NLT)

On the day of Pentecost all the believers were meeting together in one place. 2 Suddenly, there was a sound from heaven like the roaring of a mighty windstorm, and it filled the house where they were sitting. 3 Then, what looked like flames or tongues of fire appeared and settled on each of them. 4 And everyone present was filled with the Holy Spirit and began speaking in other languages, as the Holy Spirit gave them this ability. 5 At that time there were devout Jews from every nation living in Jerusalem. 6 When they heard the loud noise, everyone came running, and they were bewildered to hear their own languages being spoken by the believers.

Acts 2:22–24 (NLT) — Peter’s Message

‘22 ‘People of Israel, listen! God publicly endorsed Jesus the Nazarene by doing powerful miracles, wonders, and signs through him, as you well know. 23 But God knew what would happen, and his prearranged plan was carried out when Jesus was betrayed. With the help of lawless Gentiles, you nailed him to a cross and killed him. 24 But God released him from the horrors of death and raised him back to life, for death could not keep him in its grip.’”

Acts 2:37–41 (NLT) — The Response

37 Peter’s words pierced their hearts, and they said to him and to the other apostles, “Brothers, what should we do?” 38 Peter replied, “Each of you must repent of your sins and turn to God, and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. Then you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 This promise is to you, to your children, and to those far away—all who have been called by the Lord our God.” 40 Then Peter continued preaching for a long time, strongly urging all his listeners, “Save yourselves from this crooked generation!” 41 Those who believed what Peter said were baptized and added to the church that day—about 3,000 in all.

THE PASSION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Why did the Spirit choose foreign languages as the grand entrance? Connection and communication of a message for all people — not one ethnic group, but every tribe, tongue, and nation.

The theme of Peter’s message was clear: Jesus.

The Holy Spirit is passionate about communicating Jesus to all people — testifying about Jesus and helping us to do the same.

John 15:26–27 (NLT)

“26 But I will send you the Advocate—the Spirit of truth. He will come to you from the Father and will testify all about me. 27 And you must also testify about me because you have been with me from the beginning of my ministry.”

John 16:13–14 (NLT)

“13 When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own but will tell you what he has heard. He will tell you about the future. 14 He will bring me glory by telling you whatever he receives from me.”

Checking Our Motives

James 4:2b–3a (NLT)

‘...yet you don’t have what you want because you don’t ask God for it. And even when you ask, you don’t get it because your motives are all wrong.’

It’s possible to seek even something as good as the Holy Spirit with self-serving motives:

- A desire for personal power
- A desire for personal experience / feelings

These aren’t necessarily bad, but they may be missing the main thing.

The Spirit Enables Understanding

1 Corinthians 2:14 (NLT)

‘But people who aren’t spiritual can’t receive these truths from God’s Spirit. It all sounds foolish to them and they can’t understand it, for only those who are spiritual can understand what the Spirit means.’

Without the Holy Spirit’s power, people struggle to make sense of the Gospel.

When we share the Good News, the Spirit is the one who lights it up for the listener.

THE SPIRIT IN EVERYDAY LIFE: ACTS 8

Acts 2 = 3,000 people. Acts 8 narrows to just two people: one believer, one seeker.

Philip and the Ethiopian Eunuch — the finance minister of Ethiopia.

Acts 8:26–29 (NLT)

26 As for Philip, an angel of the Lord said to him, “Go south down the desert road that runs from Jerusalem to Gaza.” 27 So he started out, and he met the treasurer of Ethiopia, a eunuch of great authority under the Kandake, the queen of Ethiopia. The eunuch had gone to Jerusalem to worship, 28 and he was now returning. Seated in his carriage, he was reading aloud from the book of the prophet Isaiah. 29 The Holy Spirit said to Philip, “Go over and walk along beside the carriage.”

Acts 8:30–38 (NLT)

30 Philip ran over and heard the man reading from the prophet Isaiah. Philip asked, “Do you understand what you are reading?” 31 The man replied, “How can I, unless someone instructs me?” And he urged Philip to come up into the carriage and sit with him. 32 The passage of Scripture he had been reading was this: “He was led like a sheep to the slaughter. And as a lamb is silent before the shearers, he did not open his mouth. 33 He was humiliated and received no justice. Who can speak of his descendants? For his life was taken from the earth.” 34 The eunuch asked Philip, “Tell me, was the prophet talking about himself or someone else?” 35 So beginning with this same Scripture, Philip told him the Good News about Jesus. 36 As they rode along, they came to some water, and the eunuch said, “Look! There’s some water! Why can’t I be baptized?” 38 He ordered the carriage to stop, and they went down into the water, and Philip baptized him.

Philip was not an Apostle — he was simply a follower of Jesus. The Spirit uses ordinary people. The Eunuch had access, education, and wealth — yet said ‘I can’t figure this out alone.’

APPLICATION: ALIGNING OUR PASSION WITH THE SPIRIT’S

Can the Holy Spirit give us powerful feelings and experiences? Yes.

Can the Holy Spirit give us supernatural guidance? Absolutely.

But the Spirit’s deepest passion is lighting up the beauty and glory of Christ.

When we align our passion with the Spirit’s passion:

- We take our eyes off ourselves and onto helping others
- We represent Jesus in our everyday lives
- The Spirit’s power, gifts, and fruit are activated in ordinary and extraordinary ways
- The burdens we’ve been carrying start to fall off
- The world becomes more loving and kinder

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Pentecost was the fulfillment of centuries of preparation — feasts, prophets, covenants
- The Holy Spirit’s passion is to make Jesus known to all people
- The Spirit supernaturally enables people to understand the Gospel
- We partner with the Spirit by sharing the Good News — we plant, the Spirit lights it up
- The Spirit leads us to individuals, not just crowds
- Ordinary followers of Jesus (like Philip) are the Spirit’s primary instruments



Melbourne
Inclusive Church
Come as you are.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

If the Holy Spirit's deepest passion is making Jesus known, how aligned is your own passion with that? What does your day-to-day life reflect about what you're most passionate about?

On Pentecost as Fulfillment: Pentecost wasn't random — it was the culmination of centuries of preparation through feasts, prophets, and covenants. How does knowing that God works patiently over long periods of time encourage you in areas of your life where you're still waiting for things to come together?

On Being a Temple of the Holy Spirit: In the Old Testament, God's presence was localised in a temple. Now, every believer carries that presence. How does that reality change the way you see yourself — and the way you walk into ordinary moments like a conversation, a workplace, or a neighbourhood?

On Recognising the Spirit's Leading: Think of a time someone came to mind unexpectedly and you either acted on it or dismissed it. Looking back, do you think that could have been the Spirit's prompting? What would it look like to be more attentive to those nudges?

On the Ethiopian Eunuch: Philip was an ordinary follower — not an apostle — yet the Spirit used him in a pivotal moment. Who in your life might be in the "outer courts," curious about faith but missing a piece of the picture? What's holding you back from a simple conversation?

On Understanding the Gospel: Have you ever experienced or witnessed that moment when the Gospel suddenly "clicked" for someone? What did it stir in you, and how does remembering it shape how you share your faith now?