



Unit 3: God's Power and Me

Sermon Series Title: When the Spirit Moves

Sermon 1: God's Work Goes Forth

Bible Passage: Acts 2:6-7, 11-12, 14, 16-18

Background/Context

In chapter one of the book of Acts, the disciples see Jesus for the last time and He gives them instructions concerning their mission. He told them to wait for the empowering of the Spirit. While waiting Peter speaks up and says that Judas needed to be replaced. They cast lots and the lot fell on Matthias.

In chapter two, it is the day of Pentecost, the disciples and about 120 followers are gathered on one accord awaiting Jesus' promise of the Holy Spirit. Suddenly, a rushing mighty wind fills the room, tongues of fire appear, and the disciples receive the ability to speak in other languages. Empowered by the power of the Spirit, they go forth to witness to the Jews who came into the city from other nations. The people are amazed. Peter explains what is happening and preaches that Jesus, who was crucified and whom God raised from the dead, is the Messiah. Peter commanded that they repent, accept Jesus as Lord and Savior, be baptized, and receive the gift of the Spirit. Three thousand people were converted and baptized!

A. The World is Reached (Acts 2:6-7)

On the day of Pentecost, Jews entered Jerusalem from about fifteen different geographical locations. The disciples were filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke in tongues. This phenomenon "confused" or baffled the hearers. Why? Because "each one heard them speaking in his own language." The tongues were not some erratic utterance, but the audience heard the disciples in their own language. The word used for tongues means a language or dialect of a country or district. Note that the listeners were not only baffled but they were "astounded and amazed." The people had never seen anything like this before. While Jesus was there, the people were exposed to the deaf, dumb, lame, and blind being healed, but they had never heard multiple men and women from one geographical locale speaking in the language of fifteen different places. Yes, the Lord had once again removed barriers so that the gospel could reach individuals in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the uttermost parts of the world.

Using the disciples, God reached the nations by starting with Jews who were scattered into different parts of the world. Paul declared that the Lord has invested all His saving power in the gospel of Jesus Christ; to the Jew first and then to the Gentile (Rom. 1:16). Seeing that these Jews were born in different areas, they could return home with the gospel.

Application Point: People come from different backgrounds and have different life experiences. How can the Lord use your background and your unique life experiences to reach others with the gospel? How can you encourage others not to view their past as a hindrance, but rather a help in reaching nations for the Lord?

B. God's Works are Experienced (Acts 2:11-12)

When the Spirit of God moves among His people, God's works are experienced. The hearers were all amazed and said, "...we hear them declaring the magnificent acts of God." The disciples were not giving gibberish. They were proclaiming the wonderful works of God. The things the disciples said that day are not recorded but we can imagine them proclaiming God's righteousness, grace, mercy, and His loving kindness. The listeners' focus was fixed on God, and because the event was so different they were moved to ask the question, "What does this mean?" When the mind becomes engaged in the things God is doing, the hearer's heart is ready to receive God's explanation.

Application Point: Can you recall a time when you experienced something you knew was the power of God at work? How can you be sure that it was God? How did you respond to the encounter? The Holy Spirit works in the heart, mind, and soul of those who believe.

C. God's Works are Explained (Acts 2:13-14,16-18)

The believers worshiped the Lord with joy and enthusiasm. The audience heard in their own language and wanted answers for the phenomenon. Someone falsely surmised that the disciples were full of wine. Peter refuted this conclusion because Orthodox Jews did not eat or drink before 9 a.m. on the Sabbath or on a holy day, and they customarily only drank wine with meals. Peter explained their current situation using the Word of God. It is imperative to have a biblical base for what believers should and should not do. The experience is not more important than the Word. The Word is our rule and guide for faith and practice. Christians must remember that God's Word is settled in heaven (Ps. 119:89).

Pentecost was the inaugural "coming out" of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit has always been active in the world. Peter uses the prophet Joel's prophecy (Joel 2:28–32) to explain what the disciples and the listeners were experiencing. Joel's prophecy addresses the nation of Israel in the end times and some of the aspects of the prophecy were not apparent in Peter's day. Yet, Peter was led by the Spirit to see Joel's message as an application to the church. He pointed out that the Spirit Joel talked about was present and the reason they heard in their own language.

Application Point: Teaching doctrine is important for the church. Some have argued that it makes no difference what is believed, as long as a person believes in God. What counsel would you give individuals with this view?