

ACTS 2:1-13

[INTRODUCTION]

- Have you ever followed Jesus so hard people thought you were drunk?
 - That's what happens to the disciples in our passage.
 - Talk about going deeper, talk about outside people—they live lives that can only be explained by the Spirit of God.
- Maybe you know people like that—you don't think they're drunk, but you know they're different—sold out for Jesus.
 - They come alive in worship, have deep friendships, serve generously—and even share their faith.
 - There's something alive, joyful, and compelling about them.
- But you're not quite sure how to tap into that—maybe you even feel a little stuck:
 - Still wrestling with the same old problems or sins.
 - Following Jesus, but without much passion or joy.
 - Certainly not doing anything as bold as telling others about him.
- I think the first disciples would understand:
 - Jesus had given them a mission: Be my witnesses to the ends of the earth.
 - Show the world that there's a new king, and in his kingdom everything on earth can be as it is in heaven.
 - Forgiveness is real, hope is alive, healing is possible—and the best is yet to come.
 - The disciples had the mission: But how on earth were they supposed to live like that?!
- Well, in our passage this morning, everything changes.
 - The sound of rushing wind, the sight of tongues of fire...
 - God sends his Spirit, enabling his people to live alive for him—because now they have the presence, power, and purpose of the king.

[Transition]: Let's start with his presence.

1. YOU ARE ALIVE WITH GOD'S PRESENCE

[State]

- In **V1** we once again find the disciples **all together in one place**—fellowship, community, togetherness is normative in the Xn life.
- Then, **V2: Suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting.**
 - When was the last time you witnessed a great storm?

- This summer Rosie and I drove to Colorado, and somewhere in Kansas—we drove into one: Sheet lightning across the sky, rain so heavy we could hardly see, wind so strong trucks pulled off the road.
 - It was wild, and terrifying, and awesome.
- Now imagine that storm not outside—but inside a room...
 - The disciples aren't in Kansas—they're in a home!
 - And a **mighty rushing wind** consumes them. Then...
- **V3: Divided tongues as of fire appeared to them and rested on each one of them.**
 - Out of the wind, flames spiral—and then settle on each believer.
 - What's happening here? It's the **presence** of God.
 - In the **OT**—wind and fire were familiar signs of God's presence.
 - **Wind:** God's Spirit hovered over the waters at creation (Gen 1); God's breath gave life to dry bones (Eze 37).
 - **Fire:** God appeared in a pillar of fire (Ex 13:21); to Moses in the burning bush (Ex 3:2).
 - But notice the difference: The wind doesn't hover over the waters, and the fire doesn't burn within a bush—instead, they rest on each believer.

[Illustrate]: The Spirit does not just fill a *place*—he fills a *people*.

- As Tim Keller once said: *“Every believer is now a burning bush.”*¹
- If you're a Xn, the HS lives in you—you are alive with the presence of God.

[Apply]: Be encouraged, dear ones—we are never alone.

- Do you need that reminder this week?
 - When you feel isolated or overwhelmed, when you feel angry or confused...
 - Never forget that God is with you.
 - In the **mundane** tasks—driving, cooking, parenting, working...
 - In the **dramatic** moments:
 - In your **personal** life—your broken marriage, your unwelcome diagnosis, your financial stress.
 - Or in the awful events that have unfolded in our **nation** these past few weeks...
 - We put out a podcast this week in response to the evil assassination of Charlie Kirk.
 - It's important that we speak publicly on this and consider how Christ would have us think and act.
 - Encourage you to check it out if you've not yet had the chance.
 - But in all these things—personal and cultural—remember: God is with you every step.
 - To quote **Frederick Buechner**: *“Here is the world. Beautiful and terrible things will happen. Don't be afraid.”*²
 - Why not? Because you're navigating it all with the **presence** of God.

[Transition]

- *Well, yes, someone says, that is encouraging, but can we get more concrete? What difference does God's presence make?*
- Let's answer that by seeing how God's **presence** with us brings God's **power** to us.
- You are alive with God's presence, and...

2. YOU ARE ALIVE WITH GOD'S POWER

[State]

- What kind of power are we talking about?
- R. C. Sproul once answered this question by explaining the biblical imagery of fire:
 - Why is the Spirit symbolized through fire?
 - Because in the OT, Sproul says, fire brought two things:³

1) First, LIGHT.

- In our electrified age, we take light for granted—we can flick the switch and have light any time of day.
- But for most of human history, it wasn't so: Once the sun went down you needed fire—candles and torches—to see.
- In the same way, one of the most important operations of the Spirit is that he gives us the power to see.
 - As the pillar of fire guided the people in Exodus...
 - So the Holy Spirit leads and guides us today.
 - He opens our **eyes** to see our need of God (Jn 16:8).
 - He opens our **hearts** to understand his word (Jn 16:13).
 - He guides our **steps** so we can live as he's called (Gal 5:25).
- Without the Spirit we stumble in the dark—but with him we see.

[Apply]: Where do you turn when you need light?

- When you're lost or confused or you don't know what to do?
 - Social media, cable news, an influencer, ChatGPT?
 - Or do you ask the Spirit for light?
 - We bring our questions and decisions to him.
 - Praying through them and trusting he'll guide at every turn.
- We are not a rudderless people—we have the power of light.

2) Second, fire also brings HEAT.

- Again, it's easy to forget about this in our electrified age—we can change the temperature any time we want.
- But for most of human history people built fires to keep warm.
- In the same way, one of the most important operations of the Spirit is to warm our hearts to God.

- Scripture says he does this by pouring God's love into our hearts (Rom 5:5).
- He takes the facts—of sin and grace, of Jesus and his cross—and transforms them into conviction and burning affection.
- Without the Spirit we're lukewarm—but with him we're on fire for God.

[Apply]: Where are you tempted to turn when you need warmth?

- Where do you go to feel alive?
 - Your family, work, hobby, politics, another drink, porn?
 - Or do you ask the Spirit for heat?
 - Till he pours God's love into your heart.
 - Till you're ablaze—on fire for God...
- We are not a passionless people—we have the power of heat.

[Illustrate]

- On a cold night, fire does two things: it lets you see clearly and warms your body.
- That's the power the Spirit brings to us: clarity of mind, warmth of heart—a people of light and heat.

[Apply]: And that's a powerful combination:

- In our world today—there's not enough light, and there's too much unhealthy heat.
- But what a people we could be:
 - A people of light—who see clearly.
 - And a people of heat—who love deeply.
- Let's measure our words and actions by these questions:
 - Am I seeing things as God sees them?
 - Am I loving as God loves me?
- The Spirit gives us power to be people of light and heat.

[Transition]: But let's go one step farther...

- With this power, what difference should we make?
- Let's answer that by seeing that God's **presence** gives us **power** for a **purpose**.
- You are alive with God's presence; You are alive with God's power, and...

3. YOU ARE ALIVE WITH GOD'S PURPOSE

[State]

- In **chp 1** Jesus told the disciples to be his witnesses.
- Now in **chp 2** he empowers them to do the thing he's commanded them to do.
 - In **V4** the HS fills them and enables them to speak in other languages they've never learned.
 - Note two things:

1) First, who hears:

- ⁹ Parthians and Medes and Elamites and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, ¹⁰ Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, ¹¹ both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabians.
- In other words, the nations of the earth!
 - God's people do not come from one nation, tribe, people, or language.
 - God does not show partiality to any country—he came to save the entire world.
- Now that global ingathering begins.
 - The fact that it happens on Pentecost is significant.
 - Pentecost was a festival that celebrated the first fruits of the harvest—that initial batch that showed you more was to come.
 - Here God gathers the first fruits of his global community—that initial batch that shows there's more to come.
 - That great multitude that no one can number, from every nation, tribe, people and language...
 - That will one day stand before the throne.

2) Second, note what the disciples say:

- It's easy to get so caught up in the miracle of tongues that we miss what they had to say.
- But **V11** tells us—in **many languages** they had **one message**.
 - Do you see it there?
 - They all spoke about **the mighty works of God**.
- I can't tell you how much I love this:
 - The HS didn't empower them to declare what their **listeners had to do**: Try harder. Be better. Get your act together. Improve.
 - Instead, the HS empowers them to declare **good news**.
 - God has done amazing things.
 - Now he's sent his Son in love.
 - He died for your sins, but God raised him up...
 - If you believe in him—you'll be forgiven and live.
- **In summary:** They declare the mighty works of God to a world in desperate need.
 - That is the **purpose** of the **power** God gives us through his **presence**.
 - ***Declare the mighty works of God to a world in desperate need.***

[Illustrate]: What does this mean for us?

- The Spirit may not enable us to speak languages we've never studied, as he did at Pentecost—this was a one-time event to show us his purposes.
- But the Spirit does equip us to speak boldly of Jesus.
To declare the mighty works of God to a world in desperate need.

[Apply]

- What would it look like if we did that this week?
 - Who in your life needs to hear it?
 - Will you tell them?
 - Not to try harder. Be better. Get your act together. Improve.
 - But the good news: **the mighty works of God.**
- If the last few weeks have shown us anything, it's that our world is still in desperate need.
 - The world needs the light of the gospel and the warmth it brings.
 - The world needs us to witness to the love and power of our king.

[THE CLOSE]

- And don't miss the encouragement we get in the final verse.
 - The Spirit descends, they speak in miraculous languages, they declare **the mighty works of God**—and what happens?
 - Some respond in awe, but others mock.
 - Some get it. Some don't. But all hear.
 - It's not the disciples' job to change hearts—it's just their job to speak.
- It's the same for us:
 - You don't need a fancy argument, and you don't need all the answers.
 - You just need to tell others what God has done for you.
- Whatever you say:
 - Some will get it. Some won't. But through you, they can hear.
 - It's not our job to change hearts—it's just our job to speak.

[CONCLUSION]

- Have you ever followed Jesus so hard people thought you were drunk?
 - We have the **presence** of God *with* us.
 - We have the **power** of God *in* us.
 - We have the **purpose** of God *through* us.
- Go live a life that can only be explained by the Spirit of God.

That's the church at its best—A spirit-filled community of witnesses to Christ.

[PRAYER]

- Put one person on our hearts.
- Give us the opportunity to speak.
- We resolve now to take it.

RESOURCES AND ENDNOTES

Resources

This list contains some of the resources that were used to prepare this sermon series. Check them out if you want to dig a little deeper.

- John Calvin, *Commentary Upon the Acts of the Apostles*.
- Ray Cortese, *The Mission: Clarified, Mobilized, Empowered*.
- Alan Thompson, *Acts: A Commentary*.

Endnotes

¹ See Tim Keller's sermon, *The Descent of the Spirit*.

² See the article *Hope Through Grace*, accessed [here](#) 9/19/25.

³ See R. C. Sproul, *Sermons from Acts (Acts 2:1-12)*.