

“The Power of the Holy Spirit” – Acts 2:1-13

Do you ever get to the point in your life when you say, “*I just can’t do this*”? I heard the story of the guy who was moving from Alaska to California and about the time he got to California, one of his studded snow tires went flat. So, he limped it into a tire repair shop and the guy got the tire off the car and began to roll it over. He stared at this studded tire and was just shaking his head, with this look of being completely overwhelmed. He finally walked over to the owner and said, “*Mister, I don’t know how to tell you this but you have over a hundred nails in your tire!*”

Some of you may feel like that right now. You have a hundred different things going wrong and you don’t know how to handle any of them. Now, don’t answer out loud but just think about what you do when those times come. Do you freak out? Get drunk? Get high? Get low? Lash out? Roll up in the fetal position and cry?

I think all of us have those times in our lives; some more than others. When that happens, do you ever wish you had someone to just come be with you? And don’t you wish that person was really smart and really wise and could give you good advice about what to do next? Don’t you wish that person was completely trustworthy and only wanted the best for you? I think the perfect person would be someone that would just come along beside you and be there with just what you needed, just when you needed it. Don’t you?

What would you give to have that kind of person in your life? What would you give to have that person with you at all times, in every situation, just waiting for you to ask for help? Would you give your life? I ask that because when you give your life to Jesus, you get more than a religion. You get more than a list of rules, more than a bunch of thou-shalt-nots, more than just a way to Heaven when you die. You literally get One who comes beside.

In **John 14**, Jesus is comforting His disciples because He is about to leave. He is about to be crucified and die and then rise again and ultimately go back to Heaven and sit at the right hand of the Father. Because He is about to leave, He tells them, “*I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever*” (John 14:16).

The Greek word translated here “Counselor” means “one who is called alongside” and has the idea of someone who encourages and exhorts. The Holy Spirit actually takes up permanent residence in the hearts of believers (Romans 8:9; 1 Corinthians 6:19-20, 12:13) (gotquestions.org) and His job is to be our Helper, Comforter, and Guide.

Now, I know of some people who make use of the Holy Spirit in their lives about like some people use their extended car warranties. You know what I mean? Have you ever tried to get something fixed on your car that is under warranty? You sign up and pay extra for a warranty and you find out when your car is in the shop that the warranty doesn’t cover what’s broken. Got a flat tire? Not covered. Got a cracked windshield. Not covered. Headlight out? Nope. Air filter? Nope.

Some people think the Holy Spirit probably only works like that. He’s probably only interested in the big stuff and it’s probably going to be a hassle to use Him, so why even bother? “*I could get help from the Holy Spirit but I’d have to fill out a bunch of forms and it’s probably not worth it.*” But, thankfully, that’s not true. He is there with just a word or even a thought, ready to guide, comfort and help.

I want us to see this morning in a passage from **Acts chapter 2** that when the Holy Spirit shows up, He changes everything. Now, I have to admit that when I started studying this chapter, I had every intention of preaching on verses 22-41 where Peter stands and preaches and tells the people how the cow eats the cabbage. He gets up and speaks the Gospel in such a direct and powerful way that 3,000 people are cut to the heart and come to have a life-changing relationship with God through His Son Jesus.

But, if you know Peter, when you read that passage you know that something about him is different. This is not the same guy that just recently cut off a guy's ear. This is not Peter the loudmouth. This is not Pete the dufus that says the wrong thing and does the wrong thing. This guy has changed and he preaches truth with power! So, what changed? I'm telling you. The Holy Spirit changes everything.

So, let's back up just a little and start with **Acts 2 and verse 1** and let's read through **verse 13**.

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 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."

Just before Jesus left His disciples bodily to go back to Heaven, He told them a couple of things that I guarantee you they didn't understand. In the last few sentences in the book of Luke, Jesus says, *"Repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in my name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things. I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high."*

Let me read that again and this time listen like you are a disciple. *"Repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in my name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things. I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high."*

I just see them squinting at Him, trying to listen and understand what He could possibly have meant. One of them looks at the other one. *"Did you get that last part? I don't know. Something about preaching to all nations and we're getting new clothes or something. I dunno. He lost me."*

They could not have comprehended what was going to happen because they couldn't comprehend being able to do that. Who is going to preach to all the nations? It's sure not us. We can't speak all those different languages, for one. But if we could, none of us are preachers. And what power are we going to get?

But at least they got the part about staying in the city right because it says they were all together in Jerusalem and when that power came on them, it changed everything. Don't you know they said, *"Oh, now I get it!"* They started praising God and people that spoke all different languages understood them. It was a miracle.

In one mighty act, Sovereign God ended one era and started another. He changed everything with the sending of the Holy Spirit. Previously we see the Holy Spirit at work all the way back to creation but He would come for a while and then be gone. With Pentecost, all believers receive the Holy Spirit forever. Some people call that the baptism of the Holy Spirit. I'm not wild about that term because some people take it wrong but let me explain something about it.

The word "baptism" has a literal meaning and a figurative meaning for us. It literally means to be immersed. That's what we do in the baptistry here. We put you under the water. Figuratively it means to be identified with or associated with. When we get the baptism of the Holy Spirit; when we receive the Holy Spirit at our conversion (and all of us do), we are identified with God the Father and His Spirit and Jesus. We are new creations becoming more and more like Him by His power.

But all through scripture, the disciples are described as being filled with the Holy Spirit which was an extra power or an extra manifestation of God in their lives for the purpose of witnessing and spreading the Gospel. As you go through the book of Acts, you see it over and over.

In **Acts 7**, Stephen was described as being filled with the Holy Spirit as he preached and was able to ask God to not hold their sin against them as they stoned him. That is not natural. That is supernatural. In **Acts 8**, Philip was filled with the Spirit and the Spirit told him to go witness to the Ethiopian eunuch. After he laid out the Gospel of Jesus to the guy, the man believed and was baptized and then God snatched Philip away from there and put him in another region of the country. That is not natural. That is supernatural. In **chapter 10**, Peter (a Jew) is filled with the Spirit and leads a Gentile named Cornelius and his whole household to a life-changing relationship with Jesus. That is not natural. That is supernatural.

In **chapter 16**, one of my favorite stories is about Paul and Silas who were...anybody want to guess?...filled with the Spirit and were arrested and put in jail and beaten with their feet put in stocks. And it says in **verse 25** that about midnight, Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God and all the other prisoners were listening. How do you do that? I guarantee you that Paul and Silas did not do that on their own. That was not their natural reaction. That was the supernatural filling of the Holy Spirit that allowed them to do that and in the end the jailer and his whole household were saved because of it.

And then...there's you. If the book of Acts had a chapter written about you, what would it say? Then _____ (fill in your name), filled with the Holy Spirit, got up and drank some coffee, went to work, came home and watched TV, then went to bed. Is that what you want said? Would that be pretty accurate? Would it be accurate to say that you have never made another disciple, baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, teaching them to do what Jesus commanded? That is literally the one, main thing that Jesus instructed us all to be doing while He was gone. It is the Great Commission; the Great Commandment. As you go to work, make disciples. As you go to the store, make disciples. As you go to the gym, the cleaners, the ball game, wherever you go, be intentional about it.

So, we know that we always have the Spirit of God living inside of us but there are times when we are filled with the Spirit. If that is the case, then how do we get filled? What do we have to do to be filled with the Spirit?

Let's say this cup is you. See what a pretty cup it is? It is washed whiter than snow. It has been sanctified, justified, glorified and everything but petrified. It is a beautiful child of God and its home is in glory. The problem is that it is living here on this nasty old earth right now and just being here has gotten it dirty. Do you ever feel that way?

It seems like everywhere you turn there is somebody or something trying to draw you away from God's presence. The lure of this world is strong and pretty soon you realize you have sin in your life. In fact, your life is full of sin just like this cup is full of air. How do you get rid of all the sin that is in your life? Well, you might try pouring a little bit of water into the cup. That's about how much Jesus most of us want in our lives, just a little bit. The problem is, we still have sin and we are not filled with the Spirit and we don't have supernatural power to witness. In fact, we barely have enough power to get out of bed. So, we try a little more Jesus, a little more God, a little more Spirit. Surely that's enough, right?

Do you know what God wants for our lives? God wants to fill us up to overflowing. D.L Moody said, *"I believe firmly that the moment our hearts are emptied of pride and selfishness and ambition and everything that is contrary to God's law, the Holy Spirit will fill every corner of our hearts. But if we are full of pride and conceit and ambition and the world, there is no room for the Spirit of God. We must be emptied before we can be filled."*

We have to empty ourselves of sin, especially the sin of pride which is the thought of, *"Oh, I can do this. I don't need God's help. I got this."* I've told you this before but do you know how every great revival has ever started? I'm not talking

about the planned, week or two week-long revival services with special musicians and ministers showing up. I'm talking about organic, grass-roots, waves of salvations that come over whole states or even countries.

The way those kinds of revivals always start is not with a professional minister. It always starts with one lay person who is sick of his sin and repents and gets filled with the Spirit and starts to pray. That's all the Holy Spirit needs is one person and He can start to move. When that one person says, *"Lord, I want less of me and more of you. I want to say what you want me to say, go where you want me to go and do what you want me to do and if it means I lose friends or make my family mad or get fired from my job, so be it. Lord, I want it to be hard for my friends and my family and my community to go to Hell. Would you please fill me and use me however you see fit?"*

Do you think that person will have their prayer answered? Absolutely. God can work with that person. So, here's the options that you have, as I see it. Assuming that you have accepted Jesus to be your Savior, you could just sit back and enjoy your fire insurance, go to church when it's convenient and pray for help when you need it really bad. You can keep on struggling with your home life and your work life. Your relationships will be a mess. Your peace will be non-existent and hopefully you'll die soon. How's that working out for you so far?

Or you can pray to God like David did in **Psalm 139**, *"Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. 24 See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."* Then be filled with the Spirit and while you will still have problems, you can have peace and joy in the middle of those problems and you will have supernatural power to tell other people how God has changed your life. When the Holy Spirit fills up your life, everything about your life will change. It's always been that way. He changes everything. Will you allow Him to do that in your life right now? Ask God to forgive you of your sins, to fill you and use you like only He can. Do that right now.

If you don't have a relationship with God through His Son Jesus then today is the day of salvation. Again, ask God to forgive you of your sins, repent or turn away from those sins and accept that Jesus is the way, the truth and the life and no man gets to the Father except through Him. He died on the cross to pay the price for your sins that you couldn't pay and all you have to do is believe and allow Him to come in and change you. Do that right now as the music plays.