

Journey Through the New Testament

Acts 1 – 5

“The Spirit Poured Out”

5-12-19

Introduction

The book of Acts is a sequel to the Gospel of Luke. It begins with the ascension of Jesus, the coming of the Spirit at Pentecost, and the formation of the early church. The power of the Holy Spirit advanced the spread of the gospel to other nations so that all people were included in God’s salvation plan.

Pentecost means “fiftieth” in Greek. It was an Old Testament festival celebrating the wheat harvest and showing gratitude to God for the “first fruits,” or early harvest. It was held on the fiftieth day after the first day of Passover. As the disciples met together to celebrate, they were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages. Peter, who had denied Jesus and was later restored, spoke to the crowds with bold authority as he explained the mysterious phenomena of the Galileans speaking in other languages.

Opening Prayer

Lord, we have seen Peter move from believing to betrayal to holy boldness. Open our hearts to receive the power of your Spirit in our lives so that we too will be able to speak your truth with confidence. In Christ we pray. Amen.

Bible Study Acts 2:1-13 (CEB)

What?

1. What happened as the disciples waited together in the house in Jerusalem?
2. Who else heard the sound of the different languages? (v.6)
3. What did the Jews think when they heard all of the commotion? (v. 7-13)

Read Acts 2:14-15, 22-38

1. Peter boldly faced the crowd of perplexed Jews and declared the truth about Jesus. What were Peter’s main points?
2. What was the response of the people who heard Peter’s speech? (v. 36, 37)
3. What did Peter instruct them to do? (v. 38)

Leader Notes: In verses 17-21, 25-28, 34-35 Peter quoted from the Old Testament. Since his audience was primarily Jewish, these words of prophecy would have

been significant to them. Peter interpreted the events as fulfillment of prophecy.
(Commentary, Wesley Study Bible)

So What?

1. So, what made Peter respond in such a bold way as he spoke to the crowds?
2. What is your current understanding of the Holy Spirit?
3. What questions about the Holy Spirit does the story of Pentecost raise for you?
4. What is important for us to learn from the Pentecost story?
5. Have you ever felt that the Holy Spirit empowered you to say or do something? Or that the Spirit encouraged or assured you? Or spoke to you through scripture? Discuss other experiences of courage or power from the Holy Spirit.

Leader Notes: *Holy Spirit* (“wind” or “breath”) refers to the divine, mysterious presence of God in nature, or with individuals and communities, empowering them with qualities they would not otherwise possess. In the New Testament usage, the Holy Spirit represents the presence and activity of God and the continuing presence of Jesus Christ in the church. The Holy Spirit represented both divine presence and guidance for the disciples as they continued their mission. Receiving the Holy spirit brings the gifts needed for Christian ministry. The Holy Spirit makes Christians one in Christ and empowers them for the mission of the church and for living a new life in Christ. (*Harper-Collins Bible Dictionary*)

Now What?

1. Now what is clearer to you as you study Pentecost and the purpose of the Holy Spirit?
2. In what ways could you be more open or aware of the work of the Holy Spirit in your daily life?
3. Acts 2:42 says the believers, “devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching, to the community, to their shared meals, and to their prayers.”
How might this type of devotion help connect us to the work of the Spirit in our lives and in the church?

Closing

Come, Spirit come, our hearts control, our spirits long to be made whole. Let inward love guide every deed; by this we worship and are freed. (The Gift of Love)