

Pentecost Sunday  
Text: Acts 2:1–24  
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Pentecost is the birthday of the Church. The Holy Spirit descends, flames flicker above heads, languages burst forth—and the Church is born.

But let me ask you—when the Spirit came down, did it lead to a quiet, reverent church service?

No. It lit a fire in the people of God, and they took to the streets.

They didn't just go witness. They protested.

And they prophesied.

Acts 2 says they began speaking in every language so everyone could understand. But what were they saying?

Peter wasn't giving a calm sermon with three points and a poem.

He shouted in the streets: "Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God... you crucified and killed!"

Peter wasn't just accusing the powerful. He was calling out the bystanders.

The complicit. The ones who said nothing while justice was nailed to a cross.

That day, the Holy Spirit didn't inspire silence. It inspired boldness.

And Peter quoted Joel:

"In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people.

Your sons and your daughters will prophesy..."

**This wasn't just about men standing up.**

**This was about women, too.**

**Old and young.**

**Slaves and free.**

**Different languages, different cultures, different nations.**

Pentecost was the birth of a new kind of community—a new kind of life: a community where love burned so brightly that property was shared, needs were met, and unity ruled.

The Spirit compelled believers to live fully together—sharing all things, overcoming selfishness, and embodying Jesus’ way of life.

There was Unity in diversity.

Not uniformity. The early church was not exclusive. Love, by nature, grows and includes others. They welcomed all and everyone was empowered to speak, to lead, to prophesy.

“In Acts 2, when the Holy Spirit comes down, people begin speaking in many languages—not to confuse, but to connect.

It’s a reversal of what happened at the Tower of Babel in Genesis 11.

At Pentecost, something amazing happened that reversed the old story of the Tower of Babel. Back then, people tried to make themselves great by uniting under one language and culture, but God stepped in and broke that up by creating many different languages—choosing diversity over forced sameness. But at Pentecost, we see something new: not unity without differences, and not differences without unity, but a beautiful harmony of both. The Spirit of God, we learn, speaks every language—bringing people together without making them all the same. (The road we walk)

Back then, God scattered people by confusing their language. But at Pentecost?

God un-scattered them by speaking every language—through every voice. The spirit of God is multilingual. The **band Mumford & Sons** called one of their albums ‘Babel.’

It’s not just about towers or confusion.

It’s about how **hard it is to find meaning when the world feels divided**—fragmented.

In their song ‘Babel,’ they sing:

**“Like the city that nurtured my greed and my pride,**

**I stretched my arms into the sky...**

**I cry, Babel, Babel, look at me now—**

**The walls of my tower, they come crumbling down.”**

Isn’t that what Pentecost is?

**God crumbling the towers we build**—The towers we build that keep us from God aren’t always made of stone and steel—they’re often internal, symbolic structures we build that separate us from a closer relationship with God:

### **Towers of Pride and Self-Reliance**

Like the Tower of Babel (Genesis 11), we often strive to make a name for ourselves, relying on our own strength and wisdom rather than trusting God.

### **Towers of Control and Comfort**

We construct lives so tightly controlled and comfortable that we leave little room for God.

### **Towers of Busyness and Distraction**

Our schedules, entertainment, and endless to-do lists become modern-day towers—time-consuming monuments that leave little space for stillness before God.

### **Towers of Success and Achievement**

We chase career success, social influence, or even ministry accomplishments, measuring our worth by worldly standards rather than God's calling or presence.

### **Towers of Fear and Insecurity**

Ironically, sometimes our towers are built out of fear—layers of protection we create to avoid vulnerability or pain. But they also block us from receiving God's healing and peace.

### **Towers of Unforgiveness and Bitterness**

These emotional towers isolate us from both people and God. Holding onto past wounds can become a prison we mistake for protection. Forgiving is hard ... I know.

### **Towers of Idolatry (Even of Good Things)**

Anything we love or trust more than God—even family, success, security, or ministry—can become a “tower” of idolatry.

Towers that say, “Only some voices matter.”

At Pentecost, God said: “I will pour out my Spirit on all people.”

And the walls came down. Language was no longer a barrier—it was a blessing.

Diversity was no longer a curse—it was the Church. So maybe the question today **isn't**, “How do we build something impressive?”

Maybe the question is: **“What towers need to fall for the Spirit to move again?”**

Peter wasn't in the pulpit.

He was in the street, shouting, accusing, crying out for justice.

And let's not forget: Jesus turned himself in, with his hands up—and they nailed them.

They crucified him publicly, in broad daylight. The crowd watched. They heard him cry, "I thirst." They saw him struggle to breathe. They saw him go limp. **And they said nothing.**

But now, **filled with the Spirit**, the disciples couldn't be silent anymore.

What changed? The disciples used to be afraid. They ran, they hid, they denied. They went back to fishing.

But now? The Spirit descended—and they stopped believing they were powerless.

They realized: We have God, and we have mouths, and we will speak truth.

And it wasn't just the them -

It says **all of them were filled**. Sons and daughters. Servants and elders.

Everyone who had been silenced was now given a voice.

**That's what the Spirit does.**

It gives the mic to the muted.

It gives dreams to the old and vision to the young.

It builds a church where nobody's gift is left out—and no truth goes untold.

We've **sanitized** Pentecost. We turned Peter's protest into a polite sermon.

We turned the tongues of fire into a church logos. We made it about staying in the upper room instead of rushing into the streets. But if the disciples hadn't protested, would we even know about Pentecost?

The church began as a street movement. A truth-telling, power-challenging, Spirit-led uprising.

Why else was Peter crucified? Why was John exiled? Why was Paul beheaded?

And if your daughters are prophesying, If the servants are speaking,

If the Spirit is falling on all people, Then the systems of injustice are in trouble.

And we've seen Pentecost show up in our time.

**Not in cathedrals**— but the streets with Dr. Martin Luther King spoke of the spirit’s power to overcome hatred and division.

**Not in temples** but after events like 911, or natural disasters or like Hurricane Helene **when people across from different backgrounds often come together to serve, grieve and pray.**

**Not in churches** but outside ICE detention centers.

When pastors, priests, grandmothers, and youth gathered outside those fences—singing hymns in Spanish and English.

Reading Scripture aloud while officers looked on.

Holding up signs that said, “God loves immigrants,” and “You cannot cage the image of God.”

**They weren’t there for politics. They were there for Pentecost.**

Because Pentecost is when the Spirit says: “I will pour out my Spirit on all people...” Not just citizens. Not just those who speak the dominant language.

**All people.** The fire of Pentecost doesn’t check passports.

When the Church gathers at the gates of injustice—

When it says, “These families belong together,”

“These children deserve freedom,”

“These strangers are our neighbors”—

That’s Pentecost still unfolding.

Even when We can’t wrap our minds around- **what is God doing behind the scenes.** The kingdom of God is greater than what is going on at the border, - we are guilty of looking at what is going on right in front of us and instead the bigger picture. **Earthly minds can’t wrap our minds around how the spirit is moving.**

The Spirit **doesn’t come to make us comfortable.** The Spirit comes to set us on fire.

To tell the whole story. That Jesus wasn’t a criminal. He was God’s beloved.

That silence in the face of injustice is complicity. That repentance means more than a prayer—it means transformation.

Peter said his name: Jesus. But when we tell the story, we also remember others:

**Because the story of Pentecost isn’t over.**

Every time we speak truth, **every time we protest injustice, every time we refuse to be silent—we continue what the Spirit started.**

Friends - may Pentecost come again. **Not just in tongues, but in truth.**

Not just in wind, but in witness. Not just in worship—**but in holy protest.**

And may our daughters prophesy. And our sons speak out.

And our elders dream dreams.

And may the Church rise up—**diverse, united, and Spirit-filled.**

And let it be so with us. Amen