

Pray

You are praying for an atmosphere of expectancy and of faith, for the Holy Spirit to freely move in his sovereign and gentle way. No-one needs be worried as the Holy Spirit is a gentleman and knows every person. You may pray for people to see more of God, be more filled / submitted to the Spirit, for spiritual gifts to be released and increased (with people's character following the same pattern!) and for healing.

Read Acts 2.1-20

When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.

Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven. When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard them speaking in his own language. Utterly amazed, they asked: "Are not all these men who are speaking Galileans? Then how is it that each of us hears them in his own native language? Parthians, Medes and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome (both Jews and converts to Judaism Cretans and Arabs—we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues!" Amazed and perplexed, they asked one another, "What does this mean?"

Some, however, made fun of them and said, "They have had too much wine."

Peter Addresses the Crowd

Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd: "Fellow Jews and all of you who live in Jerusalem, let me explain this to you; listen carefully to what I say. These men are not drunk, as you suppose. It's only nine in the morning! No, this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel:

" 'In the last days, God says,

I will pour out my Spirit on all people.

Your sons and daughters will prophesy,
your young men will see visions,
your old men will dream dreams.

Even on my servants, both men and women,

I will pour out my Spirit in those days,
and they will prophesy.

I will show wonders in the heaven above
and signs on the earth below,
blood and fire and billows of smoke.

The sun will be turned to darkness

and the moon to blood
before the coming of the great and glorious day of the Lord.
And everyone who calls
on the name of the Lord will be saved.'

Jesus Promises

Before we start, let's go back in time and think about what we know about the Holy Spirit.

In John and the gospels, Jesus talks plainly to his disciples about the coming Holy Spirit. The disciples can't quite understand (hey, they didn't yet have the Holy Spirit fully to help them understand!!) but Jesus explains some of the work of the Holy Spirit.

So what do we learn from Jesus about the Holy Spirit? Here's just a few things from John chapter 14 and 16..

1. He will be sent because Jesus will ask the Father
2. He is the Counsellor
3. Will be with believers for ever
4. He is truth, and will guide into all truth
5. Only those in who he lives will know and recognise him
6. He will teach all things needed
7. He will remind believers of what Jesus says
8. He will testify about Jesus, helping believers to testify about Jesus
9. Jesus needed to go away (to heaven, temporarily!) so that the Spirit comes to us because Jesus sends him
10. He convicts the world of sin in regard to sin, righteousness and judgment
11. He will speak only what he hears (from God) and will not speak on his own
12. He will reveal what is yet to come
13. He will bring glory to Jesus by taking what is Jesus' and making it known to believers
14. In Acts 1.4-5, 8, Jesus said:

"Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit... But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

Obedience

In John 14.21, Jesus says, "Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves me. He who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love him and show myself to him."

While Jesus was explaining something of him returning to heaven and the Holy Spirit, he revealed to the disciples that those who love Jesus will obey him. He in turn will love them

and show himself to them. So, to have Jesus reveal himself (by his Holy Spirit), we must obey and love Jesus. Question: do you love Jesus?

After Jesus had risen from the dead, he was hanging out with the disciples and eating with them. As we've just seen, this takes place in Acts 1. Here, Jesus tells the disciples to stay in Jerusalem and wait for the gift, the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

I'm sure the disciples didn't exactly know what would happen. But the important thing is that they obeyed. What would have happened if they hadn't bothered to stay together in Jerusalem, but had gone their own way. Who knows how long they waited there. But the fact is that they waited. And on the Day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit came, as Jesus promised. And the disciples received power, as promised. We know this because there was a visible manifestation this had happened, and Peter preached and 3000 were saved.

Jesus is faithful and true.

In Revelation 19.11, we read this: "I saw heaven standing open and there before me was a white horse, whose rider is called Faithful and True."

Question: what has Jesus told you to do? Have you obeyed him? Are you continuing to obey?

Together

The second thing we notice is that the believers were all together in one place. There is tremendous power when believers gather together.

John 17.22-23 says, "I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one: I in them and you in me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me."

On the Day of Pentecost, the believers were together in one place. Being in one place doesn't always mean physically, it means spiritually. When a church or a youth work is unified in purpose, has a vision and moves forward together, there is a great power. Unity does not mean we are all the same, but that we use our varied God-given skills to work together to move forward.

Question: are you and those round you together in one place?

God sends a powerful wind

Many people will know what it's like to be in the middle of a windy day. Others know only too well what it's like to be in the centre of a hurricane or a twister. The destructive power is immense. Some people have tried to harness this wind power with wind farms and wind turbines increasingly littering the British landscape.

On the day of Pentecost, God sent a wind. In 1 Kings 19, we know that God sent a wind to reveal himself to the tired and weary Elijah. This gentle breeze brought him refreshing and redirection. For the disciples many years later, the wind was strong and signified God was about to move significantly. This was a wind that filled the whole house.

Today, we need the wind of God's Spirit to fill our 'houses'. By that I mean we need God to fill our beings. We know from the Bible that we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus. We know that God lives in our hearts and bodies, if we are his people. So, we need to be filled in every part. But more than that, we need the 'house of God' (the church) to be filled with God in every part, in every way. Just think of a church, completely filled with the Holy Spirit. What a mighty army.

Point – let's open up our hearts, personally and as the church, to be filled completely by God's Holy Spirit.

Fire from Heaven

From the Old Testament, we are used to the picture of God speaking as a 'fire' – fire that consumes, burns away, melts, lights up, judges, destroys, purifies.. God spoke to Moses from a burning bush. God brought judgment on Sodom and Gomorrah with fire and brimstone from heaven. God led the people of Israel as a cloud at day and a pillar of fire at night (Exodus 14.21-22). We read in Exodus 19.18-19 that Mount Sinai was covered with smoke because the Lord descended on it in fire – the mountain billowing smoke like from a furnace. The people were to make altars and offer burnt sacrifices to God. In Numbers 11, we have God sending fire to consume parts of the Israelites camp because they were complaining too much.

On the Day of Pentecost, God sent the fire again but this time it was the Holy Spirit, coming to rest on the believers as tongues of fire. Each individual believer had a tongue of fire on them and spoke in a new tongue.

You know what, God knows you intimately. He made you and loves you more than you can know. He delights in those who love, fear and obey him. God has put a tongue of fire on you. He's made you unique, with specific gifts and skills and ways of communicating. You may speak different languages, you may speak different tribal languages (hip-hop, hipster, punk, post rock, reggae.. replace with latest genres...) But God has made you and placed a tongue of fire in your heart for something individual – a passion that others don't share and don't seem to feel as strongly about. That's OK. God's called you to do a specific task in the church and outside its 4 walls.

Question: what has God put inside of you? What is your passion? When are you going to step out and obey him?

Tongues

As we have seen, the believers began to speak in different languages. There was a purpose in this – to communicate with other people groups outside of the Jewish people. However, it was more than this. One of the things that happens when we are 'filled' with the Holy Spirit is that it displays up by a physical action, nearly always something verbal.

One of the gifts (charisma – gift of grace from God) that is available to believers is the gift of tongues. This is nothing to be scared of and is completely within your control. However, if you ask God and step out in faith, he will give you this most awesome gift. This gift will give you a completely new language (how exciting is that?!) that will be able to pray exactly what is on God's heart.

You know that sometimes we struggle to know what to say in prayer? Well, tongues helps as it prays the heart of God and prays the will of God too. We've studied this a bit more in our talk on the Holy Spirit.. (Talks > Holy Spirit).

Question: will you ask God to give you the gift of tongues today? Step out in faith, maybe on your own and try to speak as God leads. Don't worry, it may sound like gibberish at first. But then you will notice that something happens as God releases new words. Over time, like any language student, you will be able to verbalise new words and new patterns! For example, God has given me the ability to rap in tongues. You may well be able to sing in tongues too!

The Results of the Holy Spirit

The initial results of the Holy Spirit were that people thought the disciples were mad or were drunk! The people are described as being 'bewildered', 'utterly amazed' and 'perplexed'! This was no ordinary outpouring of God's power. This was something extraordinary. This drew a crowd who were confused and left profoundly impacted by the whole thing!

God is a God who makes big changes, does big things and really impacts people. I can testify to that about my life and how God changed me. There are many stories out there of God working miraculously in people's lives. But even if your experience isn't so visibly dramatic, God has done something incredible in you. If you believe in Jesus, he has taken you and made you completely new. As you grow in your faith, he will make the new part of you ever brighter, whiter and fresher. And people around will notice – they'll be bewildered and amazed.

Peter Preaches

Peter then got up to preach. He quoted from a book in the Bible that many Jews would have heard and known well. He spoke about the last days, of visions and dreams and prophecies.

You are in this generation. The generation of prophecies, visions and dreams. You will be given new ideas, ways of doing things, passions, dreams. Today, God is looking to see who is in tune with him, who is listening and wants more, more of his Holy Spirit – to be a visionary, an apostle, a servant of an Almighty and Powerful God who transforms lives, neighbourhoods, towns and nations. Are you ready?

Some of you don't know this Jesus. But he has promised that anyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. Be saved from what? From the darkness and trouble that this world brings; from the emptiness and void that is the way the world sees and does things; saved from an eternity without light, life, hope, excitement, dreams; from a life that is meaningless; from a new heaven and a new earth which is beyond anything you can possibly imagine.

Today, will you step up and say I want to Jesus to come into my life and change me forever. I'm ready to go on the journey of life. I'm going to follow Jesus no matter what the cost. I'm going to live a life worth living.

Prayer to End

During this time, maybe have options for different people to respond in different ways, both believers and not yet believers.

One response idea is to buy some candles. If someone wants more of God in their life, they can light a candle to signify this.