

SERMON DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

May 22, 2022

I Will Pour Out My Spirit “Infilling of the Holy Spirit” Acts 2:1-13 Rev. Mike Fordham

Maybe you heard earlier this month about a special find that an antique dealer, Laura Young, discovered back in 2018, at an Austin, Texas Goodwill store. Young came across this hefty, 52-pound, Roman-looking marble bust priced at only \$34.99. At that price she figured she was getting a pretty good deal and bought it and brought it home buckled into the seatbelt in her car. Young had a hunch it was probably worth more than what she paid for it. She discovered, much to her shock, it was worth far more than just \$35. Four years after she bought it, a Sotheby’s consultant looked at it and determined that it was, in fact, a priceless, 2,000-year-old, marble Julio-Claudian-era Roman bust. The priceless bust can now be seen on display at the San Antonio Museum of Art, where it will remain for a year, after which it will go back home to Germany, from where it disappeared following World War II. For the past 80 years, it seems no one knew how valuable this marble bust was and most seemed to handle it as just another knickknack to hold up some books or add to the decorations of a home. We cannot put a price on the importance of the role of the Holy Spirit in the life of a Christian, the local church, and the church worldwide of all time. The Holy Spirit is not just some knickknack of our journey with God. The Holy Spirit’s value in our lives based on the role the Spirit serves is absolutely priceless. The next three weeks, leading up to Pentecost, we will walk through a short sermon series on the significance of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, especially as it is described in Acts 2.

Acts 2:1-13

On the day of Pentecost^a all the believers were meeting together in one place. ² Suddenly, there was a sound from heaven like the roaring of a mighty windstorm, and it filled the house where they were sitting. ³ Then, what looked like flames or tongues of fire appeared and settled on each of them. ⁴ And everyone present was filled with the Holy Spirit and began speaking in other languages,^b as the Holy Spirit gave them this ability.

⁵ At that time there were devout Jews from every nation living in Jerusalem. ⁶ When they heard the loud noise, everyone came running, and they were bewildered to hear their own languages being spoken by the believers.

⁷ They were completely amazed. “How can this be?” they exclaimed. “These people are all from Galilee, ⁸ and yet we hear them speaking in our own native languages! ⁹ Here we are—Parthians, Medes, Elamites, people from

Mesopotamia, Judea, Cappadocia, Pontus, the province of Asia, ¹⁰ Phrygia, Pamphylia, Egypt, and the areas of Libya around Cyrene, visitors from Rome ¹¹ (both Jews and converts to Judaism), Cretans, and Arabs. And we all hear these people speaking in our own languages about the wonderful things God has done!" ¹² They stood there amazed and perplexed. "What can this mean?" they asked each other.

¹³ But others in the crowd ridiculed them, saying, "They're just drunk, that's all!"

THE PROMISE OF THE FATHER'S GIFT

After Jesus rose from the dead, Jesus visited his followers for 40 days proving to them that He physically rose from the dead. At the end of those 40 days, Jesus then ascended back to heaven where He is to this day doing His great work over the Kingdom of God. On one of the occasions Jesus was visiting with the disciples, this is what happened according to Acts 1:4-5, *"⁴ Once when he was eating with them, he commanded them, 'Do not leave Jerusalem until the Father sends you the gift he promised, as I told you before. ⁵ John baptized with water, but in just a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.'"* Jesus tells the disciples to wait in Jerusalem until their Heavenly Father sends them this special gift that God has promised to send them. When did God promise to send them the gift of the Holy Spirit? If we read the Old Testament carefully, we will discover many places where God promises to send the Holy Spirit. Peter quotes one of the promises from God found in Joel 2:28-29 that says, *"²⁸ 'Then, after doing all those things, I will pour out my Spirit upon all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy. Your old men will dream dreams, and your young men will see visions. ²⁹ In those days I will pour out my Spirit even on servants—men and women alike.'"* One other powerful sample of God's promise of the gift of the Holy Spirit is in Ezekiel 36:26-27, *"²⁶ And I will give you a new heart, and I will put a new spirit in you. I will take out your stony, stubborn heart and give you a tender, responsive heart. ²⁷ And I will put my Spirit in you so that you will follow my decrees and be careful to obey my regulations."* These 2 promises among the others in the Old Testament was God saying that one day in the future God would send the Holy Spirit to work in a new way. When God does pour out His Spirit on that day, no longer would the Holy Spirit only come temporarily into a few select individuals for certain tasks as the Spirit did in the Old Testament. On that day God will send the Holy Spirit to fill all people from all walks of life who are followers of God. God will then live within all His followers, doing His miraculous work in and through them and through Holy Spirit will never leave them. Jesus then tells His disciples that this special day is now quickly approaching. They are to wait for God to send them the gift of the Spirit.

I've shared with you before that my wife Missy, and I love to travel. It is our goal to try every year to take some of our vacation time travelling to a place we have never been to before. After some of our more notable, once-in-a-lifetime trips have created photo albums. One of the most obvious formats to these albums is that when a person picks them up to look at the album, they will be able to follow our trip every step of the way

from beginning to end with just the right pictures and comments to give a taste of the highlights of the trip. With each page turned a person discovers more and more of the story of the trip, and there are many stories to tell from each trip. Wouldn't it have been awesome for the disciples to put together a photo album of their journey with Jesus over those three years? What a phenomenal addition that would make to what we already have in the Bible. Jesus was telling the disciples just before He went back home to heaven, that the story of His life and ministry with them is not over. There is another page to be turned in their journey as His followers and if they thought Jesus' life, death, and resurrection was full of amazing, life-changing events, hold on because there is more to come. They are actually going to be firsthand witnesses as they will be the ones who will have the Holy Spirit poured out upon and within them by their Heavenly Father. One of the reasons Jesus has to leave them is so He can send the Holy Spirit. The outpouring of the Holy Spirit will be another game-changer in their lives just as was Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection.

LIFE-CHANGING PRAYER MEETING:

When Jesus then left the disciples to go back to heaven, what then did the disciples do? We are told in Acts 1, after Jesus left the disciples, 120 of Jesus' followers, which included the original 11 disciples and other men and women, met in the upper room of the place where the disciples were staying in Jerusalem. There in that upper room they were together for about ten days. *Acts 1:14* says "*They all met together and were constantly united in prayer....*" The disciples still did not fully comprehend what was to come. They simply obeyed Jesus' final instructions to them to wait in Jerusalem until the Holy Spirit is poured out. Men, women, and presumably some young people spent time together those ten days waiting for God to do a new work in their lives. They really had no idea what was to come but they obediently put themselves in a place where they were ready to receive the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. This was a special time they set aside to seek what God had for the next chapter of their lives as followers of Jesus. They were all united around seeking God's presence more than anything else. Presumably this time of prayer included all kinds of elements such as praise, worship, thanksgiving, adoration, confession, and intercession, much like we would have today in a prayer meeting or worship service. They were making themselves available to receive whatever this pouring out of the Holy Spirit would be.

Are you the kind of person who, when you go to sleep at night, you fall asleep as soon as your head hits the pillow or does it take you a while to settle in and go to sleep? It usually takes me a bit of time when I go to bed to fall to sleep. Interestingly, in James Smith's book, *Imagining the Kingdom*, he says what happens as we try to go to sleep at night is similar to receiving the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives. Smith writes, "I cannot choose to fall asleep. The best I can do is choose to put myself in a posture and rhythm that welcomes sleep. I lie down in bed, on my left side, with my knees drawn up; I close my eyes and breath slowly, putting my plans out of my mind. But the power of my will or consciousness stops there. I want to go to sleep, and I've chosen to climb into bed—but in another sense sleep is not something under my control or at my beckoned call. I call up the visitation of sleep by imitating the breathing and posture of a sleeper There is

a moment when sleep ‘comes’ settling on this imitation of itself which I have been offering to it, and I succeed in becoming what I was trying to be. Sleep is a gift to be received, not a decision to be made. And yet it is a gift that requires a posture of reception—a kind of active welcome.”

So also, when we come together each Sunday morning, is what the early disciples celebrated together every week as resurrection day. It is meant to be a kind of upper room experience for us where we prepare ourselves to hopefully receive what the Holy Spirit has for us. Worship should be more than anything else a time where we eagerly come together to seek the face of God, to know God more intimately, to yield ourselves to God to have His way in our lives. A worship service is not a time to do church business or anything else other than humbling ourselves before God, longing for His Holy Spirit to move among us as we are gathered together. Interestingly, former British Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher, put it this way when she said, “When Christians meet...their purpose is not—or should not be—to ascertain what is the mind of the majority, but what is the mind of the Holy Spirit—something which may be quite different.”

THE OUTPOURING OF THE GIFT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

What then happened when these 120 followers of Jesus prayerfully poised themselves to receive the Holy Spirit? Centuries of God’s people waiting for the day God would pour out His Holy Spirit finally happened. It took place on the Jewish festival called Pentecost, which is celebrated 50 days after Passover, the Jewish festival when Jesus was crucified. Needless to say, the experience of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in that upper room exceeded all expectations. As Luke writes here in Acts, after they had been praying during those ten days together in that upper room, Luke then gives us one word in verse 2, “*Suddenly.*” Out of nowhere after these ten days, God shows up in a big way. All of a sudden, they hear what sounds like a strong wind from a Florida hurricane come rushing into that room. Then they look at each other and what looks like to be tongues of fire are resting on top of all their heads and they begin to hear each other praising God in a wide variety of languages unknown to them. I would say that was a pretty impressive and definitely unexpected entrance of the Holy Spirit.

God liberally poured out His Spirit on and into each and every one of those 120 followers of Jesus and their lives were never the same again. They were spiritually brought to life by the wind or the breath of the Holy Spirit. God performed spiritual CPR on their spirits, and they were instantly connected to God through the Holy Spirit now filling them to overflowing. When we come together seeking to know God and His will, we experience the movement of the Holy Spirit in mysterious and unexpected ways as the Spirit moves as the Spirit desires. Jesus said about the work of the Holy Spirit in *John 3:5-8*, “⁵ Jesus replied, ‘I assure you, no one can enter the Kingdom of God without being born of water and the Spirit. ⁶ Humans can reproduce only human life, but the Holy Spirit gives birth to spiritual life. ⁷ So don’t be surprised when I say, “You must be born again.” ⁸ The wind blows wherever it wants. Just as you can hear the wind but can’t tell where it comes from or where it is going, so you can’t explain how people are born

of the Spirit.” The surprising, serendipitous work of the Holy Spirit came unexpectedly and changed their lives in every way possible and the Holy Spirit is still doing the same work in the lives of women and men of all ages, nations and races who follow Jesus and humbly make ourselves available to the will of the Holy Spirit.

Pastor David Hansen writes of our need to make ourselves available to the work of the Holy Spirit as he writes, “I live near a river. Fish live in it, and the willowy river bottom is home to mice and mountain lions. From my kitchen window, I watch bald eagles, ospreys, golden eagles, and hawks. These birds of prey ride the wind. It doesn't take much energy on their part. However, when geese fly, they must (expend energy by) flapping their wings, but birds of prey soar by catching currents. Birds of prey seek thermals; columns of warm air that rise from the earth filled with energy. The birds glide on the heated currents of air. A good thermal can lift them high into the sky without so much as a single flap of their wings. From their higher place they can see more ground and can fly longer and farther, and when the time comes to dive on their prey, they can plummet with great speed. As I watch these birds, I think of pastoral ministry. I too seek thermals. The Spirit lifts, gives vision, direction, and power. Ministry is riding on the free winds of the Spirit that lift us to heights we cannot climb on our own. We can't stay in the air very long on our own strength, but we can seek thermals. Our soul-wings are made large that we might catch the Spirit.” Although Pastor Hansen is writing this about his ministry, these words apply to all followers of Jesus as we are called to prayerfully yield ourselves to the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives and as we do God will do the unexpected in and through our lives.

The Holy Spirit is here today moving in ways we do not know. Our role is to humbly yield ourselves to whatever the Holy Spirit wills to do in our lives. God will then have His way in us, and His work will exceed all expectations.

Romans 11:33,36, “³³ Oh, how great are God's riches and wisdom and knowledge! How impossible it is for us to understand his decisions and his ways! . . . ³⁶ For everything comes from him and exists by his power and is intended for his glory. All glory to him forever! Amen.”

Icebreaker I – Have you ever discovered an unexpected treasure at a thrift or antique store? What was it and how did it make you feel?

Icebreaker II – Are you the kind of person who, when you go to sleep at night, you fall asleep as soon as your head hits the pillow, or does it take you a while to settle in and go to sleep?

1. Have you ever traveled where you did not speak the language? What happened?
2. Why did God wait until Pentecost, a Jewish harvest festival, to give the Holy Spirit?
3. How far have these pilgrims come (verses 9 – 11)?
4. What attracts them to the disciples?
5. How does being filled with the Spirit relate to bearing witness to Jesus?

6. Would you respond more like those in verse 12, or those in verse 13?
7. Have you ever seen the gift of tongues used this way? Another way?
8. When have you experienced an empowering from God to witness about Christ?
9. How is it with your soul?
10. What are your struggles and successes?
11. How might the Holy Spirit and Scriptures be speaking in your life?
12. How can this group pray for you this week?