

## NORTH MAIN SERMON MAY 19, 2024 .. Pentecost Sunday

### Acts 1:12-14

<sup>12</sup> Then the apostles returned to Jerusalem from the hill called the Mount of Olives, a Sabbath day's walk<sup>[a]</sup> from the city. <sup>13</sup> When they arrived, they went upstairs to the room where they were staying. Those present were Peter, John, James and Andrew; Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew; James son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot, and Judas son of James. <sup>14</sup> They all joined together constantly in prayer, along with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brothers.

### Acts 2: 1-24

When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place.<sup>2</sup> Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. <sup>3</sup> They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. <sup>4</sup> All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues<sup>[a]</sup> as the Spirit enabled them.

<sup>5</sup> Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven. <sup>6</sup> When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard their own language being spoken. <sup>7</sup> Utterly amazed, they asked: "Aren't all these who are speaking Galileans?" <sup>8</sup> Then how is it that each of us hears them in our native language? <sup>9</sup> Parthians, Medes and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia,<sup>[b]</sup> <sup>10</sup> Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome <sup>11</sup> (both Jews and converts to Judaism); Cretans and Arabs—we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues!" <sup>12</sup> Amazed and perplexed, they asked one another, "What does this mean?" <sup>13</sup> Some, however, made fun of them and said, "They have had too much wine."

<sup>14</sup> 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. <sup>15</sup> These people are not drunk, as you suppose. It's only nine in the morning! <sup>16</sup> No, this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: <sup>17</sup> “‘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. <sup>18</sup> 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 heavens above and signs on the earth below, blood and fire and billows of smoke. <sup>20</sup> The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and glorious day of the Lord. <sup>21</sup> And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.’<sup>[c]</sup>

<sup>22</sup> “Fellow Israelites, listen to this: Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders and signs, which God did among you through him, as you yourselves know. <sup>23</sup> This man was handed over to you by God's deliberate plan and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men,<sup>[d]</sup> put him to death by nailing him to the cross. <sup>24</sup> But God raised him from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him.

The Word of God...

### **Sometimes Life Takes Your Breath Away..**

Today is Pentecost, one of the 4 major festivals of the church year. Today we celebrate the coming of God's spirit, the Holy Spirit into the lives of men and women, today we celebrate the birthday of the church of Jesus Christ. Despite the good news of the resurrection, the post-Easter disciples were a rather tentative bunch. They had lost their Leader. There was dissension all around them. They were understandably afraid, for their friend and teacher had just been executed by the government. Into their already turbulent lives blew the life-changing wind of the Holy Spirit. But as promised in John, the Advocate empowers, comforts, encourages, and strengthens the disciples. To claim the same gifts today, we need only give our fears to the Wind, and open our lives to be transformed.

The church was empowered on Pentecost for people with a purpose. That purpose remains to invite everybody to experience the good news through

faith in Jesus. Our Lord doesn't want anybody left behind. That's why he came in Jesus and continues to come through his Holy Spirit. He wants us to cross the finish line together. He wants us to be so amazed that it takes our breath away. And when that happens we can call ourselves Pentecostal people.

Today we need the fervor, fire, tongues, passion, and Spirit of Pentecost. Today the Christian Church needs a rebirth of the spirit, where souls are on fire with the love of Christ, where barriers are broken down and superficial divisions which sequester and divide people are bridged through a unity of the Spirit. Today more than ever the church needs to recapture the fires of Pentecost so that souls can break free from bondage, and healing, deliverance, and the full power of God's anointing can be experienced in every medium and every idiom by people filled with Holy Ghost madness.

Too many people today are devoid of the Spirit of Pentecost because they are tired and worn out, quiet and subdued..tired of the challenge to do something new and exciting. Sometimes, we are just tired of the conflict that getting involved creates for us. Sometimes we are without the excitement that speaks of a crucified, died and risen Lord, the church seems to be out of touch and have become less and less of a place for praise for a living God. The spirit of Pentecost is lost to many! They have lost their enthusiasm. They have lost their joy for Jesus. Pentecost marks the beginning of a new spiritual movement in Christ; a movement birthed through the fires of the Holy Spirit; a movement steeped in the spirit of hope, renewal, and spiritual transformation. It is a movement where souls are on fire with the passion of the Holy Spirit and the Church today more than ever needs to recapture that spirit. If the Church is to survive we need to put the fire of Pentecost back into the Church. The spiritual energy and vitality of Pentecost is needed today more than ever. How many of us have prayed to God to just help us get through the day. We have no energy left for the fight that we need in us to keep going. We understand that praying in Jesus' name is much more about our motivation and intention than it is about specific wording used in the prayer itself. The Holy Spirit is God's way of being with us after Jesus was no longer with us. So, on Pentecost, we remember that God is with us always, in every situation. The disciples had found out what the world does to God. If God came and lived here, what would happen to God? That, for them, was no longer a hypothetical question. They saw. It was

hideous. It took away all their courage, hope, and peace. Their heartrending experience of Jesus' humiliation and death had left them lifelessly limp in body, mind, and spirit. Their self-knowledge of their denial and abandonment of Jesus was enough to leave them drowning in awful awareness of their own sin forever. How could they recover from all that? The only thing to do after all that is to lock yourself in and throw away the key. But God Wanted to Give them a Second Wind.

On the day of Pentecost, in the year A.D. 30, 120 followers of a man named Jesus were gathered together in Jerusalem. Suddenly the Spirit of God filled each one of them and marked them with tongues of fire. On that day the Church was born. But no historian of the time saw anything significant in that event.

Those 120 disciples were just a handful of rather ordinary men and women, a few fishermen, a couple of housewives, a former tax collector, a few farmers and some servant girls. Yet through these ordinary people God built a Church which has lasted now for over 2,000 years. Imagine today you are with the disciples in the upper room. In a very short time life for the disciples was going to fall in. Their world was going to collapse in chaos around them. You are hiding there not knowing what to expect. Jesus has ascended into heaven and you are told to go to the upper and wait. Wait for what? Jesus said the Counselor would come. Jesus said the Spirit would come. You wait. You wonder what it will be like when this spirit comes? You wait, you pray, you wait some more. You start to feel impatience growing within you. Then you hear it. A small wind, a larger wind. Then an even larger wind blows into the room. Can you imagine the shock? The absolutely breath taking experience. There he is! Suddenly, unaccountably, through those locked doors, he "came and stood among them". And he said, "Peace be with you." He said it twice. He showed them the still clearly visible signs of the terrible injury the world and they had done to him. But he came back to them, filled with peace and new life. He told them to go and finish his work. He told them they were to go back out again. He'd been sent out in the first place by God, knowing what he was in for from the start. They should not be caught mummified in the webs of humiliation and despair. There were peace and empowerment that did not depend at all on what the world did. They could have both from him, just as he had both from God.

The wind, the breath of God which came to that upper room, also visits each of us. We are filled with that wind. Sometimes, we ignore it. Sometimes we are so lost we cannot feel it. Sometimes we allow it to move us. No matter what we do, the wind of God, the breath of God dwells in us. The God who originally "breathed the breath of life" could do it again, and did, and that was their second wind. The new birth carried with it not just physical breathing, but the Holy Spirit, who sanctified the life by reviving it consciously and so lifting it to a higher level of awareness of the gift. God's Second Wind Brings New Power for Living. To be forgiven in that way, by the God you have denied outside and inside yourself, who nevertheless came back to revive you again! That is the second wind that helped them to live the Pentecost feeling and get back out there to do the work Jesus told them to do. After the pain of all they had seen, and not knowing what they were going to with their very lives, God was back. Standing in their midst, despite all obstacles.

That purpose prompted Peter to preach, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved". Everyone is invited and included through faith. It doesn't matter who, what, where, or when. That's the church's good news. That's the purpose of the church. That's why our Lord gave power to his people. That's why we have wind and fire on Pentecost. The Holy Spirit came in the form of flames to the Apostles and they could talk in different languages. This is why today is such an exciting day for us.. it's the birthday of the church of Jesus Christ.... maybe today will be the birthday of a new and different church for us, we may or may not like the new church.. but.. just maybe being the church and going to church from now on will take your breath away. Think of your membership in this church like this. I'm with a global enterprise. We have branches in every country in the world. We have our representatives in nearly every parliament and board room on earth. We're into motivation and behavior alteration. We run hospitals, feeding stations, crisis centers, universities, publishing houses, and nursing homes. We care for our clients from birth to death. We perform spiritual transformation. Our original Organizer owns all the real estate on earth plus an assortment of galaxies and constellations. He knows everything and lives everywhere. Our product is free for the asking. Our CEO was born in a hick town, worked as a carpenter, didn't own a home, never went to college, was misunderstood by his family, hated by enemies, walked on water, was condemned to death without a trial, and arose from the dead—and we can talk with him every day. The church is the most amazing organization in the world! And

you and I are part of it, not because we did anything, "but the Holy Spirit calls us by the Gospels to be part of it. We are welcomed again this morning to the Pentecost event. The second wind came to the disciples giving them courage and power to go forth in Jesus' name. The second wind has come for each of us.. As Jesus said to his disciples... Peace I leave with you. My peace I give to you; not as the world gives, it is what I give to you. Don't let your heart be troubled, neither let it be fearful do not be afraid for I am with you always. Be Pentecostal people, go forth and spread the good news . Think of today as the day the disciples decided to walk with you also as Jesus told them to do. This isn't the end of the story. It's just the beginning.        Amen