

## The Wonderful Work Of God's Holy Spirit.

Text: Acts 2:1-13

Suggested Hymns:

131, 127, 122, 286, 134

1) His Special Wonderful Work Upon The  
Disciples Of Christ

2) His General Wonderful Work Among Men

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all. Amen.

The text for our sermon today is Acts 2:1-13, <sup>1</sup> *When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.* <sup>2</sup> *And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting.* <sup>3</sup> *Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them.* <sup>4</sup> *And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.*

<sup>5</sup> *And there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men, from every nation under heaven.* <sup>6</sup> *And when this sound occurred, the multitude came together, and were confused, because everyone heard them speak in his own language.*

<sup>7</sup> *Then they were all amazed and marveled, saying to one another, "Look, are not all these who speak Galileans?"* <sup>8</sup> *And how is it that we hear, each in our own language in which we were born?* <sup>9</sup> *Parthians and Medes and Elamites, those dwelling in Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia,* <sup>10</sup> *Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya adjoining Cyrene, visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes,* <sup>11</sup> *Cretans and Arabs — we hear them speaking in our own tongues the wonderful works of God."*

<sup>12</sup> *So they were all amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, "Whatever could this mean?"* <sup>13</sup> *Others mocking said, "They are full of new wine."* (NKJV)

Lord God, heavenly Father, sanctify us through Your truth. Your Word is truth. Amen.

Dear friends in Christ,

We just sang these words,<sup>1</sup>

Come, Holy Spirit, come,  
Let Thy bright beams arise;  
Dispel the sorrow from our minds,  
The darkness from our eyes!

On the day of Pentecost the Spirit of joy should reign supreme in the Christian's heart. We should forget our sorrows, and let the Spirit of God have full sway to fill us with gladness; for this is one of the great joyful festivals of the Church.

There are three great festivals with messages of joy, Christmas, Easter, and Pentecost. On Christmas Day the joyful message is proclaimed: Christ is born! And what a powerful effect this message has upon the world! The whole world is turned into a sea of gladness, and the advent of the Saviour from sin is hailed with songs of joy by young and old.

On the day of Easter we hear the joyful message: He is risen! And this glorious message thrills our hearts after the long Lenten season, and after the doleful account of our Saviour's death on Good Friday! How glad are we to know that our Saviour's great work for us has not been in vain, that death could not hold Him, that the Father in heaven has accepted His work, and that, as He was delivered for our offences, so He was raised again for our justification.

And what is the great message of Pentecost? The Holy Spirit has come; the Spirit whom Christ promised to His disciples; the Spirit who was to guide them into all truth, tell them things to come, and glorify Jesus; the Spirit without whom no man is saved, because by nature we are all dead in trespasses and sin,<sup>2</sup> and cannot believe in our Saviour Jesus; the Spirit but for whose coming the entire work of our Saviour would have been done in vain; the Spirit who makes believers, who calls us by the Gospel, enlightens us with His gifts, sanctifies and keeps us in the true faith.

Must not this glorious message, that the Holy Spirit has come, and that now salvation can be applied to us, fill our hearts with utmost joy?

The Holy Spirit's work is a most wonderful thing. In His work we meet with wonders everywhere. Miraculous was His descent upon the disciples, miraculous were His gifts to them, and all that the Spirit of God does among men is most wonderful.

Let us consider with His gracious help, *The Wonderful Work Of God's Holy Spirit*. May the Lord bless our meditation.

### **1. His Special Wonderful Work Upon The Disciples Of Christ.**

We read, <sup>1</sup> *When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.* All were with one accord in one place. Who were they? In the foregoing chapter we are told that after the Lord's ascension the disciples returned to Jerusalem, and there continued with prayer and supplication in an upper room where they were staying.

Not only the eleven disciples were thus daily assembled, but all who believed in the Lord Jesus, including the women of Galilee and the mother of Jesus.<sup>3</sup> This assembly elected another man, Matthias,<sup>4</sup> in Judas Iscariot's place, and the number of all is placed at about one hundred and twenty.<sup>5</sup>

These were the disciples of Christ upon whom the Holy Spirit performed His wonderful work on the day of Pentecost. There were men and women, aged and young; scribes and lawyers like Nicodemus, and unlettered fishermen of Galilee; rich men like Joseph of Arimathea, and poor men who depended on the support of others.

And what was the Holy Spirit's wonderful work upon the disciples? We read, <sup>2</sup> *And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting.* <sup>3</sup> *Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them.* Was not this most wonderful?

The disciples were certainly expecting something extraordinary. Daily they were waiting for the Holy Spirit and praying for Him to come. The Lord Jesus had given them the most distinct promise that He would send them the Comforter, the Spirit of Truth who would guide them into all truth, and had commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, when they would be baptised with the Holy Spirit.<sup>6</sup>

But how surprised they must have been when, at last, the Holy Spirit came! How wonderfully He came! There was a sound from heaven. Not the sound of a voice as when Jesus was baptised in the river Jordan, or when Saul was converted on the way to Damascus. But it was a sound of a rushing mighty wind, as if a tornado was approaching. Coming from a far distance, the sound grew louder

and louder, and the invisible cause producing the sound made straight for the house where the disciples were assembled.

There it reached its destination. It did not go further. It filled the house where they were sitting. And though the rushing mighty wind filled the house, it did not wreck the house, and not a single disciple was injured. How wonderful was all this!

But the greatest wonder appeared on the disciples. A flame shot up upon the head of each of them, a flame which burned, and stayed for some time, and yet did not singe a hair upon their heads. Here John the Baptist's prediction was fulfilled who said that Jesus would baptise with the Holy Spirit and with fire.<sup>7</sup>

And these divided tongues as of fire upon their heads were but an indication of what was going on within them. For we are told, <sup>4</sup> ***And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit.*** The Holy Spirit took full possession of them. He filled them. As with a flash of lightning He enlightened their understanding, and imparted to them a perfect knowledge of Christ's great redemptive work. He dispelled from their minds every trace of fear so that no more they sought refuge behind closed and bolted doors. He filled them with a sacred enthusiasm, and with a holy zeal to do their Master's work.

But the most wonderful part of the Holy Spirit's work upon the disciples was that they ***began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.*** How could these Galileans, unlearned fishermen that most of them were, stand up and speak in foreign languages, in other tongues which they had never learned? This was a miracle indeed which has no parallel.

We are told, <sup>5</sup> ***And there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men, from every nation under heaven.*** <sup>6</sup> ***And when this sound occurred, the multitude came together, and were confused, because everyone heard them speak in his own language.***

The disciples did not stand up and speak all at once in one chorus, as though they were singing a hymn, so that the people coming together recognised their own native language from the medley of sounds. Then the miracle would have been on the part of the people.

No; the miracle was on the part of the disciples, whom the Spirit gave utterance. They, most likely each one of them, collected groups of men around them and spoke to these groups in the languages of the land from which the people came.

Here stood Matthew addressing the Parthians in Syriac, there John speaking to the Cretes in Greek, there Andrew conversing with the Egyptians in the language spoken at the Nile, and so forth.

And when they had finished in one language, they would go to others and proclaim the great works of God in Jesus Christ in another language. Such was the Holy Spirit's special wonderful work upon the disciples on the day of Pentecost.

Nothing like it has ever been witnessed in the world. No wonder, as we are told, that *"the multitude came together, and were confused, because everyone heard them speak in his own language."*

## **2. His General Wonderful Work Among Men.**

And now, in the second place, let us briefly consider the Holy Spirit's general wonderful work among men.

With the disciples of Christ the Holy Spirit did something special on the day of Pentecost. He performed upon them a profound miracle. He gave them extraordinary gifts. The entire early history of the Christian Church is marked by special extraordinary gifts of the Spirit.

Speaking with tongues, foretelling the future, performing miracles, were common things in the first Christian congregations. After the introduction of Christianity these extraordinary gifts have become almost extinct in the Christian Church. Rarely does the Spirit of God manifest Himself by some extraordinary gift in the believer.

But the general work of the Holy Spirit among men is no less wonderful. What the Holy Spirit does among men is exemplified in the multitude of whom our text speaks. We are told, <sup>7</sup> *Then they were all amazed and marveled, saying to one another, "Look, are not all these who speak Galileans?"* <sup>8</sup> *And how is it that we hear, each in our own language in which we were born?* <sup>9</sup> *Parthians and Medes and Elamites, those dwelling in Mesopotamia, Judea and*

*Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia,<sup>10</sup> Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya adjoining Cyrene, visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes,<sup>11</sup> Cretans and Arabs — we hear them speaking in our own tongues the wonderful works of God.”*

The wonderful work which the Holy Spirit performed on these men coming from different countries and speaking so many different languages was, that He converted them to Christ.

While the Apostles were proclaiming to them the wonderful works of God, how in Jesus Christ, God the Father had sent to them His beloved Son to save them from sin and eternal death, the Holy Spirit was already beginning to turn their minds so that, as we are told, *“<sup>12</sup> So they were all amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, “Whatever could this mean?””*

And afterwards, when Peter had preached to them his great Pentecost sermon, *“they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, “Men and brethren, what shall we do?”<sup>38</sup> Then Peter said to them, “Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins.”<sup>8</sup>*

Thus they were truly converted, and received the Holy Spirit, as many as three thousand souls on this one day. Can there be a more wonderful work than the conversion of a sinner? Does it not seem to be an utterly impossible thing that man, as he is today, since Adam’s fall, born in sin, totally depraved, dead in sin, should become alive in Christ Jesus, that his very heart should be changed, that he should be made a new creature, seeking the things that are above, with heavenly thoughts and desires?

Yet this is what the Holy Spirit can do, and He alone can do it. Do not resist Him, do not oppose Him as He pleads with you, and He will perform upon you the wonderful work and give you a new heart.

And the means by which the Holy Spirit performs His gracious work to this day is the Word of God and the Holy Sacraments. The men in our text had the wonderful works of God proclaimed to them, and then they were baptised, and afterwards they *“continued steadfastly in the Apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.”<sup>9</sup>*

The Holy Spirit will not come upon you and convert you unawares, as if He had fallen down upon you from heaven. The Holy Spirit always connects Himself with the Word of God, and if in any other way than through the Word, and the Sacraments which are contained in the Word, you may think that you have been converted, your conversion is a delusion of your own sinful heart.

There is one thing that needs your attention as to the Holy Spirit's wonderful work among men. At the end of our Epistle we have a remarkable note. <sup>13</sup> ***Others mocking said, "They are full of new wine."*** This remark shows that the Holy Spirit does not work upon men irresistibly. He does not force the salvation upon any one.

True it is that our salvation is the Holy Spirit's work entirely, from beginning to end, that all we can do of our own natural power is to resist Him, <sup>13</sup> ***for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.***<sup>10</sup>

But if stubbornly and maliciously you resist the Spirit's pleading, as did these men, who mocked and said the Apostles were full of new wine, you cannot blame the Spirit of God, you cannot say: *'The Spirit did not do enough for me to overcome my resistance.'* But you must blame yourself, the wickedness and hardness of your sinful heart. If you harden your heart, and do not receive the Word with all readiness of mind, the Spirit's work is lost upon you.

May the Lord, therefore, grant us all, His grace that we may always passively submit to the work of God's Holy Spirit upon our minds as we hear the preaching of the Word. Then we will always be led to the knowledge of our sin by the preaching of the Law, and to a glad reception of our salvation in Christ Jesus by the preaching of the Gospel.

Then the Holy Spirit shall always remain with us, keep us in the narrow way, comfort us in our afflictions, enable us to walk in newness of life, and finally lead us to the beautiful realms above where we shall praise Him, together with the Father and the Son, ever and eternally. Amen.

The peace of God, which passes all understanding, will keep our hearts and minds, in Christ Jesus. Amen.

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<sup>1</sup> Hymn 127

<sup>2</sup> Eph. 2:1-5, Col. 2:13

<sup>3</sup> Acts 1:14

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<sup>4</sup> Acts 1:26

<sup>5</sup> Acts 1:15

<sup>6</sup> Acts 1:4-5

<sup>7</sup> Matt. 3:11

<sup>8</sup> Acts 2:37-38

<sup>9</sup> Acts 2:42

<sup>10</sup> Philippians 2:13