

**Sun., May 23 - (Pentecost) The Fire Within #1: The Church on Fire -Pastor David**

Series: "Strange Fire: Spring Message Series"

Memory Verse: John 20:22 "Then Jesus breathed on them and said, 'Receive the Holy Spirit.'"

Text: John 20:21-22 "Jesus said to them again, 'Peace be with you. As the Father sent me, so I am sending you.' Then He breathed on them and said, 'Receive the Holy Spirit.'"

Sermon Scriptures: Acts 2:1-41, various

Reading of Scripture: Acts 2:16-21

Blurb: This Sunday we celebrate Pentecost Sunday. Pentecost is the birthday of the Church! We light the birthday candles and proclaim that God's holy fire is given to live within each one of us. This changes everything! The Holy Spirit changes us from the inside out. He changes how we live each day. He changes the Church. He changes our world. This Sunday come asking for the Holy Fire to live—and burn!—within you!

***[Recorded Worship Beginning]***

**WELCOME** -Pastor Andrew  
Membership Sunday

**MEMORY VERSE:** -Pastor Andrew  
"Then Jesus breathed on them and said, 'Receive the Holy Spirit.'" -John 20:22

**WORSHIP MUSIC SET** -Sanctify  
*Celebrate*  
*Great Are You, Lord*  
Worship prayer -Pastor Andrew

***[Live Worship Beginning]***

**GATHERING SONG:** *Celebrate* -Sanctify

**WELCOME** -Pastor David

**MEMORY VERSE:** -Pastor David  
"Then Jesus breathed on them and said, 'Receive the Holy Spirit.'" -John 20:22

**WORSHIP MUSIC SET** -Sanctify  
*Blessed to Be a Blessing*  
*Wind Who Makes All Winds that Blow*  
*Great Are You, Lord*  
Worship prayer -Pastor Andrew

**[Both Recorded & Live Worship]**

**SCRIPTURE READING:** Acts 2:16-21 -Reader:

On the Day of Pentecost, after the Holy Spirit came upon the disciples, Peter gets up and explains what's going on. He quotes from the prophet Joel, 2:28-32. Acts 2:16-21, Peter says, "16 No, this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel:

17 '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.

18 Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days,  
and they will prophesy.

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

20 The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood  
before the coming of the great and glorious day of the Lord.

21 And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.'"

**GENERATIONAL BRIDGE:** Happy Birthday, Church! -Pastor Andrew

**[10AM SERVICE ONLY] BAPTISM:** Lane Yetter -Pastor David

Blessing: *May You Run and Not Be Weary*

**MESSAGE: The Fire Within #1: The Church on Fire**

**PP#1:** The Fire Within: Church on Fire!

"Then Jesus breathed on them and said, Receive the Holy Spirit.'" -John 20:22

Strange Fire: Pentecost. The Fire Within: Church on Fire! Jesus appeared to the disciples in the Upper Room Easter evening. John 20:21-22 "Jesus said to them again, 'Peace be with you. As the Father sent me, so I am sending you.' Then He breathed on them and said, 'Receive the Holy Spirit.'"

**PP#2:** *Image for Rose Bowl parade float from 1939 for Standard Oil (covered with American Beauty roses) from <https://scvhistory.com/scvhistory/hs7010.htm>*

In 1939 the city of Pasadena hosted its 50<sup>th</sup> annual Rose Bowl Parade. The winning float was by the Standard Oil Company, a massive float covered in American Beauty roses depicting a model of their historic Pioneer Oil Refinery. The theme of the parade was fitting for the pre-WW2 climate: "Be Prepared." Well, as the massive float was crawling down Route 66 through town, it mysteriously came to a standstill. After a few embarrassing moments, they realized that the float had *run out of gas!* The whole parade had to wait until someone ran with a gas can to go get gas...for the Standard Oil Company's float, depicting their refinery, in a parade with the theme, "Be prepared."

This is why I love history! You can't make this stuff up! The company had huge gasoline reserves, but yet their float ran out of gas. Perhaps you can see where I'm going with this today. I want to take it in two directions: One is how much the Church of God can be like this float, and two, how much you and I can be like this float.

**PP#3:** *Image from previous series of God as an all-consuming fire.*

We've been encountering our God as an all-consuming fire. Our God is holy, pure, and purifying. He protects and He answers prayer. Fire not only represents our God, fire describes our God.

And then, God shows up in Jesus. Jesus is God as our personal Lord and Savior. But before Jesus goes back to glory, He promises to send God as the Holy Spirit. You see, before Jesus, God's people are like a float that He is personally pulling. The fire of God leads their way, burns as a pillar of fire in front of them. God's power rests in fire on the Ark, on the Temple. God is their power. In Jesus, God's people choose to follow as disciples, attaching ourselves to Jesus as our Lord and focus. He pulls us out from the path of death and sets us on the path of life. But when Jesus returns to glory, it is almost as if His followers are left like this Standard Oil float. We now have an inner ability to pursue God, we have been born anew and we have a new identity in Christ. We have an internal combustion engine. We are able to go. But we are stalled.

**PP#4:** *The disciples in the Upper Room on Pentecost with the outline of church building over them.*

Pentecost is often called the Birthday of the Church. God's people are put together like a beautiful parade float. We are set on the highway, to represent God to all the people. Our route is to take us right through the heart of the city, so everyone can come to know Jesus. But what makes us go?

The church first gathered together after Jesus ascended back to glory. They met back in that same Upper Room in Jerusalem where they had celebrated the Last Supper with Jesus, and where Jesus first appeared to them. They gathered together, and notice, they already had much of what churches have today. 1. They had a place to meet together, they had a building. 2. They had people who were committed, their membership was at 120. 3. They had conducted a church business meeting during the 10 days waiting (read Acts chapter 1). 4. They had elected officers, particularly they elected Matthias to replace Judas. 5. They had a prayer meeting. 6. They had been collecting monies to help the needy. And, it doesn't say it directly, but 7. I'm sure they had sung a song or two. So, they had the form and function of a church, as God's people on earth. And also notice that their doors were closed. No one brought a friend or neighbor. They all agreed that Jesus was alive and that they had taken Him personally as their Lord and Savior. But they really didn't get out there and tell others about Jesus; they were rather timid. And others weren't coming to know Jesus. Those who were there had come to Jesus long before. Sounds a bit too much like a church today, maybe?

**PP#5:** *Image of a classic birthday cake with burning candles.*

Well, what is the key problem here, as that first church sat along the road but not moving? The float lacked fuel, right? Well, technically, it lacked *a fire* in it's internal combustion engine to move the pistons and move the wheels. Even fuel won't help if you don't have the fire!

I love that birthday cakes have burning candles on them. A birthday marks the day a person was born, first drew living breath. A birthday cake, with burning candles, celebrates when a person becomes alive. Fire marks breath, marks life.

Pentecost is the birthday of the church. It marks when the Church—those gathered in Jesus' name—first drew breath, first became alive. The beautiful float—all ready to go, a message to share, made for others—sits ready. What it needs is *the fire within!*

**PP#6:** Acts 2:1-41, various

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

We go to the Pentecost story. We find it in Acts 2. You heard part of it already. Pentecost is the Jewish celebration 50 days after Passover, hence *pente-cost*, for 50. It's a celebration of the harvest, which happens in the Middle East in the spring. Harvest...remember that. Acts 2, starting with verse 1,

“When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. [From the previous chapter we see they were in the Upper Room.] 2 Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. [Mark this: 1. The sound of a blowing wind, 2. Coming from above, and 3. Filled the whole place. Verse 3,] They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. [So, it started out as one big fire that separated into individual flames, and a flame rested on each one of them. What was that showing? Well, that's exciting! Let's keep reading! Verse 4,] All of them [notice, *ALL* of them!] were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.”

Before Pentecost, God's Spirit was given in a limited way. The Spirit comes upon certain people in certain places for specific reasons. The Spirit of God came upon Gideon and Sampson and Deborah to be judges. The Spirit of God came upon Saul and David and Solomon to be king. The Spirit of God came upon Samuel and Nathan and Elisha and Isaiah to be prophets. But like it says in 1 Samuel 3:1, “The word of the Lord was rare in those days.”

The word “Spirit” also means “breath” and “wind.” Jesus says to Nicodemus in John 3 that “the Spirit is like the wind, it blows wherever it wishes” (John 3:8). They, in the Upper Room, suddenly hear a rushing, mighty wind. Wind. Spirit. Breath. It is by the breath of God, when He speaks words of creation, that all things are created. It is the by the breath of God, when He *speaks* words of life, that God's people are recreated, born again, filled with life. Wind. Rushing wind. Spirit. The Holy Spirit fills the room. Breath. Words of life. Tongues of fire. Fire. God is an all-consuming fire!

**PP#7:** *Image of a birthday cake with the people w/tongues of fire on them representing the candles*

Now, the Holy Spirit *fills the room*; tongues of fire rest *on each one of them*; the Spirit of God fills *each of them*. This is the birthday of the church! God the all-consuming fire comes down from heaven and fills *each person*!

The Spirit becomes the life of the Church, the spark that burns within, that brings life, that makes the float move.

**PP#8:** Pentecost: The Fire Within...the Church

1. The Church's life comes from heaven

Three takeaways about Pentecost for the Church. 1. The power, the life, the source of the church comes from heaven. The float was beautiful. It conveyed a message. It was built with a purpose. It was made to proclaim a message. But it's power comes from heaven.

**PP#9: Pentecost: The Fire Within...the Church**

1. The Church's life comes from heaven
2. The Church must pray for the Holy Spirit

Don't miss this, church! We do not have what we need to do what we need to do! We may have a purpose. We may be fully equipped. We may be very much like that first church on the morning of Pentecost! But also like that church, our life, our power, our fire, comes only from above. We can't make our float go! Much of our struggle comes when we try to do what we are supposed to do in our own power. Church, we need Pentecost! We need to lift our eyes to the heavens and open our church to the filling of the Holy Spirit. Our most important task is to pray: to invite the Holy Spirit, to receive the Holy Spirit, to depend on the Holy Spirit, to follow the Holy Spirit.

**PP#10: Pentecost: The Fire Within...the Church**

1. The Church's life comes from heaven
2. The Church must pray for the Holy Spirit
3. The Church's purpose is to tell others

When the Holy Spirit comes on them, they burst open the closed doors and they flow into the streets! Their tongues are on fire and they tell others all about Jesus. They all began to speak in tongues, different languages, so that all the people gathered from all over could each hear about Jesus in their own native language. They have tongues of fire *on them* and their own tongues are lit on fire.

**PP#11: Acts 2:1-41, various**

5 Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven. 6 When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard their own language being spoken. 7 Utterly amazed, they asked: "Aren't all these who are speaking Galileans? 8 Then how is it that each of us hears them in our native language? ... We hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues!" 12 Amazed and perplexed, they asked one another, "What does this mean?"

We go back to Acts 2. Starting in verse 5 it describes the multitude of people gathered in the streets around the Upper Room, like the spectators gathered around the float. Verse 5, "Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven. 6 When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard their own language being spoken. 7 Utterly amazed, they asked: 'Aren't all these who are speaking Galileans? 8 Then how is it that each of us hears them in our native language? ... We hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues!' 12 Amazed and perplexed, they asked one another, 'What does this mean?'"

The Holy Spirit is given to be the flame that fuels the Church. What is the purpose of the church? To stay behind closed doors and do what works best for us? No! It's to go pour out into the streets and tell the wonders of God in ways that the people can hear. Church, our purpose together is to tell others. Our prayers for the Holy Spirit need to include prayers for seeing others, prayers for opportunities to engage others, prayers for boldness to tell the wonders of God.

And here is the connection in this story from the float representing the purpose of the Church to the float also representing how each of us, as disciples of Jesus, are like the parade float.

**PP#12:** Acts 2:1-41, various

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

14 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. 15 These people are not drunk, as you suppose. It’s only nine in the morning! 16 No, this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel:

Some of the people, you see, started making fun of the Christians, saying that this is happening because they’ve been drinking wine. Then, seeing the crowd, hearing the questions for “what does this mean?,” hearing the ridicule, Peter shares his testimony. Verse 13, “Some, however, made fun of them and said, ‘They have had too much wine.’ 14 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. 15 These people are not drunk, as you suppose. It’s only nine in the morning! 16 No, this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel...”

He then quotes the passage you heard earlier. In the final days, God will pour out His Spirit on all people...all people! It’s happening right before their eyes! After that, he continues by drawing the connection to Jesus, telling about His death and resurrection. Peter then pulls it all together by proclaiming that this Jesus is the promised Messiah sent from God.

**PP#13:** Acts 2:1-41, various

36 “Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Messiah.”

37 When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, “Brothers, what shall we do?”

38 Peter replied, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call.”

He wraps it up in verse 36, “‘Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Messiah.’ 37 When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, ‘Brothers, what shall we do?’ 38 Peter replied, ‘Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 The promise is for you and your children and *for all* who are far off—*for all* whom the Lord our God will call.’”

**PP#14:** Pentecost: The Fire Within...You!

## 1. The Holy Spirit is for you

There it is again, the Holy Spirit is given as a gift, as promised by God, given for you—for each of you, for all of you—for your children, for those who live far away, for those who are far away from God, for anyone who calls upon God as their Lord. You can be reconciled to God! And when you are, as Peter says, “you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.” This same Holy Spirit that came upon the first disciples that day on Pentecost, comes to each person who calls on God as their Lord.

**PP#15: Pentecost: The Fire Within...You!**

1. The Holy Spirit is for you
2. The Holy Spirit is not rare, but common

God's presence, God's power, God's fire, God's filling, is not just for those select few who have specialized jobs and roles anymore. Pentecost is the birthday of the Church because now ALL of God's people have the Holy Spirit within them. We each have the tongues of fire! Today we proclaim on this day of Pentecost, that we hear the sound coming from above, we have tongues of fire resting on each of us, we have the Holy Spirit filling us.

We join those throngs in the street. We ask, "What shall we do?" We are changed. Recently we had a baptism and three confirmations. Today we have another baptism. And the key part of the sacrament of baptism is marking how each of these people are filled with the Holy Spirit.

**PP#16: Pentecost: The Fire Within...You!**

1. The Holy Spirit is for you
2. The Holy Spirit is not rare, but common
3. We live as people on fire for God

God's people have a burning fire within. We are God's floats: fueled up and engine burning hot! We go forward, living out our mission, not propelled by our own power, but by the power of the burning fire within. We are "on fire" for God! And this changes everything. This makes us able to go. This makes us able to face all the challenges that are ahead. It makes us able to defeat all our sin and every obstacle we face. It gives us the unrelenting joy and hope that carries us forward in excitement. It makes us grow in godliness, in holiness, as mature disciples. It gives us a purpose and message, to go boldly and tell everyone about Jesus. It changes us from the inside out.

In the weeks ahead we're going to take this up as our Pentecost message series. Each week we'll discover another part of what it means to have God's indwelling fire. Pentecost, you see, is not just a day. It's a lifestyle. It's living under the propulsion of God's fire within.

**PP#17: Acts 2:1-41, various**

40 With many other words Peter warned them; and he pleaded with them, "Save yourselves from this corrupt generation." 41 Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.

We finish the story in Acts 2. Verse 40, "With many other words Peter warned them; and he pleaded with them, 'Save yourselves from this corrupt generation.' 41 Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day."

How different *a church* it was at the end of that day than how it started out that day. How different *we as church* can be when we open ourselves to the Holy Spirit. How different *we each are* when we invite the Holy Spirit to burn within.

**PP#18: Pentecost backdrop and the words, "A Pentecost Prayer"**

**PRAYERS: A Pentecost Prayer -Pastor David**

So, let's stop and do that right now. This is the most important prayer a Christian can pray. We pray for the coming, the filling, the burning of the Holy Spirit within.

Let's pray....

-Come, Holy Spirit!

-Pray for our church

-to have the Holy Spirit blow upon us

-to seeing others

-for opportunities to engage others

-for boldness to tell the wonders of God

Pray for each of us

-to be filled with the Holy Spirit

-to live as people "on fire" for God

-to know and live out our mission

-not propelled by our own power, but by the Fire within

-to defeat all the snares and troubles ahead

-to give us unrelenting joy and hope and excitement

-to grow us in godliness, in holiness, as mature disciples

-to go boldly into our purpose to tell others about Jesus

-to change us from the inside out

Come, Holy Spirit!

Amen.

**[IN-PERSON WORSHIP ONLY] CLOSING SONG: *Hymn to the Holy Spirit* -Sanctify****OFFERING: -Pastor David**

-Give of your monies to God's work through this church. You can give in person, mail it in or, most conveniently, you can make an automated transfer or a debit card payment on the church website or by using the "square" on the bulletin.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS -Pastor David**

Next Sunday's message: Pentecost! "Heart Strangely Warmed"

**MEMORY VERSE -Pastor David**

"Then Jesus breathed on them and said, 'Receive the Holy Spirit.'" -John 20:22

**BENEDICTION -Pastor David**