



## WEEKLY STUDY

### ***The Book of Acts - Week Four***

This week we celebrated the day called Pentecost. While it may not be a big Hallmark holiday, it's a top 3 for the life of the Church. So much of our reading of scripture comes from a historical perspective. When it comes to Pentecost, we are recalling the origins of what and who we are today! It's historic but current, old news and good news for today. Most people who consider themselves a part of the Christian Church are desiring to be a part of something much bigger than ourselves—something that can change the world. That's what the Pentecost story is all about. As you read about the coming of the Holy Spirit and the birth of the church, ask God to reveal the ways He is empowering you to share the Good News.

Please note our prayer focus for the week in the box below. Join us in seeing what God will do as we unite in prayer.

Peace of Christ,  
Pastor Mark Youngman

If you are studying with your Providence Small Group or Discipleship Group, you can share from your own daily reflections and consider the Group Discussion questions below. If you would like to get connected visit [prov.church/smallgroups](http://prov.church/smallgroups).

#### Prayer Focus:

- Would you pray for our mission team in Belize this week? This team is strengthening a new relationship with a multi-site church in San Antonio, Belize. On this Pentecost Sunday, they will worship together and experience the power of the Holy Spirit to bring life to the church in every corner of the world! Thank you God!
- Pray for the Holy Spirit to continue to break through in the Christian church all around the world today.

## DAILY STUDY

### MONDAY: ACTS 2.1-21 (NIV)

*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 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>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.*

*<sup>19</sup> 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.'*

- In this passage we read the account of the Holy Spirit flooding through the scene and changing everything. We also read the start of Peter's sermon declaring what it all means. In seasons where we are especially aware of the movement of the Spirit in our own church, I can feel a bit like Peter—needing to explain or put into context all that is happening. The Spirit can move in such powerful ways that we find ourselves trying to make sense of it. But the words of prophecy spoken by Joel (in Joel 2) might also reference our time. Could it be that God is still pouring out his Spirit on the church? When have you experienced the gentle or overwhelming presence of the Holy Spirit? If you have not, pray like the early disciples that you might be ready to see and experience it.
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- **Prayer Prompt: I will put my Spirit in you and you will live (Ezekiel 37.14)**
  - *God, I long to live in awareness of your Holy Spirit moving through this land, and through my heart and life. Come Holy Spirit! Amen.*

## **TUESDAY: ACTS 2.22-24, 36-41 (NIV)**

<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, 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.

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

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

<sup>38</sup> 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. <sup>39</sup> The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call.”

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

- The first Christian sermon was a doozy, and yet it was simple and straightforward. Jesus was truly a man, and truly God. He lived a life and carried out his ministry on the earth with real people around him. He was killed on a cross. He rose from the grave—“it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him” (how great is that line?). He is the Lord, the Messiah. Repent and be baptized! Luke himself admits that he has not captured the entire sermon here, but the point of it was to move those listening to allow their lives to be changed. Has your life been impacted by the Gospel first declared by Peter? What does the life, death and resurrection of Jesus mean for you?
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- **Prayer Prompt: For Christ’s love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. <sup>15</sup> And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again. (2 Corinthians 5.14-15)**

- *Holy Spirit, come and animate my response to the good news of the Father's work through Jesus Christ. May others see a sermon in the way I live today. Amen.*

### WEDNESDAY: GENESIS 3.11-13 (NIV)

*"Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?"*

<sup>12</sup> *The man said, "The woman you put here with me—she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it."*

<sup>13</sup> *Then the LORD God said to the woman, "What is this you have done?"*

*The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate."*

- In this passage found in the opening chapters of the Bible, the first two humans were tricked into believing that God wasn't really looking out for them. They believed that God was withholding from them. So they ate from the one tree they were told not to eat from. The lie had entered into human history, and it led to shame, fear and death. What lies seem to be lingering around the world today that keep us from living the best version of Eden-life God has for us?

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- **Prayer Prompt: Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. (1 John 4.1)**
- *Oh God, help me to discern your voice. Speak so clearly to my heart that it floods out my doubt and guards me from shame, fear and death. Amen.*

### THURSDAY: GENESIS 11.1, 6-9 (NIV)

*Now the whole world had one language and a common speech.*

*The Lord said, "If as one people speaking the same language they have begun to do this, then nothing they plan to do will be impossible for them. <sup>7</sup> Come, let us go down and confuse their language so they will not understand each other."*

<sup>8</sup> *So the Lord scattered them from there over all the earth, and they stopped building the city. <sup>9</sup> That is why it was called Babel—because there the Lord confused the language of the whole world. From there the Lord scattered them over the face of the whole earth.*

- The people had begun to construct a tower as a practical and symbolic sign that they hoped to reach the level of God. In the same way Adam and Eve had been tricked into believing that they could and should know all that God knows, the people of Babel were striving to build their way to God-status. God ended that project which led the people to live scattered and confused lives. Do you see signs of scattered and confused living in the world today? What about in your own life?

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- **Prayer Prompt: Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings. (Luke 13.34)**
  - *God, amidst the signs of confusion in this present age, would you bring clarity and focus to your church? Empower us, empower me, through your Spirit! Amen.*

#### **FRIDAY: JOEL 2.13-14 (NIV)**

*Rend your heart  
and not your garments.  
Return to the Lord your God,  
for he is gracious and compassionate,  
slow to anger and abounding in love,  
and he relents from sending calamity.  
<sup>14</sup> Who knows? He may turn and relent  
and leave behind a blessing—*

- This passage from the prophet Joel is clearly foundational to Peter's sermon in Acts 2. It makes me wonder if Jesus had lingered on this passage when he opened up the scripture to the disciples after his resurrection and before his ascension. Or maybe he was reflecting on it in the upper room as he was waiting for the Holy Spirit to come. Either way, it gives us hope in an age of confusion and turning from God. We can still return to God. He is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love. What good news! Have you known God to carry these characteristics described by the prophet? What blessings from God have you seen in your life?
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- **Prayer Prompt: Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows. (James 1.17)**
- *God, you are the Father of the heavenly lights. I return to you over and over. Like the prodigal son, I need your grace and compassion. Amen.*

#### **SATURDAY: JOEL 2.28-29 (NIV)**

*I will pour out my Spirit on all people.*

*Your sons and daughters will prophesy,  
your old men will dream dreams,  
your young men will see visions.  
<sup>29</sup> Even on my servants, both men and women,  
I will pour out my Spirit in those days.*

- The outpouring of the Holy Spirit marks the birthday of the church. Pentecost was not just a historic event that wrapped up in one day. God desires that we would be open to his empowering movement today. How could you turn this passage from Joel into a prayer? Try writing that prayer in the space below.

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- **Prayer Prompt: And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age. (Matthew 28.20)**
- *Jesus, I know that you have promised to be with us always. Thank you for the gift of your Holy Spirit which brings assurance and power to live out your promises to us. Amen.*

## GROUP DISCUSSION

As a group, take turns reading portions of Peter's sermon in Acts 2.16-41. Imagine yourselves as the original audience. Or imagine this sermon being preached at Providence Church.

Acts 2.16-21

Acts 2.22-24

Acts 2.25-35

Acts 2.36-41

- What verses challenge you?
- What do you wrestle with?
- What do you hear God saying to you or to today's church?