**“From Babel to Pentecost: The Spirit That Unites”**

**Acts 2:1-21 (CEB)**

Today is Pentecost Sunday, *birth of the Church.* The church was established on the day of Pentecost. The word “Pentecost” literally means *“fiftieth day.”* In the Jewish calendar, it was the Feast of Weeks, celebrated 50 days after Passover. For Christians, it’s 50 days after Easter that the Holy Spirit came upon the followers of Jesus, empowering them and forming them into a witnessing community. Pentecost marks the beginning of the Church’s mission to the world.

In the Old Testament, God had already promised that in the last days, the Spirit would be poured out—on the Servant Messiah (Isaiah 42:1), on the people of Israel (Ezekiel 37:14), and ultimately on *all people* (Joel 2:28–32).

In the New Testament, before he ascended, Jesus promised: *“You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses”* (Acts 1:8). The mission of the Church would not be carried out by human strength or strategy, but through the empowering presence of the Holy Spirit.

The story of Pentecost

The risen Christ instructed His disciples to *stay in Jerusalem* and *wait* for the promise of God. After Jesus returned to heaven, disciples gathered, waited and prayed in the upper room. They were Jesus’ followers about 120 of them, mostly Galileans. They included the twelve disciples, Mary the mother of Jesus, Jesus’ brothers, and others who had followed Him.

About 10 days after Jesus ascended to heaven, they received the Holy Spirit.

When the Holy Spirit came, they began speaking in different languages that they had never learned. At that moment, Jerusalem was packed with Jewish people from all over the world for the Feast of Pentecost, a Jewish festival. So, when the crowd heard the sound and saw these Galileans speaking all these different languages, they were shocked. “How is it that we hear them in our own languages?” they asked. And this miracle didn’t stay hidden inside the upper room. It spilled out into the streets. And in that moment, God used ordinary people to speak extraordinary truth in a way everyone could understand. That's Pentecost.

Three Signs of the Spirit’s Presence

* Wind and Fire: the power of God to bring new life.
* Speaking in different languages: Reversal of Babel (Genesis 11)

The tower of Babel indicates the pride of humanity. People wanted to make a name for themselves, so humanity sought to raise itself to God’s level. Simply, they wanted to be God. Humanity decided to build a tower to the heavens in the name of unity and progress. But underneath their ambition was fear: *“Let us make a name for ourselves. Otherwise, we’ll be scattered all over the earth.” (Gen. 11:4)*

Their unity wasn’t rooted in trust or love—it was rooted in pride and fear. They didn’t want to follow God’s call to “fill the earth” (Gen. 1:28). They wanted control. They want to stay in one place and built their city to not do what God wanted them to do. as a result, people were forced to build the tower. Therefore, the story of Babel not only shows sinful human pride, but also exploitative enslavement. Babel became the birthplace of confusion and division.

God decides it must be stopped. Because this situation will increase human sinfulness. So, God confused them with multiple languages, they couldn’t understand them anymore. As a result, they were scattered across the earth, and they couldn’t continue to do their project.

Pentecost in Acts 2

The disciples are gathered. The Holy Spirit comes like a rushing wind and fills them with fire and new languages. But this time, it’s not confusion — it’s understanding! Everyone (Parthians, Medes, Elamites, Egyptians, Romans, Arabs) heard the gospel in their own language.

*“We hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues!” (Acts 2:11)*

At Babel, language divided people. At Pentecost, language unites people in praise. Babel was humanity trying to climb up to God. Pentecost is God coming down to dwell with us. Pentecost makes it clear: the gospel is *for all people*. God’s dream is not uniformity—it’s *unity in diversity*. You don’t have to speak Hebrew or dress a certain way to be included. The Holy Spirit speaks *your* language.

Pentecost is when God began to undo the broken unity from the Tower of Babel. The Holy Spirit brought people together—men and women, rich and poor, Jews and non-Jews—to stand as one before God in the name of Jesus. This shows that the Gospel is for everyone, in every nation. Just as God told people to grow and fill the earth (Genesis 1:28), now people from every tribe and nation are invited to come and worship Jesus, the Lamb of God (Revelation 7:9). Pentecost is the building of community. It is overcoming the differences and making connections in One Lord. One Spirit. One Church. It is building up the body.

We live in a culture that thrives on division—politics, race, economics, even denominations. Why can’t the church live out the unity of Pentecost?

There is an important difference between the indwelling of the Spirit and the filling of the Spirit.

The *indwelling* happens once—when we come to faith in Christ. The *filling* happens repeatedly as we open ourselves to God’s presence and power in daily life. There is one indwelling, but many fillings. We don’t just need a one-time experience. We need ongoing renewal. The Spirit is always with us, but we need to keep making room for the Spirit to lead us, shape us, and fill us with fresh strength, love, and power—again and again.

In Christ, we are no longer waiting for the Holy Spirit; rather, the Spiritis waiting for *us.* Being filled isn’t about getting *more* of the Spirit; it’s about the Spirit getting *more* of us.

**The Spirit brings people *to one another*. Babel scattered. Pentecost gathered. Fear isolated. The Spirit united**.

Our world is divided by culture, language, politics. But the church has a chance to model a different way. To be a Spirit-filled, grace-giving, bridge-building community.

We need this now more than ever. In a noisy world full of arguments and closed minds, the Spirit invites us to be kind, to speak truth in love, and to truly hear one another.

So, what does Pentecost mean for you?

* You are not alone. The Spirit is with you.
* You don’t have to fix yourself to be filled. You just have to be open.
* You can be part of God’s answer to the world’s division.

Let the Spirit fill you again. And again. And again