

**Pentecost Sunday – May 24, 2015**  
**Good Shepherd Ev. Lutheran Church**

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**Acts 2:22-36 (NIV)**

"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. 23) 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. 24) 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. 25) David said about him: " 'I saw the Lord always before me. Because he is at my right hand, I will not be shaken. 26) Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices; my body also will rest in hope, 27) because you will not abandon me to the realm of the dead, you will not let your holy one see decay. 28) You have made known to me the paths of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence.' 29) "Fellow Israelites, I can tell you confidently that the patriarch David died and was buried, and his tomb is here to this day. 30) But he was a prophet and knew that God had promised him on oath that he would place one of his descendants on his throne. 31) Seeing what was to come, he spoke of the resurrection of the Messiah, that he was not abandoned to the realm of the dead, nor did his body see decay. 32) God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of it. 33) Exalted to the right hand of God, he has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear. 34) For David did not ascend to heaven, and yet he said, " 'The Lord said to my Lord: "Sit at my right hand 35) until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet." ' 36) "Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Messiah."

Dear Friends in Christ Jesus;

By God's command Jews from around the world had gathered in Jerusalem to celebrate the gathering of the summer harvest with thanksgiving and sacrifice. The festival has been given various names: the Feast of Harvest, the Later First Fruits or The Festival of Weeks or. The name "Feast of Weeks" was given because God commanded the Jews in [Leviticus 23:15-16](#), to count seven full weeks (or 49 days) beginning on the second day of Passover, and then present offerings of new grain to the Lord as a lasting ordinance. The celebration is also associated with the Giving of the Law to Moses on Mount Sinai.

Shavuot (as the festival is called in Hebrew) is one of the three pilgrimage feasts when all Jewish males were required to appear before the Lord in Jerusalem. Throughout Jewish history, it has been customary for the Jews to engage in all-night study of the Torah on the first evening of Shavuot. Children were encouraged to memorize Scripture and rewarded with treats. The [book of Ruth](#) was traditionally read during Shavuot.

All of this helps us to understand the large numbers of people in Jerusalem as reported to us in Acts 2.

It was on this occasion that the Holy Spirit enabled Peter and the Apostles to proclaim the wonders of God in a variety of languages so that the many visitors from other countries who had gathered in Jerusalem to celebrate the Jewish Pentecost festival could hear about the greatest wonder of all – the gift of God's Son.

I was thinking about setting up some large fans in our worship area today – not because it's so hot but in an attempt to recreate some of the imagery which was on display on that first New Testament Pentecost when Jesus fulfilled his promise to send the Holy Spirit to his disciples. Certainly the sound of the rushing wind and the appearance of the flames of fire was an attention getter – but the reality is the most important thing that happened on that day is happening right now – without the wind and fire.

On the first NT Pentecost the Holy Spirit was poured out not only on the apostles but on those who heard the message and learned who Jesus was, what he had done for them and how he had blessed them.

**Theme:** The Holy Spirit is Poured Out on Us

1. He tells us who Jesus is
2. He tells us what Jesus has done for us
3. He tells us how Jesus blesses us

As we heard in the Epistle Lesson for today, Peter stood up to address the crowd that had gathered because of the miraculous occurrences that Pentecost morning. His objective was not just to defend himself and the other apostles against the accusation that they were drunk. He used the Old Testament not only to explain what was happening but to explain who Jesus is.

**"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.**

Those who had gathered in Jerusalem were familiar with the OT prophecies about the coming Savior. They had also heard many things about Jesus of Nazareth so Peter didn't have to spend a lot of time introducing God's plan of salvation. He began by pointing out that the miraculous signs, wonders and miracles performed by Jesus of Nazareth; was God's way of demonstrating that Jesus was the one sent to fulfill the OT Scriptures. Although the Jews had requested signs – they had failed to see the significance of the things that Jesus had done – the healing of the blind and lame; the casting out of demons; calling the dead to life. Jesus was accredited by God, but the Jews failed to believe this.

Peter continued, **23) 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.**

God's plan of salvation called for a substitute to die for sinners. The very first promise of a Savior spoke of the seed of a woman whose heel would be bruised as he crushed Satan's head. Isaiah spoke of a suffering servant who would be punished to provide peace for God's people. Isaiah even foretold the silent suffering and death of the Savior – saying he was led like a lamb to the slaughter. God's plan was clear from the beginning!

However, the Jewish people rejected the prophets as well as the one whom they foretold. They became the instruments God used to fulfill his plan as they conspired together to compel the Roman authorities to crucify Jesus on the cross. It is likely that many of those present in Jerusalem for the celebration of Pentecost also been in Jerusalem for the celebration of the Passover because Jewish men were also required to go to Jerusalem to observe the Passover. That would mean that many in this crowd may have raised their voices calling for the crucifixion of Jesus.

Peter's words pointed out the sin of rejecting Christ. That was the law – but Peter didn't stop there. He continued, **24) 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.** God did not allow their evil actions to interfere with his saving plan. God brought Jesus back to life. This was a sign that what the Jews had done was not in keeping with God's will. They had been wrong to put Jesus to death. The resurrection was also evidence that salvation had been accomplished. The Holy Spirit used Peter's message to tell those in Jerusalem who Jesus was. He was God's chosen Savior.

The Holy Spirit has also been poured out on us. The Spirit has used his inspired Word to Tell us that Jesus is our Savior.

#### The Holy Spirit is Poured Out on Us

1. He tells us who Jesus is
2. He tells us what Jesus has done for us

Previously Peter had used the OT book of Joel to explain the events that the people were observing. Next Peter turned to the book of Psalms to show what Jesus had done for them as God's chosen Savior. 25) David said about him: "**I saw the Lord always before me. Because he is at my right hand, I will not be shaken. 26) Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices; my body also will rest in hope, 27) because you will not abandon me to the realm of the dead, you will not let your holy one see decay. 28) You have made known to me the paths of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence.'**

David was a great Jewish hero – one the Jewish people would do well to emulate. Peter explains that David was talking about Jesus in Psalm 16. David believed God's promises and joyfully looked forward to their fulfillment. He acknowledged the Lord's continuing presence in his life. The Lord was his source of strength and stability in times of hardship and difficulty. The Lord was the one who filled him with hope even when he was led to despair of his sins. He rejoiced in the eternal salvation that would be his through the resurrected Savior. The Holy Spirit had been at work in David's life and that same spirit was at work as Peter was speaking of Jesus as the chosen one of God who had been raised from the dead.

The one who is speaking in Psalm 16 speaks of the fact that he would not be abandoned to the grave and that his body would not see decay. Those words can't apply to David since his body had long ago decayed into the dust of the earth. Peter – guided by the Holy Spirit explains this Psalm. 29) "**Fellow Israelites, I can tell you confidently that the patriarch David died and was buried, and his tomb is here to this day. 30) But he was a prophet and knew that God had promised him on oath that he would place one of his descendants on his throne. 31) Seeing what was to come, he spoke of the resurrection of the Messiah, that he was not abandoned to the realm of the dead, nor did his body see decay. 32) God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of it.**

God promised David, **When your days are over and you rest with your ancestors, I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, your own flesh and blood, and I will establish his kingdom. 13) He is the one who will build a house for my Name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever.** (2 Samuel 7:12-13 NIV) There are two parts to this promise. David's son would build a temple for the Lord and David's kingdom would be established forever. Once again David and all of his descendants died. Jesus – a son of David and the Son of God is the one who fulfilled this promise. He is the one the one speaking in the 16<sup>th</sup> Psalm. He is the one who blessed David with joy and hope.

Peter and the other apostles witnessed what David could only see with the eyes of faith. They saw with their own eyes the one who was not abandoned to the grave and whose body did not see decay. They saw the resurrected Jesus. And because of the Holy Spirit's work you and I like David have seen our Savior with the eyes of faith.

The Holy Spirit has been poured out on us enabling us to see that Jesus died for our sins, that he conquered death for us and that he has prepared an eternal home for us.

**Theme:** The Holy Spirit is Poured Out on Us

1. He tells us who Jesus is
2. He tells us what Jesus has done for us
3. He tells us how Jesus blesses us

Peter has more words of blessing for those who were listening to him. He has told them who Jesus is and what Jesus did for them. Now he assures them of Jesus' blessings.

**God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of it. 33) Exalted to the right hand of God, he has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear. 34) For David did not ascend to heaven, and yet he said, "The Lord said to my Lord: "Sit at my right hand 35) until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet." ' 36) "Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Messiah."**

Peter has spoken of Jesus death and his resurrection. Next he speaks of Jesus' ascension and exaltation to the right hand of God where he lives and rules over all things for the benefit of those who believe on him. Jesus is the one who has sent the Holy Spirit upon his disciples and who uses the Holy Spirit to bless us. Once again Peter quotes from the Psalms and applies the Words of the Psalms to Jesus – Jesus is the one who was welcomed to sit at the right hand of God. Jesus had received the rewards for his victory of sin, death and the devil.

“The Jewish leaders had shouted, ‘Take him away! Take him away! Crucify him!’ The chosen people had rejected the promised Savior. That did not stop God’s plan. The people could know that Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah from his works, from Old Testament prophecy, from his resurrection, and from the outpouring of the Holy Spirit which they themselves had witnessed...from his exaltation, they could know that he is one of whom David sang [and in whom David placed his hope.]” (Sermon Series on the Epistles, Balge, pg. 178)

Jesus Christ is both God and Lord – that was the message of hope and blessing the people who crucified Jesus needed to hear. And we are numbered both among those who crucified Jesus, since Jesus died for the sins of the world and among those whom the Holy Spirit has been outpoured. Through the Spirit we have heard of Jesus blessings for us and in faith we have claimed them as our own. He is our abiding presence in life, in death and in the life to come. He is the one who fills us joy and hope. He is the one who died, who rose, who was exalted for our blessing so that whatever we ask in his name it will be done for us. He is the one who gives us access to the Father and his throne of grace. Together with Jesus, the father promises that he will graciously give us all things.

Brothers and sisters – be assured of this, even though there was no wind, no flames of fire, no speaking in tongues – the Holy Spirit has been poured out on you. He told you who Jesus is, what Jesus has done for you and how Jesus blesses us. And brothers and sisters be assured of this: Jesus Christ is both God and Lord – the one who fulfilled God’s plan of salvation for you.

Amen.