

ESF Lord's day service sermon
10/5/2014
International Festival Service- Korean, Indian & Pakistani

The Wind, The Fire and The Tongues

Acts 2:1-12

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. ³They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. ⁴All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongue as the Spirit enabled them.*

⁵*Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven. ⁶When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard them speaking in his own language. ⁷Utterly amazed, they asked: "Are not all these men who are speaking Galileans? ⁸Then how is it that each of us hears them in his own native language? ⁹Parthians, Medes and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, ¹⁰Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome. ¹¹(both Jews and converts to Judaism); Cretans and Arabs—we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues!"*
¹²*Amazed and perplexed, they asked one another, "What does this mean?"*

About 2000 years ago, a big celebration was going on in Jerusalem. People from all over the world came there to celebrate the Passover. It was like our national Independence Day celebration.

On that day, the believers, a group of about 120 people, were all together in one place in Jerusalem. Suddenly there was a sound like the blowing of a violent wind. It filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on

each of them. All of them began to speak in many foreign languages. People at the place were amazed at hearing the believers speaking with so many different tongues at once.

It is called “the anointing of the Holy Spirit” on the day of Pentecost.

There are three main things when the Holy Spirit is anointing people. They are wind, fire and tongue. Wind means powerful movement of the Holy Spirit. Fire means God’s holy presence. Tongue means the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Powerful movement of the Holy Spirit

When the Holy Spirit came upon the believers, there was a sound like the blowing of a violent wind. Jesus said that the Holy Spirit works in us like wind (John 3:8). As wind has moving power, the Holy Spirit has moving power.

The power of the Holy Spirit is more powerful than the power of natural wind. Because, the Holy Spirit has power to penetrate human hearts and transform them.

The Holy Spirit has power to convict man’s heart of guilt. In John 16:8, Jesus says, *“When he (the Holy Spirit) comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness...”* The Holy Spirit enables men to acknowledge their own sins. When Peter was filled with the Holy Spirit and preached to the crowd, the Holy Spirit convicted them of their sins: *“When the people heard this (Peter’s preaching), they were cut to the heart...”* (Acts 2:37).

And the Holy Spirit enables a person to accept Jesus as Savior who died on the cross to forgive all sins and to make one righteous before God. In other words, the Holy Spirit enables a person to be born again spiritually (John 3:5-8).

This is the power to revive men's dead souls. Until spiritually being born again, men are spiritually dead. In the book of Ezekiel, there were dry bones in a valley. They were dead human bones. But when the Holy Spirit came upon the dry bones, they became alive: "*This is what the sovereign Lord says: Come from the four winds, O breath, and breath into these slain, that they may live...and breath entered them; they came to life and stood up on their feet-a vast army*" (Ezekiel 37:9-10).

The Holy Spirit also enables us to be strong and bold so that we can overcome our weakness and fear. After the believers were filled by the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost they became bold to proclaim their faith in Christ without fearing anybody.

How can we live by the power of the Holy Spirit? By humbly surrendering ourselves to the will of Holy Spirit and depending on the movement of the Spirit. How can we know whether we are surrendering to and depending on the Holy Spirit or not? By seeing whether we have fruit of the Spirit or not-such as peace, joy, love, gentleness, self-control. Romans 8:6 says, "*The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace.*" The humble mind that is controlled by the Holy Spirit has life and peace.

(Video clip of a ship moved by wind)

God's holy presence

When the Holy Spirit anointed the believers, the Spirit appeared as tongues of fire: "*They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them*" (verse 3).

The fire of the Holy Spirit means God's holy presence (Exodus 3:1-6, 19:17-19).

Deep down in the hearts of all human beings, there is a desire to see God, and to know who God is. When the Holy Spirit anoints us, he reveals the presence of the holy God to us regardless of circumstances. While we are in difficult circumstances or trials, we may feel that God is far away

from us. But the Holy Spirit enables us to see God's presence in all circumstances. And when we see God's holy presence in us, all problems become small or disappear, our spirits are filled with peace, joy and passion for God.

While Moses was living in the desert as a poor shepherd he did not expect to see God's presence. However God appeared to him in flames of fire from within a bush. The Holy Spirit enabled Moses to see the presence of holy God and revived his dead spirit. The Holy Spirit enabled Moses to hear God's great call to lead the Israelites out of the slavery in Egypt.

There are times we believers experience dryness, joylessness and lifelessness in our personal lives, gatherings, fellowships and services. Songs are sung but they don't touch hearts. Messages are delivered, but they don't meet the deep needs of our souls. Prayers are offered, but they seem not to reach the Lord of heaven but stay flat on earth. We become lukewarm.

That's why the Lord promises that He will fill us with the Holy Spirit (John 16:7; Acts 1:8). When the Holy Spirit fills us, we feel the presence of the holy living God. The presence of the holy living God brings us peace, joy, and a vibrant spiritual life. Suddenly God's words become active in our hearts and lives. We come to joyfully read and meditate on God's words. Praying time becomes sweet. The power of God's presence enables us to forgive our enemies without struggling too much. It enables us to love each other heart to heart.

Then how can we be filled by the Holy Spirit? First of all we have to keep ourselves from sinning. Because the Holy Spirit cannot mingle with sin. Ephesians 4:30 says, "*And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.*"

1 Thessalonians 5:19 says, "*Do not put out the Spirit's fire.*"

Constantly repent from your sins moment by moment. Keep pursuing the holiness of God.

The gift of the Holy Spirit

When the Holy Spirit filled the believers in Jerusalem, the Spirit enabled them to speak foreign tongues they had never learned or known.

Suddenly barriers among different tongues were demolished.

Here language barriers signify not only communication barrier but also barriers of relationship between man and God, and all barriers in human relationship.

Through the gift of tongues of the Holy Spirit God demolished the barrier between man and Him and barriers among men. The Holy Spirit enables us to be able to call God, “Abba, Father” so that we can approach God without fear (Romans 8:15). The Holy Spirit enables us to breakthrough conflicts and barriers among us.

The gift of tongues is just one of many gifts the Holy Spirit gives to believers. The Spirit gives many different kinds of gifts to believers to bless their lives and to build up the church (1 Corinthians 12:12-31; Ephesians 4:11-13). For example, the Spirit gives the gift of boldness to a shy person. The Spirit gives the gift of discernment to those who lack wisdom. The Spirit gives the gift of healing to those who must help the sick. The Spirit gives the gift of encouragement to those who want to serve the weak and the discouraged. Through all those diverse gifts the Holy Spirit enables believers to live fruitful, meaningful, and joyful lives.

How can we receive these gifts of the Holy Spirit?

The gifts of the Holy Spirit are not something we can earn by our own effort and any merit. They are literally gifts from God. What we must do to receive the gift is to ask God. When we ask the gift,

First we must ask the gifts to build up the church.

When the Holy Spirit gives gifts to us, His primary purpose is to build up the church of Christ through the gifts (1 Corinthians ch. 12). 1 Corinthians 14:12 says, “*Since you are eager to have spiritual gifts, try to excel in gifts that build up the church.*” So if we seek the gifts to build up the church, the Spirit will gladly give us the gifts.

Second, we must ask with confidence.

The confidence is that God is our heavenly father who surely gives the best gift to His children. Jesus says in Luke 11:10-13 “*If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask them.*” We can receive the gifts of the Holy Spirit by asking with confidence.