

**Sermon Notes of  
Pastor Craig Kuhlman's Sermon on May 23, 2021:**

**"The Power of Pentecost"  
(Acts 2:1-21)**

**[In today's sermon, Pastor Craig Kuhlman on Zoom shows us On Pentecost Sunday that the Holy Spirit was poured out upon humanity to guide us, to direct us and to encourage us.]**

Video by Greg Williams, GCI President:  
(Shown before Pastor Craig came on screen)

*Sometimes words are not enough. When a child is born, it is hard to put into words the joy that comes from the miracle of a new life coming into the world. When we lose a loved one, words fail to convey the depth of our grief. Oftentimes, the beauty of creation is so overwhelming, our only response is silent reverence.*

*In these moments, words fail to express the depth of our emotions. The same is true in our relationship to God. Not only do we have difficulty finding words to express the depth of our need for God, but we also often find ourselves struggling with words when we talk to God. Fortunately, we have help. Notice what Paul tells the believers in Rome:*

*We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption to sonship, the redemption of our bodies (Romans 8:22-23).*

*In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans. And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for God's people in accordance with the will of God (Romans 8:26-27).*

*Our need for God is so great that we groan inside for him. Words cannot express how much we need the redemption that is found in Jesus Christ. We need the Holy Spirit to intercede for us. And that's one of the reasons we celebrate Pentecost. It was the day when the Holy Spirit empowered the disciples, launched the church, and began the church's mission to the world.*

*With spectacular signs and wonders, Pentecost revealed God's desire to dwell in the hearts of his people. He wants to live inside us because that is where we need to be healed — that is where we groan. The amazing thing is that the Holy Spirit understands the groans of our heart. He understands the words we cannot express. Not only does he understand, but he takes our wordless prayers and brings them to the Father on our behalf.*

*The Holy Spirit groans with us, expressing the depth of our need for God as only he can. Even when we do not know how to pray, the Holy Spirit knows, and he*

*intercedes on our behalf. Because of the humanity of Jesus Christ, God understands us completely, and the Spirit uses that knowledge to pray for us perfectly.*

*So, when we turn to God, we are turning to a Father who already knows what we need and, to Jesus Christ, our big brother who fully identifies with our human experience. When our words are not enough; when words fail us, it is good to know that God never will. He is always with us and he always understands. I am Greg Williams, Speaking of Life.*

### Introduction:

- Happy Pentecost.
- Today, we're going to take a look at the power of Pentecost and what that means.
- The story of Pentecost actually begins one chapter early in chapter one of Acts.
- So, Jesus had said this in the upper room at His last supper with the disciples.

**Acts 1:4 (NIV), On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command: “Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about.**

- Let's notice that the Holy Spirit is a gift from God.
- This gift comes without any strings attached to it and without anything on our part to deserve it.
- The Holy Spirit is a free gift that God the Father gives us and there are tremendous benefits that come with this that we're going to see today.

**5) For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.”**

- We see that the Holy Spirit is often used as a metaphor for water – living water, rushing water.
- A metaphor helps us to understand something in our created minds that is uncreated.
- The presence of God is often used in terms of fire and flames.
- Now, it's not that God is actually fire, but it helps us to understand His intensity and compassion.

**8) But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”**

- What was the purpose for the Holy Spirit to be poured out upon us and stay with us? – It is an enabling power within us to transform us and to help us share the gospel with others.
- Now, there are times when the Holy Spirit will be escalated in us and we will feel more spiritual power.

**Acts 2:1, When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place.**

- Pentecost means 50<sup>th</sup> – the 50<sup>th</sup> day.

- In the Old Covenant, they had the celebration of the “Feast of Weeks”, a festival of thanksgiving.
- They started counting 50 days from the Passover festival to reach this special day.
- Today, Pentecost represents the founding of the new covenant church.
- It’s also important to see that the followers of Jesus “were all together in one place.”
- Today in our digital era, we are gathered together in one place on this one screen.
- While this is good, we are looking forward to the time when we, as God’s people, can gather physically together in one place like we did before.

**2) Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting.**

- Notice, it wasn’t actually a wind, but had the sound of a wind blowing.
- It’s quite possible that this occurred in the upper room where Jesus met with his 12 disciples before his crucifixion and resurrection.
- The “they” in all probability were the 120 disciples of men, women and children that Jesus had brought together before His ascension.

**3) They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them.**

- Once again, we see the imagery of fire, which in the Old Covenant, God appeared to Moses in a burning bush and also appeared as fire and smoke on Mt. Sinai.
- Now a theophany is when God appears and makes Himself know to humanity.

**4) All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.**

- So, at this time, the Holy Spirit enabled the believers to speak in various languages that were spoken within the Roman Empire.
- Now the language barriers had been broken down, so that all people were able to communicate which probably hadn’t happened since the Tower of Babel.

**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.**

- These were Hellenistic Jews, who were pious and God-fearing, came from their various countries, around 70 nations, to Jerusalem to celebrate Pentecost.
- These Hellenistic Jews usually stayed in the southeast section of Jerusalem and when they traveled on their way to the Temple to worship, they passed by this house where the 120 had gathered together and had begun speaking in various languages.
- The temple worship began at 9 AM, so this was early in the morning.
- God is using this occurrence to bring 3000 Hellenistic Jews into becoming followers of Jesus.

**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?”**

- Galileans is a derogatory comment, because they weren't a very educated group of people and they dressed differently and spoke with a different accent than the rest of the Jews.
- But God was using them to draw attention to the more sophisticated Jews.
- Luke next shows some of the important countries where these Hellenistic Jews came from.

**9) Parthians, Medes and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, 10) Phrygia 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!”**

- This was a miracle because of the manifestation of the Holy Spirit.
- He was enabling these Galileans to take the gospel message and to “the ends of the earth.”
- Today, when we reach others with the gospel and share our testimony, we don't do that on our own – it's accomplished with the empowerment of the Holy Spirit.

**12) Amazed and perplexed, they asked one another, “What does this mean?” 13) Some, however, made fun of them and said, “They have had too much wine.”**

- Many of the people, who heard these Galileans talking joyfully and probably with laughter, assumed that they were drunk.
- Next, we'll see that Peter speaks to this crowd of people to debunk their comments.
- Luke has organized the book of Acts in what's called the narrative genre, which is the story of what's going on.
- And then Luke quotes various people who explain what the narrative meant.
- In fact, about one third of the book of Acts contains the speeches of various people.

**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!**

- 9 o'clock was the time for prayer in the temple.
- These prayers usually went from 9 in the morning to noon.

**16) No, this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel:**

- Peter tells them that what they are seeing and hearing is a fulfilment of prophecy.
- This is a prophecy of judgment and also mercy.

**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.**

- The “last days” are the time from Jesus' birth until His second coming – these are the messianic days.
- To prophesy means God gifted speaking.

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

- So, those directed by the Spirit, both men and women will speak God-given words.

**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.**

- Joel talks about a future manifestation of the Messiah's second coming.
- Also, the signs and wonders that Jesus did will continue to go with the His disciples today.
- When the sun has gone dark, we can't see and don't know where we are going.
- This is a time of judgment, but judgment isn't always bad because it takes us from who we are to the way we are because of Jesus,

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

- Universal salvation, not universalism, means that salvation has now been made available to all.
- So, as we've seen in the book of Acts, salvation has been opened up to all Gentile nations, within the Roman Empire.

Definition of the gospel:

- Now, here's a quote from GCI's Statement of Beliefs, concerning the definition of the gospel.
- This is extremely meaningful when we "call on the name of the Lord."

*The gospel is the good news of the kingdom of God and salvation by God's grace through faith in Jesus Christ. It is the message that Christ died for our sins and has made us his own before and apart from our believing in him ...*

- This is a huge statement, because we had nothing to do before God extended His love to us and Jesus making us His own.
- We were owned by Jesus before we believed.
- It's the Holy Spirit that has brought us to that understanding and belief.

*... and has bound us to himself by his love in such a way that he will never let us go.*

- Now, when God binds something, it's never going to fail.
- God will never let us go – we are bound with Him forever and ever.
- So, when everyone "calls upon the name of the Lord to be saved", they are calling upon that relationship that Jesus gave us and then bound us to Himself.
- That's the message that we share.
- And those who are living without the knowledge of who they are and the existing relationship that they already have with God, the message of Pentecost is the message

we share with others to let them know that their existence as they imagine it, is not reality.

- They are bound to the love of the Lord, but they just don't know it.
- So, how do we call upon the name of the Lord? What are our struggles?
- When Peter began to walk on water and then took his eyes off Jesus, he began to sink and then cried out, "Save me Lord."
- In essence, he called upon the name of the Lord to be saved in the midst of his circumstances.
- So, pastor Craig asks each of us today, "What are we struggling with? What are our concerns? What keeps us awake at night?"
- We need to call upon the name of the Lord because He has bound Himself to those circumstances, those things that keep us awake.
- If we're dealing with financial difficulties, call upon the name of the Lord, because Jesus has bound Himself to those financial difficulties with you.
- If we've just admitted someone to a hospital bed and we're suffering because of pain and grief, call upon the name of the Lord.
- Jesus has bound Himself to our loved ones who are in that hospital bed.
- And if we are bound to our own bed and can't get out because of our immobility and are suffering from that, call upon the name of the Lord.
- That's because Jesus has bound Himself to you and your situation of immobility.
- If we're suffering from cancer, call upon the name of the Lord because Jesus has bound Himself to that cancer and you and knows your situation.
- Call upon the name of the Lord and be saved in each situation.
- We've been given eternal life, we've been given salvation, and we have been given life that will go on and on and on.
- And so this physical life that we go through – the pain, the emotions and the suffering and the unpleasant circumstances we live in – we need to realize that in essence we've been healed because we've been given eternal life already.
- It is "an already but not yet" in terms of manifesting itself in our resurrected bodies.
- So please, brothers and sisters call upon the name of the Lord in whatever you suffer from, whatever concerns you, and whatever you might be afraid of.
- The fact that Jesus has saved us, the fact that He has bound Himself to us and will never let us go, is the absolute basis of where pastor Craig has placed his message of having no fear, no shame, no guilt and no doubt.
- Since we are bound to the Lord, He will never let us go.
- In our relationship with Him, we have no reason for fear, shame, guilt or doubt because Jesus has bound Himself to us.
- And He says, "Call upon Me, call upon My name" and He's there for us.

Closing prayer