

## **Willow River Parish: Clear Lake, Deer Park, and Faith Family**

### **Title: Life in the Holy Spirit**

### **Lesson: Acts 2:1-21**

**2** When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. **2** And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. **3** Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. **4** All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability.

**5** Now there were devout Jews from every nation under heaven living in Jerusalem. **6** And at this sound the crowd gathered and was bewildered, because each one heard them speaking in the native language of each. **7** Amazed and astonished, they asked, “Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? **8** And how is it that we hear, each of us, in our own native language? **9** Parthians, Medes, Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, **10** Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, **11** Cretans and Arabs—in our own languages we hear them speaking about God’s deeds of power.” **12** All were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, “What does this mean?” **13** But others sneered and said, “They are filled with new wine.”

**14** But Peter, standing with the eleven, raised his voice and addressed them, “Men of Judea and all who live in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and listen to what I say. **15** Indeed, these are not drunk, as you suppose, for it is only nine o’clock in the morning. **16** No, this is what was spoken through the prophet Joel:

**17** ‘In the last days it will be, God declares,  
that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh,  
and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,  
and your young men shall see visions,  
and your old men shall dream dreams.

**18** Even upon my slaves, both men and women,  
in those days I will pour out my Spirit;  
and they shall prophesy.

**19** And I will show portents in the heaven above  
and signs on the earth below,  
blood, and fire, and smoky mist.

**20** The sun shall be turned to darkness  
and the moon to blood,

before the coming of the Lord's great and glorious day.

<sup>21</sup> Then everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.'

**(Slide Show 1)** Today is Pentecost Sunday. As you see in the sanctuary, red is the color of Pentecost, symbolizing the Holy Spirit's arrival with tongues of fire. In fact, for the people of Israel written in Acts we read, Pentecost is a big Jewish holiday to commemorate that Moses received the commandments from God on Mount Sinai. After Jesus ascended, by the way, the Holy Spirit arrived on Pentecost, a festival day. Through the Holy Spirit's arrival, early Christian church began. Therefore, Pentecost is called the birthday of the church. If people learned God's love from the commandments in the Old Testament era, after the Holy Spirit's arrival people have experienced God's love through God's spirit.

**(Slide Show 2)** On Pentecost, right before the Holy Spirit's arrival, a lot of people gathered in Jerusalem to commemorate Pentecost. Just as there are many things to enjoy in festival today, they must have been enjoying their festival. Among the crowd, there were Jesus' disciples who believe the resurrection of Jesus Christ and their disciples and families. Most of them were from Galilee, and there was a border area facing the Gentiles in Israel. For those of you who might not know, Jerusalem is located almost in the middle of Israel.

**(Slide Show 3)** Not all countries' capitals are located in the center, but in some countries, the capital is located in the center of the country. For example, Korea was divided into South and North, but historically Seoul, the capital of S. Korea, had been located in the center of Korea. So, some people argue that the capital should be changed to the center of S. Korea, but Seoul is still the capital. Galilee was located in northern Israel facing other countries, where it was common to marry gentiles, and there were many mixed-race children. Orthodox Jews tended to think that Galilee, mixed with such different ethnicities, languages, cultures, and blood, was vulgar and often criticized.

**(Slide Show 4)** In Jerusalem, where many people gathered, Jesus' disciples were humble, insignificant, weak, and poor. Also, they may not have spoken much there because they had different accents from people of Jerusalem. When others heard the disciples' conversation, they were able to easily notice their origin. Eleven years ago, my college friends and I traveled to Jerusalem for two weeks. It was a short time, but it was enough time to experience racism. Some people called us monkey and cursed. I can imagine how Jesus' disciples would have been careful not to be found out where they came from.

**(Slide Show 5)** Today's scripture reading describes an amazing miracle that happened. When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. (1) And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. (2) Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. (3) All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability. (4)

If we think of that as today's language, they speak English, German, French, Korean, Spanish, Chinese, and so on, not Hebrew. There were devout Jews from every nation under heaven living in Jerusalem. (5) **(Slide Show 6)** And at this sound the crowd gathered and was bewildered, because each one heard them speaking in the native language of each. (6) I think the Jews already seemed to know they came from Galilee and asked: "Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? And how is it that we hear, each of us, in our own native languages?" (7-8) This shows how the people of Israel thought of the people of Galilee. Galilee was suburb, and a poor place. In Jerusalem, there were many highly-educated and high-ranking people such as high priests and scribes, but most people of Galilee didn't learn a lot. Therefore, the people of Jerusalem did not believe that they spoke various languages. So, all were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, "What does this mean?" (12) But others sneered and said, "They are filled with new wine." (13) Then, Peter began to explain what happened to them to the doubters. He preached about the Holy Spirit's arrival, asking back, "these are not drunk, as you suppose, for it is only nine o'clock in the morning." (15)

**(Slide Show 7)** Acts chapter 2 introduces Peter's first preaching. Peter, who was originally uneducated, was reborn as a bold testifier by the touch of the Holy Spirit, and he was able to explain all the reasoning in detail. His sermon on the Spirit's arrival is the first sermon to contain the core of the gospel since Jesus' resurrection and the most evangelical example. He testified to the resurrected Jesus Christ, quoting the prophecy of the Prophet Joel that any Jew would know: "In the last days it will be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams." (17)

Jews were proud that they were the people chosen by God. In their history, however, despite their pride, they were invaded, enslaved, and ruined by other countries. Before Jesus, the Spirit of God stayed only with special people such as Abraham, Moses, and Elijah. Under God's spirit, they were able to exert charismatic vitality. However, after the resurrection and ascension of Jesus,

everyone was able to experience God's spirit, just like Joel's prophecy. Everyone can invite the Spirit to their bodies.

At the time, young children, young people, and old people were the most marginalized people in the temple. They were marginalized from the law and marginalized from the Jewish faith tradition. But the prophesy tells that your children shall prophesy, and your young people shall see visions, and your old people shall dream dreams. Peter proclaimed with confidence: "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved." (21) Everyone can experience the presence of the Holy Spirit by opening their heart and embracing the Spirit. The Spirit of God is with those who have already confessed Jesus as Christ.

**(Slide Show 8)** Beloved in Christ, who are Christians? Christians are the people saved in the name of Jesus Christ. We are the people saved in the name of Christ. We can confess that Jesus is our savior and our Christ because of the help of the Holy Spirit. The apostle Paul tells that "No one can say Jesus is Lord except by the Holy Spirit." (1 Corinthians 12:3 NRSV) The confession that we confess Jesus as Christ is not something we can do with our knowledge or common sense. It is possible by the Spirit of God, the Holy Spirit, which works in our lives. The apostle Paul says that Christians are the people who belong to the Holy Spirit. Christians are the people who follow the guidance of the Spirit; a life that loves Jesus and combines his love, which brings depth to spiritual life.

Due to the influence of consumerism and capitalism, many people are aiming for consumption and serving money. However, life belonged in the Holy Spirit does not follow the logic of power and the logic of wealth. On the contrary, it is a life that follows emptiness and selflessness. Christians' lives are restored through a relationship with God.

**(Slide Show 9)** Beloved in Christ, I would like to ask you, does your life have love? Does your life have joy, peace, patience? May you love the fruits of the Holy Spirit, and stay in God's grace. May you pray for the help of the Spirit, use your gifts given by God for others and neighbors. May you experience Pentecost in your lives, live a life belonging to God's spirit. May the Holy Spirit always dwell in everyone's lives and may your lives bear the fruits of the Holy Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Amen.