



Acts Chapter 2

When we have saving faith in Jesus, we receive the gift of the Holy Spirit, we then learn to live in the Spirit and walk in the Spirit, and God the Holy Spirit also empowers us to serve God and others. [Discuss](#).

Read

Acts 2:1–4 The Holy Spirit Comes at Pentecost

2 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. **3** They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. **4** All of them were **filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.**

The outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost was a one-off event in the same way the death of Jesus on the cross was. However, just as the effects and impact of Christ's death affect us now and enable people to be forgiven and reconciled to God, so too the gift of the Holy Spirit is still being given to new believers and working in the lives of believers. And to be sure, people still have dramatic and powerful conversion experiences when the Holy Spirit came into their lives.

"Luke is not trying here to give us a detailed description or chronology of individual Christian experience. It is quite clear that in crucial ways this event is unique. It is the beginning of the creation of God's eschatological people, properly speaking. It is the empowering of them to do their job—to witness to Christ. While it is certainly true that every individual Christian must have his or her own filling by the Spirit in order to be Christian, his or her own "Pentecost" so to speak, that is not what this text is about." Ben Witherington

Then there is the way the Spirit enabled them to speak in tongues, or other languages.

In particular, Luke highlights this strange phenomenon of 'speaking in tongues'. This has been a prominent feature of some parts of church life in the last century or so, though for many previous generations and in many parts of church history it has been virtually unknown. It occurs, it seems, in other religions, as Paul was aware (1 Corinthians 12:2–3). Some people try to sweep 'tongues' aside as if it was a peculiar thing which happened early on and which, fortunately, doesn't need to happen any more. Sometimes this is combined with a sense of the need to control the emotions, both one's own and other people's. But 'speaking in tongues' and similar phenomena are, very often, a way of getting in touch with deeply buried emotions and bringing them to the surface in praise, celebration, grief or sorrow, or urgent desire turned into prayer. It is hard, seeing the importance of 'tongues' in the New Testament, and their manifest usefulness in these and other ways, to go along with the idea that they should be ruled out for today's church." Tom Wright

In any case, there are 3 main realities of the Holy Spirit in Acts:

1. Through the saving work of Jesus Christ on the cross and through his resurrection, God gives the Spirit through Jesus to those who believe.
2. The Holy Spirit helps us become like Jesus in holiness and obedience.
3. The Holy Spirit is given in greater measure and in ongoing ways for acts of service and ministry.

More succinctly, we can say: Through Jesus we receive the Spirit, live in the Spirit and are empowered by the Spirit.

Discuss how the Holy Spirit is at work in your lives, in our world and in the church, and how we can better live in and by the Holy Spirit.

Read Peter's Sermon in Acts 2:14-41

What do you notice about it? You should notice this: it is thoroughly Christocentric. In other words, it is ALL ABOUT JESUS! The first sermon at the first church service inspired by the Holy Spirit was all about Jesus. The Christian message is not a vague feeling or belief about God, but it is rooted in the historical person of Jesus, the historical death of Jesus, the historical resurrection of Jesus, and of course, the gift and experience of God's Holy Spirit. Here are some excerpts:

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. Ac 2:22.

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 Ac 2:23–24.

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. God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of it. Ac 2:31–32.

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. Ac 2:33.

"Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Messiah." Ac 2:36.

Those who heard the message respond by saying, "Brothers, what shall we do?" Listen to what Peter says:

38 Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call."

40 With many other words he warned them; and he pleaded with them, "Save yourselves from this corrupt generation." 41 Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day. Acts 2:38–41

What should our church be about and our lives be about as we look and listen to the first ever Holy Spirit inspired message of the church community? How can we share this message and let loose its power so that, like people who first heard it, they ask "What must we do?" How do you think the Holy Spirit will help us share this message?

Read:

Acts 2:42–47 The Fellowship of the Believers

42 They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. 43 Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. 44 All the believers were together and had everything in common. 45 They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. 46 Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, 47 praising God and enjoying the favour of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

“People sometimes feel guilty if they think they haven’t had such wonderful experiences as the **apostles** had on the first Pentecost. Or they feel jealous of those who seem to have had things like this happen to them. About this there are two things to say. First, as we saw in the first chapter, God moves mysteriously among his people, dealing with each individual in a different way. Some people are allowed remarkable experiences, perhaps (we can’t always tell) because they are going to have to go into difficult situations and need to know very directly just how dramatically powerful and life-transforming God can be. Other people have to work in quiet and patient ways and not rely on a sudden burst of extra power to fix all the problems which in fact need a much more steady, and perhaps much deeper, work. There is no room for pride or jealousy in a well-ordered **fellowship**, where everybody is as delighted with the gifts given to others as with those given to themselves.”
Tom Wright.

What sort of qualities, practices and attributes in the first church community resulted from people believing in Jesus and being filled with the Holy Spirit? How can our church communities whether in small groups, Sunday gatherings or other fellowship times be more like this?

A Prayer

Father God, we ask you to give us your Holy Spirit now.

Holy Spirit come, fill us with the love of God;

Holy Spirit come, affirm that we are God’s children;

Holy Spirit come, lead us in the way of Jesus;

Holy Spirit come, give us power to testify about Jesus;

Holy Spirit come, let your joy fill our hearts;

Holy Spirit come, lead us in the truth of Jesus, Amen.

A prayer for all day everyday: Holy Spirit, help me be like Jesus and live for Jesus.