

OASIS:
“CHURCH ON FIRE”
DONE IN SYNC WITH
THE “LIVING GOD’S STORY” JOURNEY
The Passage – Acts 2:1-13



***Preface:** Welcome to our LC Bible study in our sermon series “Living God’s Story.” As you know, this year we are working our way through the Bible, from Genesis through Revelation. So fasten your seat belt—it is quite a ride! These LC studies will complement the sermons, often using the same biblical texts, and will help your LC go deeper in personal understanding and application. These italicized portions are meant to resource and help you in leading.*

Study’s BIG idea:

The Holy Spirit is a fulfillment of God’s continued promise that He is with us, guides us and empowers us.

Possible starter questions (3 min.): What do you think of when you first hear the term “Pentecost?” Describe an experience when you have sensed the Holy Spirit at work in your life.

Transitional comment: The work of the Holy Spirit is a beautiful and a controversial topic in the Church. Pneumatology (the fancier theological term for the study of the Work of the Holy Spirit) and the doctrine of the Holy Spirit are essential in understanding personal sanctification and the work the Church has been called to. Today we want to look at the giving of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost.

Acts 2:1-13 (New International Version © 2011)

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. 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.

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. 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? 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!” 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.”

Context:

Pentecost was the fiftieth day after Passover. It was also an agricultural festival, the Feast of Weeks, when the wheat harvest was celebrated with a one-day celebration (Ex. 23:16, Lev. 23:15-21, Deut. 16:9-12). But for the Jew, neither Passover nor Pentecost was simply an agricultural festival. These festivals, of course, celebrated the identity-forming legacy in the young nation of Israel with the stories of the Exodus and the Passover. It would be 50 days after Passover until they would come to Mount Sinai and Moses would receive the law. Pentecost is about God giving to his redeemed people the way of life by which they must now carry out His purposes. How appropriate for God to send the Holy Spirit to this young church to proclaim He was with them.

O – What do you observe about the arrival of the Holy Spirit in verses 2-4?

I – Why do you think the Holy Spirit made such a dramatic entrance and what do the metaphors of wind and fire mean for the original Jewish audience?

(This was God's supernatural blessing of the Church that was called to bear the good news of the risen Jesus. The Greek word for "Spirit" is "wind" or "breath" and we should remember that Luke says the Spirit was like the wind, not actually referring to Him as wind. Fire was also used to describe the moment and this reminds the reader once again of Mount Sinai [Exodus 19:18]).

A – The work of the Holy Spirit is at times dramatic and at times subtle. How can we as Spirit-led Christians allow Him to lead in our lives?

O – What do you notice about *when* God poured out His Spirit?

(It's interesting to note that God poured out His Spirit when they were all together in one place. Today we tend to see the receiving of the Spirit has a personal experience and individual gift from God. The Spirit unifies and strengthens and is not intended simply for only personal/private use. The Holy Spirit is not only necessary for the believer's individual sanctification but also essential for the work of the Church. Both themes are to be cherished in the Church).

I – Why do you think the miracle of "tongues" was used here?

(Because of the festival, so many were gathered in the holy city of Jerusalem and as the text describes, they were from so many different nations. Some commentators have pointed out the significance that God is redeeming the sin of pride found at the Tower of Babel by demonstrating the miracle of unifying the different languages. In any case, the gift of the Holy Spirit is the greatest post-Resurrection demonstration of God's goodness to Israel and a fulfillment of Jesus' prayer of the giving of a Helper from John 14).

O – There are other "Pentecost experiences" repeated later in Acts (8:17, 10:44-11:18, 19:1-6). What similarities and differences do you notice?

(The power of the Holy Spirit working through the apostles for the glory of God is the common thread.)

I – Why do you think God repeats these somewhat similar scenes?

*(Luke is demonstrating the powerful and effective nature of God's **continued** presence among those who follow after God's Messiah.)*

O – It's interesting to note that even on the day of the Spirit's arrival on the day of Pentecost, the people mocked the disciples by stating that they had too much to drink. How do you think people today would have responded to this scene?

I – As the rest of the scene unfolds, we see dramatic courage and inspiring communal life transpire. What does this tell us about the work of the Spirit?

A – Following Peter’s dramatic speech and the early church’s sacrificial sharing of resources we are told that many people were added to the early church’s number. How can we as today’s Spirit-led Church act similarly? What hinders us? What do we individually and collectively need to continue the work started at Pentecost?

Prayer together: Let us pray that we as followers of Jesus would allow the Holy Spirit to work in our lives, in our LC, and in our church for the glory of the Father.

Text notes (you can access biblical texts via www.Biblegateway.com)

- a. **Please note that not all these questions are to be asked in a single night.** Take some time and select and reword the questions that best fit your voice and your LIFE Community group. Certain questions work better for certain groups. You are encouraged to prayerfully discern what will serve your LC the best.
- b. Complement OIA questions with “process questions” (what else? what more? what do others think?).
- c. When you ask questions, give people ample time to think and respond. Wait. Take your time; don’t rush people but encourage their participation. And avoid answering your own questions!
- d. Timing/pacing: allocate your time and move forward gently, with a steady pace.
- e. Application: Pace the study to conclude with “difference making” application.
- f. Secondary texts—use other texts sparingly, even if they are relevant. Such texts will push you into “teaching,” rather than facilitating. It can cause people to feel distracted or de-powered.