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God's Presence and Power in Me

Acts 2:1-13

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Have you ever been without power? A few months ago I was home alone on a Saturday when the electricity went out. Until that happens, you don't realize how dependent you are on it for everything. I didn't have a clock. I didn't have a radio. I didn't have a television. I didn't have a computer. I couldn't cook anything in the microwave. My food in the refrigerator and in the freezer was starting to melt. I couldn't even get my car out of the garage. You don't realize how everything in our world is designed around electricity. You think about those people on the Gulf Coast still living without power for a long period of time.

Life is designed around this power that comes into our home and makes life on a daily basis possible. Think about how foolish it would be to live in a place where there wasn't a regular supply of electricity or there wasn't any electricity at all. How foolish it would seem to go down to Target and go down all the rows and rows of electronic appliances—mixers and microwave ovens and toasters. The list goes on and on. Pencil sharpeners! I mean, the whole thing! If you didn't have any power, those would be the most worthless, absolutely useless things you could possibly purchase. They might look really pretty, but it would just be a bunch of clutter and junk. They wouldn't do anything, because they have to have power in order to do what they were created to do.

Well, our lives are a lot like that. After Jesus ascended back into heaven, those 120 devout followers of Jesus must have felt that powerlessness. The person they had walked with and had seen do miracles, the One who had taught them and shown them how to live and walked with them every single day, was now gone. They were just there, alone. They had been given this mission just before Jesus ascended: to go into all the world and be witnesses of the things that they had seen and heard about Jesus. But they had no ability. They had no power. They were alone and powerless.

Have you ever felt that way? Powerless to do what you know you're called to do? Without any sense of ability in yourself to carry it out, to make it happen? That's exactly where those disciples found themselves. Jesus told them to wait, and that He would send another Helper—someone to empower them, someone to come into their lives, to enable them and empower them to carry out the mission that He had given them.

They really had to question the verses in John 16 that were read on the screen a few minutes ago. Jesus said to them, "It's to your advantage that I go away." Think about that for just a minute. I'm with the Son of God. I'm with the Creator of the universe. He is here in my presence. He told me that it's to my advantage that He go away and that He would send another Helper, who would empower me to live and to carry out the mission. That had to be hard for them to even believe.

Frankly, the truth that we're going to see unfold in this next chapter of the Church's development is also, I think, sometimes hard for us to believe—the truth that God the Holy Spirit is the empowerer and the presence of God in our lives. But that's what we're going to see unfold.

Turn with me to Acts 2. This is the opening scene of a drama that is continuing to unfold to this very day. This is Act 1, Scene 1 of God working in our world to accomplish the mission of taking the good news of Jesus Christ to every man, woman, boy and girl, to every place in every

continent in every language, that they might understand and know and have a relationship with God Himself. This is the opening act.

You need to understand that you and I are still a part of the story. It's still unfolding to this very day. It has been the longest continuing, ongoing drama that the world has ever known. It's continuing to unfold and happen today.

Here is Act 1, Scene 1, beginning in verse 1 of Acts chapter 2:

When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. (*NASB)

We pick up in chapter 2 exactly where we left off in chapter 1. They are still meeting together, seeking God's face together. They are still enjoying that unity and that oneness of heart and mind that we saw over in chapter 1:14 that we talked about last week. They're seeking God's face. They're waiting just as God told them, "Wait until the Spirit comes. Wait until this Helper comes." So they're doing that. They're seeking His face.

We're told a very important thing here, though: that is was the day of Pentecost. What exactly is that? Well, Pentecost was one of the three great festivals in the life of the Hebrew people. People would make a pilgrimage up to Jerusalem, if they lived other places. It was a celebration of harvest. The wheat harvest would be completed by this time. They celebrated God's provision and His blessing and His harvest. It was the most widely attended of all the festivals, because it happened at a time of year where the weather was good. (They were as fickle as we are—we show up if the weather is good.) So the streets of Jerusalem would have been crowded with throngs of people not only from Jerusalem and Judea and Samaria, but Jews would have pilgrimed from far-off lands to come and be here for this festival.

The word *pentecost* means *fiftieth*. From that we get *pentagon* (five). It was celebrated the fiftieth day after the day after Passover. So it has been fifty days now since the resurrection of Christ. Forty of those days we understand that Jesus spent with His disciples, teaching them and preparing them for what was to come. Then He ascended into heaven. Now it is ten days later. It's the fiftieth day following the resurrection. That's when this festival was actually conducted in Israel.

It's interesting to think about the events that are going to unfold happening on the day of Pentecost during this festival. It was a celebration of harvest. That's what is about to happen. God's timing is absolutely perfect. We're told in Galatians that at just the right moment, God sent forth his Son to be born of a woman. At just the right moment, Jesus became flesh. At just the right moment at the celebration of Passover, He was crucified. And now, at just the right moment, in the life of the people, for those who had eyes and ears to see and understand, the celebration of harvest begins in the life of the nation of Israel.

So they're together. They're meeting in this same place where they had been meeting, no doubt—this room. It's this festival. Verse 2:

And suddenly there came from heaven a noise like a violent rushing wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting.

Suddenly, while they're in prayer and seeking God's face, this tornadic-sounding wind came on the whole house and filled it, just the sound of a violent, rushing wind. It's interesting as you go back through the Old Testament that the Hebrew word for *wind* and for *spirit* and for *breath* are

all the same word. The breath of God, or the wind, signified God's presence. It signified life from God.

You recall that in Genesis 1, God breathed into the nostrils of this man, Adam, that He had formed, and he became a living being. When God gave the Law on Mount Sinai, it was accompanied by a loud sound, a thunderous sound, and the sound of trumpets. It was a designation or a realization of God's power coming on His people or into a place.

So as an audible signal to these people that God's power was coming to them, this sound of a violent, rushing wind filled this place. Actually, as we'll see in a few verses, it spilled out of the house. It was heard. It was audible outside of the house where these people were—enough that a crowd gathered, wondering, *What in the world is that noise?* But it was evidence of God's power and God's life coming into and onto these people. Verse 3:

And there appeared to them tongues as of fire distributing themselves, and they rested on each one of them.

Again, throughout the Scriptures, fire is always a sign of God's presence among His people. You remember that when God spoke and came to Moses and said, "Moses, I want you to be My leader," how did He speak to him? Out of what? A burning bush. There was fire. You recall that when God led the people of Israel out of Egypt, there was a pillar of fire that went before them. It signified the presence of God. When they built the tabernacle and they would camp in a place, there would be a pillar of fire that would hover over the tent of meeting, signifying God's presence there among His people.

The people had understood that God was present among them, but this is something brand-new. Notice what happens with this fire. It appears to the people there in the room that it breaks up into individual flames or tongues of fire. It's sort of like when you and I have a campfire and you see the individual tongues of fire or flames of fire leap up. It says that this fire that came into the room distributed itself and came to rest on each and every person in the room. It says it came to rest on each one of them.

God is now coming to them in the person of the Holy Spirit, but He did it miraculously for these early Christians so that they would see and hear that God was coming. It was a dramatic moment of God's coming to dwell in them and rest on them. From this moment forward, they would have the very presence of God in their lives.

This is what John the Baptist referred to as the baptism of the Holy Spirit. John, when he baptized people, said, "I baptize you with water, but One is coming after me who is much greater than I, and He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire." That's exactly what they're experiencing right here.

Now one of the important things to understand as we read the Book of Acts is that it's not primarily a book of doctrine or teaching. It's a historical account of what happened. You have to read into Romans and Ephesians and Colossians and into Peter's writings to understand more and more about the ministry of the Holy Spirit.

But let's just understand that this is the baptism of the Spirit. That's how it happened for these folks. But the Scripture goes on to clearly teach that every person, at the moment they trust Jesus Christ as Savior—when they put their faith in His work on the cross and believe that *that* is their hope of salvation—at that moment they receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit. In fact, in

Romans it says if you do not have the Spirit, you don't know Christ. He who knows Christ has the Spirit.

The Spirit enables us to know within our own heart that we belong to God. Ephesians says it's the down payment, it's a seal, it's a guarantee—like the seal of a king's ring on a document. It's a guarantee of the promises that God has made. The Holy Spirit comes to us as a guarantee of our eternal inheritance. God comes to dwell with us and live in us.

Paul writes that God doesn't live any longer in temples made with human hands. He doesn't live in a building, in a sanctuary, in a holy of holies, but our bodies are now the temple of the Holy Spirit who lives within us.

God comes to take up residence in the person of the Holy Spirit in the life of every single person who believes in Jesus Christ as Savior. You are baptized into the Holy Spirit—you are identified with Christ and you are identified with God's mission and His power—at that moment you believe and God comes to live within you. That is an extremely profound truth that can revolutionize your daily life.

There are times when you and I have a great sense of God's presence. There are moments when you just feel God's presence. There are times when you feel like God is far away and distant: *Where is He?* But here is what you must believe and know that Scripture teaches very clearly: He has never left you. He will *never* leave you. He said to His disciples, "I will never leave you as an orphan. I'll never leave you without My presence. I will be with you forever; in fact, I will be *in* you." Go back and read what Jesus said in John 14 and John 16, because He spelled out this promise very clearly.

You and I, whether we feel it or not, if we know Jesus as Savior, must know and believe that God the Holy Spirit lives within us. He has taken up residence in our bodies. He is not far off. He is very near. You never are away from God's presence if you know Christ.

That's the baptism of the Spirit. Now notice in verse 4 what happens next.

And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit was giving them utterance.

It uses this different word, "filled." First, the Spirit came and rested, and now they are *filled* by the Spirit. It means to come under His complete and total control. They were under the complete guidance and direction and control of the Holy Spirit. In other words, the life of God was uninhibited in flowing through them to do what God had called them to do. They were completely yielded and surrendered to Him. They were completely dependent on Him. They had been waiting for ten days, just emptying themselves and waiting and asking God to fill them and asking God to empower them. God came and He rested on them, and then He filled them. He took control of them, and they began to speak in languages.

This was not some kind of ecstatic utterance or gibberish or something that no one understood. These were languages. He gave them the supernatural ability to speak fluently languages they didn't know. That's a pretty amazing gift or empowerment or miracle, isn't it? Think about the sound that came out of this room. People out in the streets, the throngs, heard it and wondered, *What in the world is that?* People came. As they came, they began to hear these 120 followers of Jesus, this little band of misfit leaders on Jesus' bus, begin to do this miracle of speaking another language. What must it have been like on that day of Pentecost to see and hear this miracle?

[Sounds of rushing wind and thunder. Several individuals speak the following words in different languages simultaneously.]

“Listen, friends. Listen to what God is saying to you. Hear the message of hope and forgiveness that is for you this very day. Jesus, the One who performed miracles and wonders among you—Jesus, the One who was crucified at the hands of sinful man—this same Jesus God raised from the dead, putting an end to the agony of death, for He could not be held in its power. This Jesus is both Messiah and Lord. He is the Savior. We have seen and heard all these things with our own eyes and ears.

Jesus has ascended into heaven, where He sits at the right hand of God the Father, exalted as Lord of lords and King of kings. What you are seeing and hearing today is what Jesus promised the Father would do—He would send the Holy Spirit, the Helper, to empower and comfort and encourage those who believe as we carry out the mission.

He also promised the Spirit would come to convict the unbelieving of righteousness and sin and judgment, and guide people into the truth to receive salvation and eternal life. Listen and believe. Jesus can deliver you, just as He has delivered us.”

Now there is no way we could literally go back and relive that, but what you heard spoken today was French and Spanish and Hebrew and Farsi, or what would be known as modern-day Persian, as well as English and sign language. But on that particular day, these 120 followers of Jesus were filled with the Spirit and given a supernatural ability to speak in languages they had never learned or spoken before.

What was the significance of that? Well, notice in verse 5:

Now there were Jews living in Jerusalem, devout men from every nation under heaven. And when this sound occurred, the crowd came together, and were bewildered because each one of them was hearing them speak in his own language.
(vs. 5-6)

Why would God do a miracle of allowing or causing these people to speak in languages they didn't know? It was because there were people from every language that was spoken that were there in Jerusalem on that day, and they were able to hear the message of God's goodness and His life-giving salvation message in their own native tongue.

There's a reason why God chose this festival to be the outpouring of His Spirit. In one day, thousands and thousands and thousands of people were able to hear and understand in their own native language the salvation message from God. It was an amazing thing and perplexing to them. Notice in verse 7:

They were amazed and astonished, saying, “Why, are not all these who are speaking Galileans? And how is it that we each hear them in our own language to which we were born?” (vs. 7-8)

They were perplexed. They were distraught. They were troubled by what they were hearing. As they lingered and they heard and they listened more, they took notice of who it was that was speaking in these languages and said, “Aren't these Galileans? Aren't these people from Galilee?”

Now what's the significance of that? Well, the significance is that Galileans were thought of as country bumpkins. These were, for the most part, uneducated people. They were very unpolished. They had a regional dialect that was odd. They couldn't pronounce certain things very well. They couldn't do guttural sounds. People just thought of them as backwards. You know how we have certain dialects that we sort of think that way about. We won't name them—maybe Nebraskan. But it was a dialect that gave them away. It made this thing all the more amazing—that these people who couldn't speak well at all, were speaking flawless, fluent languages that they had never learned or maybe even heard before. This was a miracle. It allowed these people to hear this message—the mighty deeds of God—in their own native tongue.

Verses 9-11 are those verses that cause us to stop and ask, “Of all the things that we'd like to know about the day of Pentecost, why in the world would he spend three whole verses just listing out all of these parts of the earth and nations where these people had come from?” Notice what he says:

“Parthians and Medes and Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the districts of Libya around Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabs—we hear them in our own tongues speaking of the mighty deeds of God.”

Why would he take the time to list out all of these nations where the people had come from? Well, the list of 15 nations here represents really what was then the known developed world. He starts off on the east and lists the Parthians and the Medes and Mesopotamia. It would be where we would think of as Iran and Pakistan and Afghanistan today. He comes around and he moves through what is today Turkey and Syria and Iraq. Then he moves down into Egypt and North African nations. Then he goes up into Asia and Europe. Then he mentions Rome. People had come as visitors from Rome for this festival, both Jews from Rome and also proselytes—people who so wanted the God of Israel that they were willing to go through a process of becoming Jews in order to enter into the promises of God for the Jews.

Basically what he is saying is that there were people from every corner of the known world that were there on that day, and they were all hearing the language—this message of the mighty deeds of God—in their own native tongue. It seems clear to me and most people who read this that the reason Luke uses three verses to tell us that is because it goes back to Acts 1:8. The mission of the Church and its people was to be witnesses of the mighty works of God—the work of Jesus Christ as the Savior of the world—to be witnesses of that truth in Jerusalem and Judea, in Samaria, and to the uttermost parts of the earth. By listing the countries where they came from and making it clear that God spoke this message in their own native tongue, he is making it very clear that this is a worldwide message. This is not a message for a select few. This is a message for *everyone*.

Just as God has always taken the initiative to come and reach out to us, He is taking the initiative to bring this good news to people in the very best possible way that they could receive it—their own native tongue. That is the remarkable story of God's grace from Genesis to Revelation—that God takes the initiative with us. He comes looking for us. He comes after us.

When Adam and Eve sinned, God came to the Garden looking for them. When God wanted a leader, He came to Moses. When God called His people out of Egypt, He came and visited them and He brought them out. God's heart, from the very beginning, has been clear He has a heart

for all people, that they might know Him and experience His life-changing message. So on this day, the birthday of the Church, He made this message known to people in their own native language by a miracle.

This filling of the Holy Spirit, this coming under the Holy Spirit's complete control and influence, is what empowered the disciples to carry out the mission. This theme of the filling of the Spirit and His giving them power to do the mission will come back again and again and again in the Book of Acts. Every week we're going to see it.

But I want you to understand something. He comes and He fills and gives them power to do different things every time. There's no formula for this. There is no one of these things that is standard or always the case. In this particular case on this moment on this day, the miracle that was really going to make an impact was the ability to speak in other languages.

But in other chapters and in the weeks to come and down the road, you're going to see that He gave them the ability supernaturally to suffer, to endure beatings for the sake of the Gospel. He gave them the ability to love and touch people who were unlovely and untouchable. He gave them the ability to sing while in prison. He empowered them to identify with people that they previously would never want to identify with for the sake of the Gospel.

The filling of the Spirit is something that you and I need to experience on a regular daily basis. We empty ourselves of our own ability to trust ourselves to live out of our own human strength, and we depend on the power of God in us to carry out the tasks and missions that He has given us to do in this life.

Everything is about the mission. The filling of the Spirit is about getting power to accomplish the mission. It's not for us. It's not so we can say, "Hey, look at me. I really have a great gift. Look at how God is in my life. Aren't I something?" But it's all about giving the message. It's all about serving people. It's all about loving people. It's all about carrying out the mission that God has given us to do.

The promise of God is that when we are yielded to Him, when we are humble and dependent on Him, when we recognize our inability in our flesh to carry out the mission, but we also recognize the presence of God in our lives by the Holy Spirit, then He will empower us to do whatever He calls us to do. Whatever it is that God has asked you to do or is calling you to do, He'll give you the power to do it—as long as you're dependent on Him.

There is no formula for being filled. If anybody comes to you and tells you, "Here is the formula for being filled with the Spirit: Step one, step two, step three," run from those people, okay? Run! There is no formula.

God looks in our heart and He knows when we're completely emptied of self-dependence and when we're completely dependent on Him. When we are, then He can fill us and He'll use us in powerful ways. But He chooses how He will use us. He chooses what the manifestation of the Spirit will be. That's His call, not mine and not yours.

We often think of the filling of the Spirit in conjunction with doing what I'm doing this morning: proclamation, standing up, having boldness to speak. Clearly it requires the Holy Spirit's empowerment, not to speak, but for any impact to come from the speaking. But I will tell you that it takes just as much, if not more, filling of the Spirit in my life to do a lot of other things I do than stand up and speak.

To forgive someone that in my flesh I don't want to forgive requires the power of the Holy Spirit. To love someone that frankly isn't very lovable requires the power of the Holy Spirit. To submit to someone who is in authority over you who may mistreat you, may misunderstand you, may not treat you fairly, requires the power of the Holy Spirit. But for the sake of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, so that they can see and understand who God is—that He is present in your life and can make a difference—He will empower you to do whatever He calls you to do.

You may be a student, and you have a coach or a teacher that is unfair and unjust. You want to disrespect them. You want to ignore them. You want to blow them off. But God says, “No, you are to be respectful. You are to submit to them.” By the power of the Holy Spirit, you can do that for the sake of the mission—that people might see and know the reality of God.

Some of these miracles are absolutely wonderful listed in the Book of Acts. But God must empower us to suffer sometimes, to go through hard things, to walk through dark days. It requires the power of the Holy Spirit in our lives to do that with grace, so that people will see our God in the midst of suffering.

The manifestations of the Spirit's filling are up to Him alone. What I must understand is that every day, every breath I take, every moment I live, requires that I be under the control and under the absolute influence of the Spirit of God who is in me. Any time you and I try to live outside of that and try to live this out in our own flesh, doing it out of our own strength, nothing of eternal significance will come of it. Like beating your head up against the wall, we'll find ourselves being frustrated and feeling powerless, when all the time God is right there. But He says, “You need to trust Me. You need to depend on My strength and energy.”

We're good at making excuses for why we can't do things: “I don't have enough knowledge”... “I don't know those people well enough.” The list goes on and on why we can't do sometimes the thing that God has called us and told us to do. “I can't love my husband”... “I can't forgive my wife”... “I can't...I can't...I can't.”

That's absolutely right. You can't. But God, by the power of the Spirit who lives within you if you know Jesus Christ, can give you the ability to do whatever He has called you to do. That is a life-transforming truth. That will revolutionize your daily existence when you grab hold of God's presence in your life and the power that is available to you. As Paul would later go on and say, the very power that raised Jesus from the dead is the same power that is resident in the person of the Holy Spirit in your life. How it must grieve God when He hears us say we can't, when all the time He has given us exactly what we need to carry out the mission.

Verses 12 and 13 give us the response of those who were there on that day—those who had gathered, the throngs who came. Ultimately this group of 120 spread out into the streets and out into the public places and were speaking in these different languages. People were coming and hearing. Ultimately they end up in the temple courts, where the message from next week we'll pick up in Acts 2:14. But in verses 12 and 13 we have the immediate response of those who were there. This also will come up again and again in the Book of Acts. There will always be these two responses to the message. Notice verse 12:

And they all continued in amazement and great perplexity, saying to one another, “What does this mean?”

A large part of this crowd continued, it says, in amazement. In other words, they lingered. They stayed. They hung around. They continued to dialog and talk among themselves and listen

more. They were curious and they wondered and they wanted to know, “What does this mean?” Their hearts were beginning to open to the message of salvation that was being spoken. Their curiosity and their desire to know more caused them to linger and stay. These are some of those who we’re going to read about next week—the thousands who believed on that first day.

It’s interesting, because I saw a survey that was taken a few years back on a college campus. The question was asked, “Are you interested in spiritual things?” More than 80% of the students who responded to that survey said, “Yes, I am very interested in spiritual things.” But the second question was, “Do you think other students are interested in spiritual things?” Only 20% thought somebody else was interested in spiritual things.

We live in this perception that nobody is interested, nobody cares, nobody wants to hear this message. But the reality is all around you, in your world, at work, in your neighborhood, among your peers and friends and family and extended family are people who deep down really want to know something about God. They feel this powerlessness and this aloneness. They don’t have God in their life.

From the moment you trusted Christ, you have had the presence of God in your life. You just don’t even know what it would be like unless you can remember your days before Christ. What would it be like to live in this world without the presence of God, without purpose, without direction, without power? There are people all around you who are curious and are going to ask questions. They want to know if we’re going to allow God to fill us up and do what He calls us to do: to tell them and to live before them in a way that causes them to ask questions.

There will always be, as we go through Acts, this crowd of people who are curious and stay and listen. But notice the other group of folks that are represented. Verse 13:

But others were mocking and saying, “They are full of sweet wine.”

Now this is not a group of people who stood around and waited and tried to assess what was going on and then came to this conclusion, “They’re all drunk.” These are people who looked for an immediate excuse to write off what they were seeing here. They said, “Oh, those people are just drunk.”

It would make absolutely no sense that these people were drunk. People speaking in flawless languages, boldly in the street, is not what I’ve ever heard from drunk people, okay? These were people who were immediately looking for an excuse, a reason to write it off. They didn’t have to consider what was being said. “Oh, they’re just a bunch of drunks.” On they went on their way into a life and an eternity without God. There will always be the two different groups of people. Two responses. You’ll see it again and again and again in the Book of Acts, and it continues to be true to this very day.

What do we need to take away from this dramatic opening scene of the story of the unstoppable Church? First of all, God promised that He would come in a personal way to each and every person who believes. He would take up residence in our lives; He would forever be with us. We would not be orphans. We would not be strangers. His promise was, “I will never leave you or forsake you.” That is the reality, if you know Jesus Christ today, that He is with you, that He is in you, in the person of the Holy Spirit. With the presence of God in the Holy Spirit, comes the power to do whatever God asks you to do. The question is not whether God is able. The question is: Are we listening to what He is telling us to do and are we living in dependence on His ability, His power, to do it?

This is an amazing thing—that for over 2,000 years this drama of God’s work in the world has been unfolding through ordinary people like you and me and these 120. Isn’t it amazing that these 120 people spent over three years in the presence of Jesus, but they were left powerless and without any ability to do what He called them to do until the Helper came? Suddenly, overnight, in a day, the presence of the Holy Spirit in each and every life transformed them into an army of witnesses that has been continuing to act and move and work in this world from that day to this very moment.

Even as we sit here, around this world there are people bearing witness to Jesus Christ today. People are believing in Him today. This is a movement of God in this world unparalleled in any time in history. It is without army. It is without government. It is without institution. It is an army of people who are individually filled and empowered by the Holy Spirit to carry out a mission that He individually gives to us and collectively gives to us. It is transforming our world. You and I are called to be a part of it to help transform the lives of people in this city and around the world.

You have a very important part to play. God has put a call on your life. I don’t know what it is. But there is a call on your life today and tomorrow and every single day of your life until the last breath you take. God has a call. He has a mission for you that only you can fulfill. If you will understand that you do not have within yourself the ability to carry out that mission, but the Holy Spirit in you can empower you, what will happen in our city? What would happen in our world if we, like those early followers of Jesus, empty ourselves of our own self-reliance, live in dependence on the Holy Spirit, and He begins to work, continues to work, as only He can do?

Our Father, I ask that You would burn this truth of Your presence and power deep into our hearts that it would affect us as much tomorrow morning or this afternoon or tonight, next week, next year, as it is perhaps this morning. The reality of Your presence in us is absolutely amazing, and we give You thanks for it. Lord, may we live depending on Your power, but may we not feel weak and powerless. May we recognize that everything we need for life and godliness is ours because of Your divine power poured into us. Make that a reality for us we pray in Jesus’ name, Amen.

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Study Questions
The Unstoppable Church
God's Presence and Power in Me
Acts 2:1-13
Pastor Mark Kremer

Opening Discussion

1. Have you ever felt isolated and alone at an important point in your life? How did you deal with it, and what did you take from that experience?
2. Have you ever felt powerless to accomplish an assigned task or to deal with a challenging situation? How do you respond in such cases?
3. What are the unique characteristics of each of the following kinds of power that we can possess: physical power, political power, economic power, spiritual power? How do they differ? What is the source of each? Which would you most like to possess and why?

Bible Study

1. Read John 14:12-26 and John 16:5-15. What did Jesus teach His followers about His departure and the coming of "another Helper"? What specifically did Jesus promise the Holy Spirit would do?
2. In Acts 1:4 Jesus told His followers to wait in Jerusalem for the Holy Spirit to come. Did they obey this command, and how did they occupy themselves while they waited? What were they doing in Acts 2:1 when the Holy Spirit came?
3. What was celebrated during the feast of Pentecost? Why might God have chosen this celebration as the occasion to send the Holy Spirit?
4. Compare the account of God's giving of the law on Mt. Sinai in Exodus 19 with the giving of the Holy Spirit in Acts 2:2-3. How are they similar? How are they different?
5. The biblical record shows that God's presence and power were often demonstrated through both wind (sound) and fire. Discuss some of those other occasions and the similarities or differences with the coming of the Holy Spirit.
6. What is the significance of the tongues of fire coming to rest on each one of Jesus' followers who were in the house?
7. What is the connection between the mission given to the church in Acts 1:8 and the first supernatural ability God gave to His followers to speak in the native languages of those present in Jerusalem for the feast of Pentecost (Acts 2:4-6)?

8. Why was hearing Galileans speaking perfectly in these various languages so amazing to those who heard it (Acts 2:7-8)?
9. Why did Luke go to the trouble of listing the names of the people groups who were there to hear the “mighty deeds of God” in their own native language at Pentecost?
10. How did the crowd respond to what they were seeing and hearing according to Acts 2:12?

What does the question they were asking indicate about their heart condition?

Have you ever experienced this kind of reaction from people you have talked with about Jesus?

11. What does the response of those in Acts 2:13 indicate they were thinking?

Have you seen this kind of response from some you have talked to about Jesus?

Application

1. How has the coming of the Holy Spirit as recorded in Acts 2:1-13 affected your daily life as a follower of Jesus?
2. Do you live in the constant awareness of the presence of God the Holy Spirit in your life? What enhances or detracts from your awareness of His presence?
3. What does it mean to be filled with the Holy Spirit? Why does God want us to be filled with the Holy Spirit? What are the characteristics of those who are filled? What must I do to be filled with the Holy Spirit?
4. What has God asked you to do that you most definitely need the power of the Holy Spirit to carry out? What happens when you try to carry out your assignment in your own human strength?
5. Share some examples of what you have seen God do through you when you have been completely dependent on the Holy Spirit.
6. How will the truths of this passage change the way you think and act this week?