

**Joke:** A Baptist preacher and his wife decided to get a new dog. Ever mindful of the congregation, they knew the dog must also be a Baptist. They visited kennel after kennel and explained their needs. Finally, they found a kennel whose owner assured them she had just the dog they wanted.

The owner brought the dog out to meet the pastor and his wife. "Fetch the Bible," she commanded. The dog bounded to the bookshelf, went back and forth through the books, located the Bible, and brought it to the owner. "Now find Psalm 23," she commanded. The dog dropped the Bible to the floor, and showing dexterity with his paws, leafed through and finding the correct passage, pointed to it with his paw and barked. The pastor and his wife were very impressed and purchased the dog.

That evening, a group of church members came to visit. The pastor and his wife began to show off the dog, having him locate several Bible verses. The visitors were very impressed! . One man asked, "Can he do regular dog tricks, too?" "I haven't tried yet," the pastor replied. He pointed his finger at the dog. "HEEL!" the pastor commanded. The dog immediately jumped on a chair, placed one paw on the pastor's forehead and began to howl. The pastor looked at his wife in shock and said, "Good Lord! He's Pentecostal!"

## **When God Came to Stay - Pentecost Sunday 2024**

Today I want to continue on our journey that we were on before Mother's Day but I want to do that in light of the Jewish holiday which is today Pentecost Sunday.

There's a theme we see throughout Scripture, several actually but the one I want to talk about today is this: God coming to, and living among His people.

It began with God walking with Adam in the Garden. Later, the story continues with God living among the people in the Tabernacle, or temple. But then with the coming of Jesus, we read. . .

John 1:14 (NIV): The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

God robed himself in flesh, left heaven and walked among men, through Jesus.

And even though we know He had to suffer and die so that we could live. He also rose again so that we could rise in newness of life.

And here's the good news, even with what took place on the cross, Jesus said he would never leave us or forsake us. And even went so far as to tell us. . .

John 16:5–11 (NLT): 5 “But now I am going away to the one who sent me, and not one of you is asking where I am going. 6 Instead, you grieve because of what I’ve told you. 7 But in fact, it is best for you that I go away, because if I don’t, the Advocate won’t come. If I do go away, then I will send him to you. 8 And when he comes, he will convict the world of its sin, and of God’s righteousness, and of the coming judgment. 9 The world’s sin is that it refuses to believe in me. 10 Righteousness is available because I go to the Father, and you will see me no more. 11 Judgment will come because the ruler of this world has already been judged.

And then the story climaxes with the vision John had in Revelation 21

Revelation 21:2–3 (NLT): And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven like a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. 3 I heard a loud shout from the throne, saying, “Look, God’s home is now among his people! He will live with them, and they will be his people. God himself will be with them.

But how does that happen?

And church it’s important to remember that our salvation isn’t just about heaven when you die. It’s more about how to bring heaven to earth right now. That’s the Kingdom of God.

It’s one of the reasons why Jesus taught us to pray, “Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.” But again, how?

So, let me share three stages of the change that was coming when Jesus stepped on the scene.

1. Prophecy

Under the Old Covenant, the arrangement was simple: God would bless the people, and they would live the way he wanted them to.

But as we have discussed the past few weeks It didn't work, because the people continually disobeyed. Even through the law was perfect no one could follow it perfectly.

But then along comes Jesus to bring in a new and better way.

Hebrews 8:6–10 (NLT): But now Jesus, our High Priest, has been given a ministry that is far superior to the old priesthood, for he is the one who mediates for us a far better covenant with God, based on better promises. 7 If the first covenant had been faultless, there would have been no need for a second covenant to replace it. 8 But when God found fault with the people, he said: “The day is coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the people of Israel and Judah. 9 This covenant will not be like the one I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand and led them out of the land of Egypt. They did not remain faithful to my covenant, so I turned my back on them, says the Lord. 10 But this is the new covenant I will make with the people of Israel on that day, says the Lord: I will put my laws in their minds, and I will write them on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people.

That Scripture was taken from the prophet Jeremiah who also foresaw the New Covenant on God's horizon.

Jeremiah 31:31–33 (NIV): The days are coming,” declares the Lord, “when I will make a new covenant with the people of Israel and with the people of Judah. 32 It will not be like the covenant I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, because they broke my covenant, though I was a husband to them,” declares the Lord. 33 “This is the covenant I will make

with the people of Israel after that time,” declares the Lord. “I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people.

The prophet Ezekiel saw it as well. . .

Ezekiel 36:26–27 (NIV): 26 I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. 27 And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws.

I remember in Boy Scouts, who now decided to change the name to Scouting America, so they can be more inclusive, y the way that means it’s not just boys, frustrating to me. But I will let that be.

Anyway I can remember one of our high adventure trips to Minnesota Boundary waters. When we started off that trip, we had to carry all the provisions for the week on our back, as well as the canoe over our heads, on the trails to get to the next access point. And that weight of it all would slow you down. You learned in a hurry to eat the food that was the heaviest the quickest. Because we weren’t staying in the same place every day we would move onto another trail to hit another bay the next day. But as that hike continued that very same stuff that slowed you down when you first started became the very energy that kept you going. So, as your pack became lighter your energy became greater just when you needed it the most.

It’s sort of like that with the Old Covenant vs. the New Covenant.

The Old Covenant with its laws and requirements weighed us down, slowed us down, like a burden on our backs. But with the coming of the New Covenant the burden of the Law is removed from our backs, and His Grace gives us a new energy inside to keep us moving towards God.

That's why Jesus said, "My yoke is easy and my burden is light."

Because we are no longer burdened with a performance mindset, we are a new creation and instead of working for victory we work from victory. Instead of working to please Papa we work because Papa is already pleased. Instead of working to become more right with God we understand that we are the righteousness of God in Christ Jesus.

So we have prophecy the second is that we have a . . .

## 2. Promise

Luke 24:44–49 (NLT): Then he said, "When I was with you before, I told you that everything written about me in the law of Moses and the prophets and in the Psalms must be fulfilled." 45 Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures. 46 And he said, "Yes, it was written long ago that the Messiah would suffer and die and rise from the dead on the third day. 47 It was also written that this message would be proclaimed in the authority of his name to all the nations, beginning in Jerusalem: 'There is forgiveness of sins for all who repent.' 48 You are witnesses of all these things. 49 "And now I will send the Holy Spirit, just as my Father promised.

But stay here in the city until the Holy Spirit comes and fills you with power from heaven.”

And then in John’s gospel we read this. . .

John 14:18 (NIV): I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.

And in Acts. . .

Acts 1:4–5 (NLT): Once when he was eating with them, he commanded them, “Do not leave Jerusalem until the Father sends you the gift he promised, as I told you before. 5 John baptized with water, but in just a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.”

And after ten days of waiting for what Jesus had promised, detailed in Acts, chapter one. The third thing I want to share took place and that is they were filled with. . .

### 3. Power

Acts 2:1–4 (NIV): 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.

Here in Acts 2 the text records three manifestations of the Spirit's power:

1. The wind – Greek word is Pneuma and the Hebrew word is Ruah.

It's the same word used in:

- Creation when God breathed into the first man the “breath of life.”
- Ezekiel when he prophesied to the dry bones in chapter 37
- When Jesus spoke to Nicodemus and told him you can't see the the wind but you hear its power and see its effects.
- And then this in John. . .

John 20:21–22 (NIV): Again Jesus said, “Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.” 22 And with that he breathed on them and said, “Receive the Holy Spirit.

It's much like wind filling sails. The Holy Spirit breaths on us and it propels us to move.

Then there was. . .

2. Fire. And if the wind signifies an exterior force, then fire symbolizes an interior one.

- It's the flame which cleanses, purges, and burns away the impurities. (Talk about the gold refining process) It convicts us but never condemns us.



- It's the flame which warms our hearts and changes smoldering embers into a roaring fire.

And let me say this if you feel like the flame isn't what it used to be Matthew 12:20 tells us this. . .

Matthew 12:20 (NIV): 20 A bruised reed he will not break, and a smoldering wick he will not snuff out, till he has brought justice through to victory.

So in context of the New Covenant that I have been sharing this is just another verse that shows Jesus comes to bring healing, restoration, and justice. And it's a beautiful depiction of Jesus' compassion. It shows us that he will not leave us broken, weak, hurting, or struggling. But will be with us in those seasons of difficulty. Helping us, working all things for our good and His glory.

- The fire also fulfilled the prophecy of John the Baptist who said: "I baptize with water, but One is coming after me who will baptize you with the Spirit and with fire."

The last thing we see in Acts was the. . .

### 3. Praise

- These disciples who had been huddled together in a room behind locked doors ran into the streets and began loudly and boldly to declare the wonders of God.

They simply could not contain their praise. It was like a tea-kettle ready to boil: The steam will escape, wherever it can.

Not even language barriers could contain their praise. Everyone around heard them declaring God's praises in their own languages; languages these unschooled Galilean fishermen had never learned.

And as real as that experience was for them and is available to us, and as powerful as all of it was. The Real Power of Pentecost was not the Wind, the Fire, or the Praise.

No, the real power of Pentecost was the Holy Spirit's ability to completely change the heart. To change people. . .

Think about Peter for a minute. . .

Think about the events of his life over the last 50 days:

- There in the garden, Jesus is about to be betrayed and what does Peter do? He cuts off the guard's ear with a sword. And I love this, Jesus heals him and I think that would get me thinking what are we doing here if I was the one being healed.
- Then as Jesus was found guilty at the trial what does Peter do? Three times he denies that he even knows Jesus.
- Then there's a resurrection and Peter runs to the tomb but doesn't find Jesus and still not fully understanding what happened.

And then Jesus appears to the disciples and this is awesome, check this out. . .

John 20:19 (NIV): On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jewish leaders, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!"

Now I don't know about you but if I'm in a house and the doors are locked and all of a sudden someone who wasn't there is now standing there the last thing I'm going to be is at peace.

I can almost see Jesus looking at everyone and saying, "surprise,"

And Thomas wasn't there during that encounter so a few verses later we read. . .

John 20:26 (NIV): 26 A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!"

Surprise again it's me.

And after Jesus comes and shows himself to them what does Peter do?

He does what so many other believers do when they feel they don't measure up. He goes back to the old and familiar, after God has called him to something new to walk into by faith. Peter went back to fishing. Back to where he thinks he belongs.

Romans 8:1 (NIV): Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus,

That verse should really be an encouragement to all us. When the enemy who is the accuser of the brethren comes to you and tries to tell you that you messed up, and tries to make you feel condemned for your sin. You need to understand that it is not God. The Holy Spirit may convict us to remind us that what you did isn't who you are. But he will never condemn. The enemy dies that to get you to believe the lie that God can't or won't use you so that you will not reach your full potential. But greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world.

And watch this as the women get to the tomb they see the angel that tells them Jesus is not here and then adds this. . .

Mark 16:7 (NIV): But go, tell his disciples and Peter, 'He is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him, just as he told you.' ”

He points Peter out by name. I love that about God when we don't think we have done enough, witnessed enough, loved enough. . .He shows up to let us know you are enough. In spite of what you did He says, "I still remember your name."

But it doesn't stop there after Peter returns to his old career. . .

John 21:1–8 (NIV): Afterward Jesus appeared again to his disciples, by the Sea of Galilee. It happened this way: 2 Simon Peter, Thomas (also known as Didymus), Nathanael from Cana in Galilee,

the sons of Zebedee, and two other disciples were together. 3 “I’m going out to fish,” Simon Peter told them, and they said, “We’ll go with you.” So they went out and got into the boat, but that night they caught nothing. 4 Early in the morning, Jesus stood on the shore, but the disciples did not realize that it was Jesus. 5 He called out to them, “Friends, haven’t you any fish?” “No,” they answered. 6 He said, “Throw your net on the right side of the boat and you will find some.” When they did, they were unable to haul the net in because of the large number of fish. 7 Then the disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, “It is the Lord!” As soon as Simon Peter heard him say, “It is the Lord,” he wrapped his outer garment around him (for he had taken it off) and jumped into the water. 8 The other disciples followed in the boat, towing the net full of fish, for they were not far from shore, about a hundred yards.

And it was when Peter hits the shore that three times He was asked Peter do you love me? Three times the same number of times Peter said I never knew him.

And the scripture said Peter was hurt. No wonder he went back to fishing. He felt like maybe he messed up too many times all the while Jesus is calling him back to his purpose.

Talk about a wishy-washy, up and down, inconsistent Christian! Probably not too different from many of us.

But on the Day of Pentecost, this same unsettled, shifting fisherman stood up, full of the Holy Spirit, the Pnuema, the very Breath of God, raised his voice, and addressed the crowd.

Peter was transformed by the indwelling presence and power of the Holy Spirit. That is the real miracle of Pentecost!

It wasn't the wind, or fire, or praise that accomplished God's work that day. That only got the people's attention. It was Peter's sermon that was effective. When he finished speaking the people were cut to the heart and cried, "What shall we do?"

(Talk about miracles without a message)

And they asked, "What shall we do?"

Acts 2:38–39 (NIV): 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."

Now I don't want to speculate but I do find this quite fascinating. Do you know how many were baptized on this Pentecost?

Acts 2:41 (NIV): Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.

Do you know how many died when Moses came down off the mountain with the law?

Exodus 32:28 (NIV): The Levites did as Moses commanded, and that day about three thousand of the people died.

3000 died when the law was given, 3000 saved when Peter preached his sermon on Pentecost. Truth is in both events 3000 died. But in the second event they died to their old self and were baptized to bury the old and put on the new. To become new creations.

In one occasion they died because of the law on the other they died to the law.

2 Corinthians 3:7–9 (NLT): The old way, with laws etched in stone, led to death, though it began with such glory that the people of Israel could not bear to look at Moses' face. For his face shone with the glory of God, even though the brightness was already fading away. 8 Shouldn't we expect far greater glory under the new way, now that the Holy Spirit is giving life? 9 If the old way, which brings condemnation, was glorious, how much more glorious is the new way, which makes us right with God!

And then in Romans we read. . .

Romans 7:4 (NIV): So, my brothers and sisters, you also died to the law through the body of Christ, that you might belong to another, to him who was raised from the dead, in order that we might bear fruit for God.

Let me try to wrap this up today. . .

Mary Magdalene was the first person to see Jesus after His death and resurrection. Do you remember what she did as soon as she recognized Him? She grabbed Him, and she wouldn't stop clinging to Him.

Jesus responded, “Stop clinging to me.” Why did Jesus tell her that? Jesus was in effect saying to her: “Mary, stop holding on to me. There’s a new way to know me that’s different from what you’ve experienced thus far.

Hear this church Jesus doesn’t dance to our music. He doesn’t sing to our tune. He can’t be contained by our expectations, or domesticated by our programs.

He no longer is doing things by the old way of doing things. He’s given us new wine skins. And He comes to us in ways that sometimes can make it easy to miss Him. But the good news is His sheep hear His voice we just may need to slow down enough to recognize what He is saying.

By the way that’s why we read the Bible, come to church, pray and do the stuff we do. It’s not to perform and think we are getting closer to God by doing them. We do them so we can know what He has said, so that we can hear what He is saying.

When Peter, James and John saw the transfigured Lord on the mountain, it was Peter who wanted to build a tabernacle for Jesus, Moses and Elijah and remain on the mountain to enjoy the encounter. Peter wanted to stay with the tabernacle experience.

But God said no that’s not how it works anymore.

I think there is something in our fallen nature that, like Peter, wishes to build a monument around a spiritual encounter with God and remain there.

But hear this church, He will always break free from our frail attempts to pin Him down, box Him up and hold Him in place.



And He does that by coming to us in new and unexpected ways.

His ways are not our ways and so we need to sometimes just put aside the distractions climb into our closets and wait as they did on the day of Pentecost so that we can taste and see that the Lord is good.

Pentecost records and celebrates the new way God is with us now.

And it is the fulfillment of all the prophecies and promises of the scriptures.

Colossians 1:26–27 (NIV): the mystery that has been kept hidden for ages and generations, but is now disclosed to the Lord's people.  
27 To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

He no longer comes to us by some ceremonial thing done in the temple. You now are the temple.

God no longer just visits with us by now lives in us. God no longer just rests His Spirit upon us, but now puts His spirit in us.

That is what's special about Pentecost. . .It is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

Listen I'm all for the power of God showing up like it did on the Day of Pentecost but even when he doesn't I can know He is with me because it is Christ who lives in me, the hope of glory.