

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

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

14But 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. 15Indeed, these are not drunk, as you suppose, for it is only nine o'clock in the morning. 16No, 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. 18Even upon my slaves, both men and women, in those days I will pour out my Spirit; and they shall prophesy. 19And I will show portents in the heaven above and signs on the earth below, blood, and fire, and smoky mist. 20The sun shall be turned to darkness and the moon to blood, before the coming of the Lord's great and glorious day. 21Then everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.'

The last time we heard him speak was March 28th. Late at night on March 28th or early in the morning, March 29th he spoke before just a few people: a young woman, some other folks gathered, waiting. His speech was full of passion, he even swore to God to make his point.

"Aren't you a friend of Jesus?" he was asked.

"I do not know the man."

"Surely you were with him."

"I was not," he replied.

"Surely you are one of them," another said.

And Peter cried, "I swear I do not know him."

March 28th to May 19th - not even two months. How have you changed in that time? Have you quit smoking? Have you made a new commitment to your church, to serve? Have you made a new commitment to your family, to husband or wife or children to listen with all

your attention? Have you found the courage to speak to a co-worker about Christ? Have you taken that big step to talk with someone about that thing that is troubling you?

Is faith stronger in you now than it was March 28th, is the love of God more fully in your heart? Is the hope of salvation closer to you now than it was 53 days ago?

Or are you exactly where you were then - still full of good intentions, things you will get to sometime? How is it with you?

For Peter those fifty-three days turned the whole world upside down. He witnessed Jesus' humiliation. He saw what happened to the Son of God in this world. In exchange for his love the world gave Jesus hatred. In exchange for Jesus faithfulness, everyone abandoned him. In exchange for Jesus word of forgiveness the world condemned him to death on the cross.

Peter and the other disciples huddled together in fear the Friday and Saturday following, and were still full of fear when on Sunday evening Jesus appeared in their midst.

He told them to wait in Jerusalem, that his power would soon be theirs. And they waited. For fifty days they waited. Surely they prayed, and read the scriptures, and remained together supporting and encouraging one another.

Fifty days is a long time to wait. But Peter surely remembered just how far he could get on his own. He knew that his own spirit, his own courage, failed him when the going got tough. This time he would depend on what God would give.

Suddenly a sound came from heaven like the rush of a mighty wind and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared to them tongues as of fire, distributed and resting on each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit.

Then, full of God's Spirit they went out. They spoke, and people understood, heard them speaking in many languages.

Then Peter spoke. Such a short time before unable to say even to a young girl, I know Jesus, now Peter was before a crowd of thousands saying, "God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified." The fisherman from Galilee now stood before the crowd of people from all over the empire. Empowered by God's spirit he spoke, and about three thousand believed that day. More than I will convince in a whole lifetime of preaching, believed Peter and God's word spoken through him that day.

What is God planning to do with you, and with me, and with all of us together as the church? We expect no mighty rush of wind, no tongues of fire. We expect that not even three will be converted through us today.

What could God accomplish in us if we would spend the next fifty-three days filling our hearts and thoughts and words with Jesus? Could Ezekiel's vision of the dry bones happen in us, could Pentecost happen once more in us and through us? What is possible for God?

I know this, that if you and I continually fill our hearts with only what is possible for us, fifty-three days will pass and the bones will be only drier, and every young girl who asks about Jesus will get the impression that we don't know the man. But if our hearts and our minds and our souls are filled with Jesus Christ, then there is no telling what will be.

So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls. And they devoted themselves to the apostle's teaching, and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.

I don't know what the Holy Spirit will make possible in you and in me. But while we wait I know that God's will for us is that we devote ourselves to the Apostles' teaching, and fellowship - being together. God's will is that we gather here for the breaking of bread, sharing the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ and for prayer expecting that God is planning to do great things through us.