

May 20, 2018

KIBC Sunday Worship Service (Pentecost Worship)

Message by Pastor Teiichiro Kuroda

Title of the Message: "The Blessed Time to Gather in One Place"

—Who is Present in the Center?—

Text: Acts 2:1~13

2:1 When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place.

2:2 Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting.

2:3 They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them.

2:4 All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.

2:5 Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven.

2:6 When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard their own language being spoken.

2:7 Utterly amazed, they asked: "Aren't all these who are speaking Galileans?"

2:8 Then how is it that each of us hears them in our native language?

2:9 Parthians, Medes and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia,

2:10 Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome

2:11 (both Jews and converts to Judaism); Cretans and Arabs — we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues!"

2:12 Amazed and perplexed, they asked one another, "What does this mean?"

2:13 Some, however, made fun of them and said, "They have had too much wine."

Introduction

The other day, when I was walking near Osaka Umeda station, I suddenly heard a loud sound. I immediately thought, "It's a traffic accident." People nearby probably thought the same.

They simultaneously looked a direction of the sound. Many people nearby were all relieved to know that it was not the big accident. We often are surprised at an unusually loud sound.

Many people heard a big sound in Jerusalem 2000 years ago. They came together in bewilderment.

The Bible records as below—

Acts 2:5 Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven.

2:6 When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard their own language being spoken.

The verses above describe the moment when the Spirit of God came down to people who believed in God. It is called Pentecost that was a very important event in the history of the Bible and also of Church. We can't mention the days of the New Testament and its grace and the Bible without the event of Pentecost.

The Holy Spirit is often likened to oil so Pentecost is called *the Anointing Oil*.

Let's study the following two points from Pentecost today.

Main Points

1. The Anointing of the Holy Spirit

1) Pentecost is a Fulfillment of Prophecy in the Bible

2:1 When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place.

Pentecost is one of three major festivals (Passover, Sukkot, Pentecost) of the Jewish people. Pentecost (meaning 50) means the fiftieth day festival. It is celebrated 7 weeks (49 days) after Passover. People also give thanks for harvesting wheat on that day.

The Bible records as below—

• **Leviticus 23:15 From the day after the Sabbath, the day you brought the sheaf of the wave offering, count off seven full weeks. 23:16 Count off fifty days up to the day after the seventh Sabbath, and then present an offering of new grain to the Lord. ⇒ Pentecost**

Psalm 133 records as below—

133:1 How good and pleasant it is when God's people live together in unity! 133:2 It is like precious oil poured on the head, running down on the beard, running down on Aaron's beard, down on the collar of his robe.

133:3 It is as if the dew of Hermon were falling on Mount Zion. For there the Lord bestows his blessing, even life forevermore.

2:1 “They were all together in one place.”

People came to gather on the day of Pentecost and join the festival of thanksgiving. “One place” seems to be the upper room of the last supper or the temple (Luke 24:53).

Anyway, they kept praying in one heart.

Because Jesus said,

1:4 On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command, “Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my father promised. Which you have heard me speak about.

Therefore, the saints who were commanded by Jesus stayed in Jerusalem.

1:14 They all joined together constantly in prayer, along with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brothers.

Like this, God’s Spirit came down in Pentecost that was God’s promise in the Old Testament.

Jesus also said that the Spirit came down.

John 14:16 And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever —

14:17 the Spirit of truth.

It was on the day of Pentecost that the Spirit that God was promised to come down.

2) The Signs of Pentecost

Pentecost had the following signs as below —

① **“a sound like the blowing of a violent wind” (verse 2)**

The first sign was to be heard so everyone could understand. Wind is often used as a symbol of the Holy Spirit in the Bible. (Ezekiel 37:9~14, John 3:8) It is written that the wind came *from heaven*. So we understand it as a sign *from heaven*.

② **“tongues of fire that separated” (verse 3)**

The second sign was visible. Fire and flame symbolize the Holy Spirit. Flame also represents holiness.

John the Baptist records as below —

Matthew 3:11 I baptize you with water for repentance. But after me comes one who is more powerful than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.

It is the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

③ **"...and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them." (verse4)**

The third sign was that they began to speak God's work in other tongues. Wind symbolizes power and fire symbolizes holiness and the third sign symbolized universality of the Gospel.

Because, when the Gospel is preached in many languages it will be heard by many kinds of people. Jesus said that the Gospel of God would spread to Samaria the land of the Gentiles, from Jerusalem and Judea, the Jewish communities. It means that the Gospel of Christ will spread over the entire world. It is God's master plan.

Like this, Pentecost revealed three signs and they were very meaningful ones. God's master plan progressed by the Holy Spirit. It was led by God's authority.

Let's study Pentecost deeper.

3) The Center of Pentecost

We studied three signs of Pentecost as the event of history. However, if we are present there, we would be paralyzed with fright.

Their hearts are terrified ⇒ greatly moved ⇒ and came to awe. However, we should be careful. We should think about the most important thing. Signs, phenomena and events are amazing things. However, the center of Pentecost is not the signs, but the fact that they all were filled with the Holy Spirit.

What does it mean to be filled with the Holy Spirit? It means that they completely belong to God. Then, God can use him or her completely.

Believers of the early churches had great responsibility and were in danger. My friends. Please imagine how they lived at that time. They didn't have any special theological education. However, they were sent to untrodden places by following Christ's great commandment. It was nothing but God's work. However, they were not willingly accepted. They met with opposition and they were sneered and persecuted. They had to walk the way God prepared.

My friends. What does it mean to be filled with the Holy Spirit? When we greatly moved and look supernatural things, healing diseases and miraculous things, we are really excited. On top of that, when we meet people who work these miraculous things, we call them people who are *filled the Holy Spirit*. Of course, they are great people.

However, what does it mean to be really filled with the Holy Spirit?

I think it means to *completely belong to God*.

As a result, God can do a miracle through him or her.

The center of Pentecost is not the signs (results) but it is the coming of the Holy Spirit.

To be filled with the Spirit is very important, because it is motive power of preaching the Gospel of Christ and Christian life. The common nature of those who were filled with the Holy Spirit in Acts 2 were people who believed in the cross of Jesus and His resurrection and ascension.

- ① They repented at the cross of Jesus and believed His resurrection.
 - ② They decided to rely on the Lord and belong to Him.
- What then is the work of the Holy Spirit?

2 . The Work of the Holy Spirit

1) The Coming of the Holy Spirit Attracted a lot of Attention

At that time, many Jewish people moved Jerusalem from other countries. And also Jews and converts came to the festival of Pentecost. The converts in verse 11 refer to the Gentiles who had faith of Judaism and came to gather the Jews.

Many people came to the festival of Pentecost in Jerusalem because the sea was very calm so that they took the safest trip by boat at this time every year. Therefore, Jerusalem was very crowded and the congestion reached its peak.

Many people came to the festival from many parts of the Roman Empire. **“Parthians, Medes, Elamites and Mesopotamians** lived to the northeast of Jerusalem. **“Judea”** was in neighborhood. **“Cappadocia, Pontus, Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia** are to the northwest of Jerusalem, in Asia Minor (Turkey of today). **“Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene”** refers to North Africa in the southwest. **“Romans”** lived to the far west of Jerusalem and **“Cretans”** lived in the east side of Jerusalem and “Arabs” lived in the south and in the east.

At that time, the Roman Empire controlled much of the world. People who were mentioned above were representatives of each region of the Roman world. Those who met Jesus and believed in Him as the Savior returned home and shared their experiences of Jerusalem. Like this, the Gospel of Christ was brought to over the world. It means that God had already prepared preaching the Gospel to the world at the birth day of Church.

2) The Holy Spirit Made People Focus on Christ and Glorify the Lord.

Many people who heard the strange sound came together and listened to what the disciples spoke. They were surprised at disciples who were Galileans but speaking other languages. What happened and why?

“God’s great work” was revealed through languages that people there heard.

2:11 (both Jews and converts to Judaism); Cretans and Arabs – we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues!”

The Bible doesn’t record what they said exactly. However, the content of their words was about the Lord Jesus Christ guessing from Paul’s speech that comes later. They were spoken in many languages and the central topic was about Jesus Christ.

My friends. The Holy Spirit constantly glorifies and preaches the Lord.

The Bible records,

“He will glorify me because it is from me that he will receive what he will make know to you.” John 16:14

Their stories were in total accord with Christ even though they spoke in different languages. It was quite the opposite in the case of the tower of Babel. (Genesis 11:1~9)

When God works, there is harmony.

The Holy Spirit still works today. He works with God’s Word (the Bible) in our hearts. When the Word is spoken, the Holy Spirit also speaks at the same time. He sometimes speaks through a sermon, sometimes through a fellowship with other people and sometimes when we read the Bible. The Holy Spirit speaks to us in various opportunities.

3) Responses to the Work of the Holy Spirit

The term *amazed* appears three times (verses 6, 7, and 12).

1. The first response was with of an eager heart.

Utterly amazed, they asked one another, **“What does this mean?”**

They were ready to listen to Peter’s speech that was addressed later.

2. The second response was with mockery.

2:13 Some, however, made fun of them and said, “They have had too much wine.”

We don’t know if they were joking or rejected truth. They made fun of disciples as drunkards. Some of them probably took part in crucifying Jesus and didn’t want to hear His resurrection.

When the Holy Spirit came down, people were divided into two as below —

- ① Those who were ready to listen to the Word of God
- ② Those who doubted and rejected to listen to the Word of God

My friends. The disciples did not get drunk on wine, but they were filled with the Spirit. Generally, those who get drunk become careless and reveal their real and ugly characters.

However, those who filled with the Holy Spirit become bold and begin to live for God's glory.

When the Holy Spirit works and leads us ⇒ human beings must choose the way to go.

The choice is to walk in the light of the Holy Spirit or to walk in the dark world.

How about you? We would like to walk the way of light. What is our response to Pentecost?

Do we open our hearts to intervention (work) of the Holy Spirit? Or do we doubt His intervention? Our lives become quite different by choosing the way.

God wants to show us His secret (grace of the Kingdom of Heaven) deeper. The Holy Spirit (parakretos) is *another advocate*.

John14:16 And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever —

We would like to ask for help of **"another advocate", the Holy Spirit.**

The Bible records those who receive help of the Holy Spirit as below —

"And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit. " (2 Corinthians 3:18)

The verse above refers to lives that are being transformed into the Lord's image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Spirit. We don't need to achieve this ourselves. How happy we are!

Conclusion

Title of the Message: "The Blessed Time to Gather in One Place"

—Who is Present in the Center?—

We celebrate Pentecost Sunday today. Pentecost is God's promise. God promised us to give us blessed lives and to understand His secret deeper. We should not have doubtful lives.

How should we accept Pentecost?

Let's think again the following two points that we were taught.

- 1 . The Holy Spirit (another Advocate) is present.
- 2 . We are able to live blessed Christian lives with the Holy Spirit.

God bless you!