

**Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada Archives Transcript****John Burrage****Day of Pentecost****Broadway Tabernacle, Vancouver****26 May 1985, AM Service**

Today is what we call Pentecost Sunday and I think it is appropriate if we read this passage and I would like to read most of the chapter. So Acts, chapter 2.

*When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them. Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven. When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard their own language being spoken. Utterly amazed, they asked: "Aren't all these who are speaking Galileans? Then how is it that each of us hears them in our native language? Parthians, Medes and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome (both Jews and converts to Judaism); Cretans and Arabs—we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues!" Amazed and perplexed, they asked one another, "What does this mean?" Some, however, made fun of them and said, "They have had too much wine." Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd: "Fellow Jews and all of you who live in Jerusalem, let me explain this to you; listen carefully to what I say. These people are not drunk, as you suppose. It's only nine in the morning! No, this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: 'In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men*

*will dream dreams. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy. I will show wonders in the heavens above and signs on the earth below, blood and fire and billows of smoke. The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and glorious day of the Lord. And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. “Fellow Israelites, listen to this: Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders and signs, which God did among you through him, as you yourselves know. This man was handed over to you by God’s deliberate plan and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross. But God raised him from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him. David said about him:*

*“I saw the Lord always before me. Because he is at my right hand, I will not be shaken. Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices; my body also will rest in hope, because you will not abandon me to the realm of the dead, you will not let your holy one see decay. You have made known to me the paths of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence. “Fellow Israelites, I can tell you confidently that the patriarch David died and was buried, and his tomb is here to this day. But he was a prophet and knew that God had promised him on oath that he would place one of his descendants on his throne. Seeing what was to come, he spoke of the resurrection of the Messiah, that he was not abandoned to the realm of the dead, nor did his body see decay. God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of it. Exalted to the right hand of God, he has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear. For David did not ascend to heaven, and yet he said, “The Lord said to my Lord: “Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet.” “Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Messiah.” When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, “Brothers, what shall we do?” 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. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call.”*

In the days of my boyhood and youth where I was raised in England they would call this weekend the Whitsun weekend. I find most people here don't understand or know what Whitsun is all about. Whitsun is short really for White Sunday and White Sunday was the name that was given to that particular day because apparently it was the custom many, many years ago in the church for them to hold a baptismal service and all the candidates wore white baptismal gowns all day. So as they celebrated together the joy of baptism they wore those gowns and the day became to be known as Whit Sunday. But of course in the church calendar as we call it, it is Pentecost, the Day of Pentecost. This is what we celebrate this weekend. It's not a bad idea of course to remember some of the days where we recall God's mercies to the church. We always remember Christmas. We remember Easter and it is good for us I think to remember some of these other days as well, not that one would adhere to the church calendar in every detail, of course not. That would be an observance that would be merely legalistic.

Pentecost is an interesting word. Of course it basically is just an adjective that means fiftieth. The idea comes from the Old Testament where the Lord instructed the Jewish people, the Israelites, after they had come out of the land of Egypt to keep the Passover. And then on the second day of the Passover they would calculate fifty days and then have another feast. It was the feast of a single day that was always a great day of rejoicing for them. It was a Sabbath for them. They didn't work so they would gather together, and particularly gathering in Jerusalem of course they would know the festivities but also they would know the religious ceremonies. The priests would wave a sheaf of barley before the Lord, the idea being that they recognized that God was the one who gave them harvest and sustained all of life.

A very interesting thing too they would also rejoice in the two loaves of bread that were made from the new grain and presented to the Lord at that particular ceremony.

So Jerusalem would be filled with people in a sort of festive mood. It would be a joyous celebration on that particular Pentecost Day. It was at that time of course that God was pleased to pour out his spirit and that is what we remember and what we celebrate today. The disciples, the apostles as we call them at this time, were gathered together. Who they were gathered together with or who they were we are not absolutely sure.

Our tradition says they were in the upper room. Of course in chapter one and verse thirteen, when they had arrived they went upstairs to the room where they were staying. We conclude of course it was that upper room that they met in. If you go to Jerusalem today they will take you to the upper room, supposedly where they gathered and where the Holy Spirit fell. I'm not too sure if that's valid or not but I suppose they like to have somewhere to take visitors. And it reminds us, doesn't it, when we go to those places of what happened. There are some who believe it may even have been in the Temple that the Pentecostal experience was first known. We do not really know who was there. We assume that the one hundred twenty were there, as we read of course in verse fifteen of the first chapter. The group numbered about a hundred twenty. But maybe when verse four of chapter two says *all of them*, they were only thinking of the twelve, for in verse fourteen it says that Peter stood up with the eleven. We're not sure. Maybe it's best to stay with the traditional figures of one hundred twenty in the upper room. But you see I really don't think it matters very much where it was or how many were there.

The most important thing is of course that the Holy Spirit came and *while they were gathered together suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind*. It does not say a violent wind. It was *like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house and they saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that sat on each of them*. That was the best way that they could describe it. They were signs that accompanied the coming of the Holy Spirit. But what is most important of course is that the presence of God filled the place, and not only filled the building, it filled the individual disciples and believers who were gathered there. That was the glory of God that rested upon them and that's always associated with something dramatic, isn't it? Whether it was Genesis, chapter fifteen where God came down and made a covenant with Abraham with fire moving between the pieces of the beast that were laid out, whether it was Sinai, chapter nineteen and twenty of the book of Exodus, or whether it was chapter forty where the glory of God filled the tabernacle that had been raised up, or whether it was Isaiah in chapter six, who saw the glory of God and his train filled the temple. Wherever it was, wherever it is in the word of God, there seems to be some accompanying signs of the manifestation of God's presence. We have it here. The shekinah that dwelt in the holy of holies in the Old Testament, where God's presence was.

By the way, the Jews have a tradition that that shekinah rests upon the pious Jew who is sitting there studying the word of God, the law. I don't know about that but what I do know is that presence that was with God's people in the Old Testament in the tabernacle and in the temple, the glory of God in the holy of holies, now rested upon the apostles as the Holy Spirit came and indwelt each individual believer. We do thank God that it is our distinctive testimony that we believe that is true today. We believe in exactly the same way without the accompanying signs of something like wind and a fire of course, but exactly the same way, God by his Holy Spirit comes and abides in the hearts of his people.

We believe too that the accompanying sign is exactly what they had: that of speaking in other tongues. Now I know that there may be some difference of opinion, some controversy perhaps over that. But we are assured that what we believe is according to the word of God. And it is as the spirit enabled them, you see, or as the spirit kept giving them, that is the force of that imperfect there, kept giving them the ability to utter those things. It came from God. It was not something they fabricated in their own minds. Today it is exactly the same. We do not make it up. We do not believe in that kind of baptism. We believe in a baptism that comes from God and is expressed in the speaking of other tongues in a very beautiful clear loud expression of other tongues that only God by his spirit can give.

I thank God it has been my privilege to have been saved in Pentecost. It was in Pentecost I was taught the word of God and it was in Pentecost I learned the doctrine of grace. It was in Pentecostal circles that I knew of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. And it is not merely a precious testimony, although indeed it is very precious, but it is more than that. I thank God ever for that. I met a pastor and his wife here from my home area in England. They know a relative of mine who is still alive. He's as old as the years but he is still going strong. But he was the first one, my uncle Bert, who came to know the Lord in our family. It was through a workmate, a colleague at work, who simply said to him, "Bert, are you saved?" And Bert who was a proud usher in the Church of England, a legal Christian if you may say, if a Christian at all, indeed he was not a Christian for that word by the Holy Spirit was as an arrow to his heart. It found him

in unbelief and God gave him no peace until he rested his faith in Jesus Christ as his Lord and Saviour and has followed him ever since. I thank God as I look back over the years what would have happened maybe in my life. I suppose the older you get the more you begin to wonder if my life had taken, if your life had taken a different turn at a certain point, where would we have been? But I do thank God for that man who had a word of witness for my uncle and by that means some of our family at least came to know Jesus Christ.

But it's not only because of our tradition, is it? We believe what we believe because we see it substantiated in the word of God. It's truth that keeps us where we are. As we look at this passage in Acts, chapter two this morning, you must agree that for the disciples, the apostles, it was a subsequent experience to conversion. We do not believe that the disciples were only just saved at this point. Nobody believes that. Of course you may say it was a unique experience at a unique time, the first time the Holy Spirit came of course, we all know that too. But we maintain don't we that it is a subsequent experience and something that only the believer can receive. Jesus said, when speaking of the Comforter, *whom the world cannot receive because it knows him not and cannot receive him*, but it is for those who are believers. In the end of this chapter, verse thirty-eight we read together, Peter speaking concerning the gospel very clearly. He says *repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven*. And the NIV of course makes a separate sentence of this. *And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit*. It does seem as though Peter is assuming certain steps and that of course is what we're saying. We're in good company, of course, the apostle Paul spoke in tongues more than all the tongue exercisers or the tongue emphasizeers of Corinthians, of Corinth. He spoke in tongues and we assume that he received that gift in Acts, chapter nine, which also was subsequent to his conversion experience.

It's interesting how many misrepresentations there have been in the Pentecostal Movement over the years. I always find it rather strange. When we went to southern Ireland there was virtually no Pentecostal testimony there at all. A number of years ago, since those days, the Charismatic Movement has moved in. We lived in a town of about

eighteen thousand people. The only fruit from that particular town and our work there – it was very much a pioneer work – was a young man who came from the Church of Ireland. I found him very interesting. When he told his father, and they knew nothing about Pentecost, when he told his father that he was associating with Pentecostal Christians, his father immediately began to warn him about those that roll in the aisles and do all sorts of weird and wonderful things. I don't think that I'm given to any fanaticism. It's not my kind of way of worship. I don't like to dance in the aisles or roll on the floor or do anything like that. I do not believe that is necessary but I do believe that you should speak in tongues every day. I do believe that you should exercise the gift of the Holy Spirit and I do believe that you should be looking today, and every day, for these precious gifts that God gives to us in the Pentecostal stream. I hope that by God's grace we may all be more diligent both in prayer and in searching his word and in seeking after these gifts that we will know a genuine move again in a real Pentecostal revival, that God will stir our hearts, that we will see God come down in mighty signs and wonders undeniably his presence will be manifest in our midst. We are not satisfied with anything less than that. May God keep our hearts focusing on that great move that he and he alone can give.

We do not believe either that Christians who are not baptized in the Holy Spirit are some sort of second class Christian. We certainly do not teach that they are not saved. We have no right to sit in judgment on the work of grace, the miracle of conversion, of salvation, that God by the Holy Spirit does in the individual's life. No. We rejoice with all who have come to faith in Jesus Christ. And if you are here this morning and have not put your faith in your great Saviour, in our Lord Jesus, then we urge you to find and know this joy of forgiveness that Peter speaks about at the end of this chapter. It's wonderful to know that your sins are forgiven, that Jesus is your Saviour.

But we also believe that this dimension in the Holy Spirit is a necessary emphasis. We also believe that this is the heart and the life and soul of our life in Jesus Christ. It is clear I believe right from the beginning of the early church. I don't want to turn to the chapters now but you can read them at your leisure following this chapter, a number of chapters, where you see the fullness of the Holy Spirit undeniably equipped people for

service. We think in particular of Stephen who is mentioned in chapters six and seven of his mighty deeds in the power of the spirit. We do not believe that the spirit focussed attention to himself either. That has perhaps been an area where we may have over-emphasized the Holy Spirit. Thank God we honour the Holy Spirit. It's the right direction to go. But I see in the word of God that the Holy Spirit, the ministry of the Holy Spirit is to glorify Christ. That's what our Lord said. That's exactly what we find in this chapter. When the Holy Spirit came, what was Peter doing? Talking about the spirit? No. He was talking about the Lord. He exalted Christ. He said the one that has given us this gift, the one that has poured forth the spirit is the one that you crucified upon the cross. And today he is not only raised from the dead but he is seated at the Father's right hand. He is exalted. He is King. He is Lord over all. That was the message that Peter had on the Day of Pentecost. And I trust that our emphasis will be there, that as we read the word of God anointed by the spirit of God we should not only see the things that apply to our lives – we long to see direction etc. – but what we should see most of all is our Lord Jesus Christ in his glory.

We should know what it means in the power of that same spirit to go out in our work-a-day world and honour God and glorify our Lord Jesus Christ by the life we live in the power of that spirit. That's what the Holy Spirit does. He glorifies Christ. We need to keep that emphasis I believe ever before us.

Let me say too that I believe this experience was rooted in the word of God. What does Peter do when they are all confused because all these people are gathered in the city of Jerusalem from all over the then known world almost, from many, many places. And they heard distinctly their own language from the lips of these Galilean people who only spoke perhaps Greek and maybe a couple of dialects of Aramaic. That's all they would speak perhaps. I don't know. But they were limited. But they suddenly heard in clear tones of his own language.

How wonderful that is. I'll never forget when I first went to Africa, the heart of Africa in Congo. We were in a convention and a group of Wabembi young people, mostly young women.



The Wabembi are a tribe that don't speak any language but their own pretty well, and Swahili, of course. But they didn't know any European language. But as these young ladies ministered in song in the convention suddenly the Holy Spirit came upon them and my ears caught English in perfection, praising the Lord. Do you know if you teach an African a phrase in English, do you know when he repeats that back to you, you may not even recognize it? You know that, don't you? Have you ever tried? I could tell you some amusing incidents when we used to try to convey messages by telling an African in English and asking him to go and tell somebody else. You wouldn't recognize what he is saying. But that day I heard a young woman praising God in English with no accent. That caught my ear because it was my own language. Can you imagine how they would feel here in Jerusalem from a foreign country, suddenly they heard the wonders of God in their own language? They were absolutely confused.

When Peter stands up in order to explain what is happening, what does he do? He goes back to the prophecy of Joel. He says, "Look, this is not just some phenomenon that is out of the air. This is rooted in scripture. It is what Joel said would happen in the last days." There will be some wonderful things taking place, not only now would the spirit come as he came in the Old Testament and go in that sporadic fashion. You remember, equipping perhaps an individual for a particular task and then leaving. No. Now the Holy Spirit would come and these would be the last days but he would dwell. He would be poured out upon the church. He says wonderful things about the coming of the great and glorious day of the Lord and everyone, he said, will be forced to make a decision for everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. He brings them to that point. It is the day of free grace. It is the day when the gospel must go out in the power of the spirit to all.

So we extend that glorious invitation to all this morning. Come. Come and call upon the name of the Lord and you will know that salvation, you will know that deliverance from the punishment that your sins deserve. You will know that lifting of the guilt as Christ in his wonderful way releases you from it and grants you new life in Jesus Christ.

So Peter roots it in the word of God. And I want to say I believe it is rooted in the word of God. Significant, isn't it. If we turn back to chapter one of the Acts of the Apostles,

again you will find that in verse three – you remember the forty days, don't you? We've often mentioned about the forty days. Do you know what went on in those forty days? *After his suffering he showed himself, verse three, after his suffering he showed himself to these men and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive.* He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God. Jesus talked to them about the kingdom. Isn't that beautiful? So when in verse six they ask: "*Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?*" that was not as dumb question as some people make it out to be. Those stupid disciples again don't understand. I don't believe so. Our Lord's reply indicates there is something there that is not yet revealed, something there that is hidden, and judging by the controversy that we find in that area even today, I wonder if it is still not hidden. We don't know exactly.

But what we do know for certain is that our Lord taught them about the kingdom and then when Peter began to preach in the anointing of the Holy Spirit he began to talk about a King, one who was made, verse thirty-six of chapter two, *God has made this Jesus whom you crucified both Lord and Christ.* That's what Pentecost does. We know, don't we, that the kingdom of God, as Jesus said, is within us and that great kingdom of grace is reigning now. I know we look forward to the day when our King will reign and be seen to reign in glory. His kingdom of glory is yet to come it seems, but his kingdom of grace is now throughout the world. And it's that great kingdom that we are called to promote in words of witness and words of testimony to our friends, neighbours and our colleagues at work and wherever we are, to tell them that Jesus is King, that Jesus is exalted. That's the emphasis I believe of Pentecost. It's rooted, you see, in the teaching of the word of God. The experience that we find in Acts 2 was rooted in forty days of teaching from the lips of Jesus himself on the kingdom and then one time he left and if they knew that this was a different occasion, he had left many times before. But now they watched him go and they wondered what this may mean. So ten days I believe they spent ten days in prayer. They continued in prayer. I believe it was over that ten days of prayer, so forty days of teaching and ten days of prayer lead to the fullness of the spirit. Remember that. I think that's important. You won't find anything weird. You won't find that you receive something that is not of God if you spend forty days in the word and ten days in prayer. I'm not saying that is absolutely essential but I

believe that's the direction that we see. Of course every revival God has been pleased to honour has been a revival that has been rooted in the word of God and saturated in prayer. We see that every time we see a move of the spirit of God. History attests to that.

Now Peter spoke about the fulfillment. It was a fulfillment of prophecy he spoke about that exalted our Lord Jesus Christ. And then the result of that was the preaching of the gospel. Verse thirty-eight: *Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.* What a beautiful conclusion, three thousand that day were converted and brought into the kingdom. But it didn't end there. Passages we didn't read, I just want you to look at it, verse forty-two. *They devoted themselves to the apostles teaching and to the fellowship and the breaking of bread and to prayer.* Then they knew many wonders and miraculous signs, you see. It started in the word and it led them back to the word. The Holy Spirit shows us Christ in the word and he gives us a greater love for that word.

I trust today our hearts may be found looking to God for another visitation of his spirit. Amen.

--- End of sermon

--- Music and worship, invitation for people to come forward for healing, prayer by Pastor Williams, service continues with more music and worship, choir sings.

--- Service is at Broadway Tabernacle according to the person giving announcements and taking up the offering.

--- End of Recording