



# VILLAGE BIBLE CHURCH

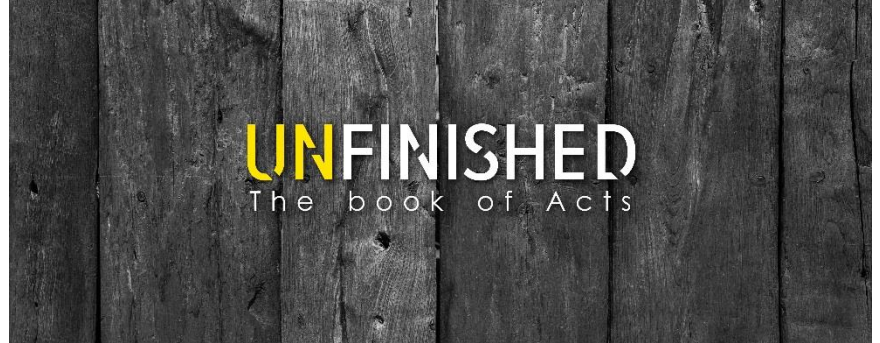
## SUGAR GROVE CAMPUS

## Unfinished

Part 3: Looking for a Church?

Acts 2:1-13 | Tim Badal

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Over the past couple of weeks we've started a series we're calling "Unfinished: A study from the book of Acts." We're using Acts as a model for how ministry in the church needs to be done. The book is a biography describing how God's Spirit fell on a group of people. Even though they weren't famous or extraordinary, God used them to change the world—even amid great obstacles. He used these ordinary and frail people in the face of government and worldly opposition.

So while we observe how they were successful in their day, we need to realize the job of the church is not done. It was left unfinished then, and it will not be finished until the return of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. We too have work to do. We pick up the mantle as frail and broken people as well. Even though we too aren't famous or extraordinary, we are praying for the same thing they prayed for: the coming of the Holy Spirit in a new and real way, so that we might boldly go out professing Jesus Christ and change the world as they did.

We've already journeyed a long way into this study. In Acts 1, we learned that the book was a second volume telling of the work Jesus did. Luke first wrote his Gospel to describe what Jesus taught and did. He then wrote this second book for his friend Theophilus, with the purpose of telling him the rest of the story. He wanted to tell him what was transpiring in the hearts of the people some 30 years after Jesus' death, burial and resurrection. What impact were these things having in the church Jesus started?

In Acts 1, we read how Jesus gave His final commands to His disciples. Even though He had told them He was leaving, they still didn't get it until they saw Him ascend into heaven in radiant glory. They had gone to a high place where angels came to tell these disciples that Jesus would come back in the same way as He left earth—blameless, pure and radiant, as the King of kings and Lord of lords. He would come as the triumphant One Who has destroyed His enemies and made them His footstool, as the psalmist had prophesied hundreds of years earlier.

Before He left, Jesus told His disciples they would be empowered in a new way. Yes, they would be afraid after their Friend and Teacher and Messiah was gone, but Jesus had promised them earlier that He would send One Who was greater in the sense of what He could do through His people. Now they would have to wait patiently in Jerusalem until He arrived.

Last week we saw that they decided to choose a new disciple to take the place of Judas, who had taken his own life. No doubt during this time they were grieving and bewildered, wondering when Jesus was going to come back as He said He would and if His Kingdom would be restored soon. But all they could do was wait. So they waited.

The Bible tells us that Jesus had walked with His disciples for 40 days after His resurrection until His ascension. Today we'll read that after a span of another ten days, something amazing is going to happen and that Jesus is about to knock their socks off by giving them the Holy Spirit.

Let's read Acts 2:1–13:

When the day of Pentecost arrived, they were all together in one place. <sup>2</sup> And suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. <sup>3</sup> And divided tongues as of fire appeared to them and rested on each one of them. <sup>4</sup> And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.

<sup>5</sup> Now there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men from every nation under heaven. <sup>6</sup> And at this sound the multitude came together, and they were bewildered, because each one was hearing them speak in his own language. <sup>7</sup> And they were amazed and astonished, saying, "Are not all these who are speaking Galileans?" <sup>8</sup> And how is it that we hear, each of us in his own native language? <sup>9</sup> Parthians and Medes and Elamites and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, <sup>10</sup> Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, <sup>11</sup> both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabians—we hear them telling in our own tongues the mighty works of God."

<sup>12</sup> And all were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, "What does this mean?" <sup>13</sup> But others mocking said, "They are filled with new wine."

Over the last couple years there have been a lot of transitions in our church. As you might read in the newspapers, Illinois is losing a lot of people—and as a church, we've said goodbye to so many wonderful people because of job transfers that have taken them out of state. One of the questions we as staff will inevitably hear from these people is this: "We're moving to such-and-such a locale, could you help us find a new church? We want to find a church that parallels Village Bible Church in doctrine, direction and vision."

With the help of the Internet, we can learn a lot about the churches in a particular area. A Google search will show us a map with dozens and dozens of them. But then we have to ask, "What makes a good church? What kind of church helps people grow? What kind of church would God want us to be part of?"

In America, we often look at churches through the wrong lens. We look through our lens rather than God's lens. We ask, "What can this church do for me?" instead of asking, "What is this church doing for God?" We want to know if we'll like what they're doing. We will like a certain program or their state-of-the-art facilities or their dynamic staff? Instead we should be asking, "Does God like what He sees them doing?"

As I shared a couple weeks ago, we've become consumers instead of committed followers who are pursuing the glory and honor and ministry of God. This kind of behavior is summed up in a video I'd like to show you.

#### **Video:**

Cory: Nick and Molly just moved to the city and can't agree on what they want. They're young and energetic, looking for a new church home. We'll take some personality tests, tour the sites, ask some questions—and based on taste, experience and location, we'll find them the perfect congregation. I'm Cory Clark. Welcome to Church Hunters.

Molly: We're so excited to find a church. We just started dating.

Nick: The churches we go to now are just not for us. They're just not really doing it for us, you know?

Molly: I go to a satellite campus. I just find it hard to connect emotionally with a video screen. It's just...

Nick: Okay, you cry during *Cake Boss*. So we've been viewing a lot of services on-line, a lot of podcasts. There are a lot of preachers we do like.

Molly: They're really good. We want serious, yet funny.

Nick: Yeah, like commanding of the stage yet relatable, you know?

Molly: We're looking for the humor of Andy Stanley, the body of Stephen Fertick.

Cory: Hey, guys, I'm Cory. Good to see you.

Nick: My name's Nick. This is Molly.

Cory: Welcome to Church Hunters. This is your first church—Creekside First Baptist. While it is traditional, it's still pretty current. Just this year, the pastor started untucking his shirts.

Molly: Oh, wow.

Cory: He does dress his age though, so don't worry. He's past the Osteen suit phase, but he hasn't gone full Giglio yet.

Nick: So holes in the knees, or not?

Cory: They're frayed, but no holes.

Nick: Frayed? Okay, got that.

Cory: Okay, so let me show you around.

Nick: I do love this lobby.

Cory: It's a great lobby—not too big, not too small. It should be enough room to catch up, chat with your friends. But here's a great thing. There's a bunch of side exits, so if you need to leave early and catch the game, you can do that.

Nick: Honestly, right up front didn't love the name.

Molly: No. First Baptist? Who names a church that anymore? I just....

Nick: Not these days. We're looking for like, ah, "Thrive Church." Maybe "Relevant Church." I don't know—"Radiant Church." Something...

Cory: This is the sound board they use here. Remember, it's pretty traditional here. So, when Sunday comes around, they turn it way down low. But the one knock on this church is that they still use the childcare numbering system on the screens. Or, as the moms like to call it, the "Sanctuary Walk of Shame."

Molly: The Sunday morning experience? It's just a little too traditional for us.

Nick: I mean, the pastor's main point was 157 characters. I can't Tweet that.

Cory: I really think you guys are going to love this place.

Nick and Molly: We do. We like it. Yeah.

Cory: It's diverse, but it's not too diverse, you know?

Molly: Scripture-heavy sermon?

Cory: Oh, yeah.

Nick: What about...is it community oriented?

Cory: Absolutely.

Nick: Great.

Molly: Women in ministry?

Cory: The parking situation. You guys have got to see it. It's super rare nowadays. Come with me.

Molly: It looks like a maybe for when my parents come into town, for a Christmas/Easter type of church.

Nick: Like a holiday type church.

Cory: One of the main reasons I love this church for you guys is that on your personality test, Molly, you scored high in service and hospitality. There's a great welcome team you could join.

Molly: Okay.

Cory: And then, Nick, you scored really high in need for accountability. The men's groups here are amazing.

Nick: You're just going to...you're just going to put that out there?

Cory: God knows your heart, okay?

[End of conversation]

Cory: On the next episode of Church Hunters—I think you're really going to love this place. They take relevance to a whole new level. This church identifies as interdenominational. This pastor speaks out of a brand new translation. It's the Tumbler Bible.

**End of video (To view video, go to <http://tinyurl.com/yc5gvpmw>)**

Well, hopefully a little satire helps you recognize how we in America approach churches. Notice that most of their issues had to do with their preferences and desires. I have to be honest, there's probably some truth to what we've just seen. We can look at a church and ask, "Is this church doing something effective?"

While some personal preferences aren't bad, we're going to learn in Acts that it's not about our preferences. The early church had nothing to do with great facilities or awesome staff members or even programs. In fact, they just met in homes and enjoyed the favor of God there. That simple church found themselves being a change agent in their world. We too need to get closer to that kind of church model.

What does the Bible say we should be looking for in a church? Whether we're moving to a new community, or staying right here in Village Bible Church, how do we become the church God wants us to be? I see four important characteristics in our text.

Last week Pastor Steve gave a lot of attention to the gift and filling of the Holy Spirit. That laid the groundwork for today's passage. I'll be looking at the net result of the Holy Spirit's ministry and impact. He's going to come. He's going to fill His people. And now that the people are filled with the Spirit, what will they do after receiving what was promised?

Let's consider the setting of this text in Acts 2. We see that the believers are in Jerusalem, which is exactly what Jesus told them to do, and they're waiting for Him to do what He said He would do. It's a busy time in Jerusalem. About seven weeks have gone by since Passover and a new celebration is coming. In our calendar year, this celebration takes place between mid-May and June. It's springtime in Jerusalem and all kinds of people have come for this feast called "The Feast of Weeks" or "The Feast of the Harvest." It's mentioned five times in the first five books of the Bible: Exodus 23, 24; Leviticus 16; Numbers 28; and Deuteronomy 16. It was a celebration of the beginning of harvest. There were actually two harvests in Palestine—a spring harvest and a fall harvest—because they didn't have the crazy winters we have. They could be planting and reaping all year long.

This Festival of Weeks was a celebration of the first harvest of the year. That which was true agriculturally is about to become true spiritually. God is going to unleash His Spirit on the church, thereby creating a celebratory feeling in the people because the spiritual harvest is about to begin. As Jesus said, He will send His followers out as laborers in that harvest. Pentecost will be the celebration of that early harvest and what is going to come. But in order for the church to receive the blessings and benefits of being close to God, they will have to go forward into this harvest—this spiritual ministry. It will be both an internal and external ministry.

Let's look at four characteristics that will need to define us if we're going to be a Pentecost kind of church.

## **When looking for a church, look for a community-loving people.**

First, if we want to be the kind of church God wants us to be, we need to be community-loving people. That Pentecost Sunday was a day of waiting. Jesus was gone and ten days had passed. What was Jesus going to do next? God had given the disciples a gift even in their waiting—the gift of community. Remember, God doesn't want us in isolation. In fact, if we've learned anything from the disciples, we learn this truth: in isolation, we fall. When Jesus was arrested, the disciples all ran off, not together but individually. Their failures were characterized in two guys in particular—the failure of Judas and the failure of Peter. When we try to do the Christian life on our own, we run the risk of falling as well.

But Jesus had told them to wait together, all in one place. When people are together, they don't fall—they stand tall. As a church, it applies to us as well. We in America are told, "Do it by yourselves, for yourselves." We're characterized by rugged individualism. But for Christians, life is not about the individual; it's about being together in community. So these believers are waiting together, as we read in Acts 2:1. They are patiently obeying what they were told to do.

In Acts 1:12–15, they have just witnessed the glorious and awesome event of Jesus being taken into heaven, and they're returning to Jerusalem. They were probably rejoicing in all that God had done. They also might have believed that Jesus would return in a day or so. Little did they know that over 2,000 years later we would still be waiting for that return.

This is the nature of the church. They're always a "waiting" people. They waited on the day of Pentecost for the coming of the Holy Spirit. Today the church is waiting for the coming of our Lord. God has commanded us to watch and pray as we wait for Christ's coming—but we are also never to stop doing the ministry we've been called to do. The disciples went back to Jerusalem from "the mount called Olivet," a Sabbath day's journey. *"They went up to the upper room, where they were staying"* (Acts 1:13). Then the text lists the disciples by name. Verse 14: *"All these with one accord were devoting themselves to prayer, together with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brothers."* We're told in verse 15, *"In those days Peter stood up among the brothers (the company of persons was in all about 120)."*

So there are 120 people—the eleven disciples, Matthias, Mary, the brothers of Jesus and other close associates of Jesus. We could guess this group might include the two men Jesus met on their way to Emmaus, perhaps some of the women Jesus had ministered to, maybe Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea. Maybe even the centurion who said, when he saw Jesus on the cross, "Truly, this

was the Son of God" (Matthew 27:54). But whoever they were, these followers of Jesus came from all different backgrounds and were now waiting together for the promised Holy Spirit.

We're told they were "in one accord," that is, they were unified. One thing characterizes a good church—and something you should look for if you move somewhere else—is that the members are in unity. The way a church body becomes unified is they start sharing things together. I see three things in the Scripture that these people shared.

### **Community is found through shared experiences.**

In other words, we can create community by doing life together. The disciples had experienced the highs and lows of life. No doubt they were all grieving the loss of their friend Judas. They were bewildered by why he would betray them. No doubt they were dealing with their own failures because they had faltered when Jesus had commanded them to stay close.

They had also experienced some great things together. They had experienced the resurrection, followed by eating and drinking with the risen Savior and Lord. They had touched Him, realizing He truly was raised from the dead. Now they had seen Jesus lifted up into heaven and had heard from angels that He would be coming back. Community is where we share the good times and the bad times together. These disciples had done both. Now they're in the upper room, and they're still doing life together, crying and laughing and discussing what they had experienced.

### **Community is found through shared exercises.**

Jesus had given the disciples a command. He didn't just give it to Peter or James or John as individuals—He told them as a group to wait patiently in Jerusalem. He told them He would send the Holy Spirit to them as a group, and thus He wanted them all gathered in one place when the Spirit would come. He wanted to confirm through all 120 witnesses what He was going to do.

So the people of God not only had experienced life together, but they had also experienced what it meant to live out their calling together. As a group, they were doing the things He had told them to do. The one job description for Christians is to glorify and magnify the name of Jesus in both word and deed before a lost world.

All in one accord, these people were ready to do these things. They devoted themselves to prayer. They were praying for the Holy Spirit to come. They were praying that they would remain strong and obedient. They were probably also asking God, "What is next?"

### **Community is found through shared expectations.**

Finally, they shared expectations. What were those expectations? They had all heard Jesus say, "I'm going to be taken to heaven, but I will send you a Helper. He will lead you into all truth and He will convict the world of their sin." The Holy Spirit will be "changing the ball game." But when His work is done, Jesus told them He would return to get His people. Remember that in John 14:1–3, Jesus told the disciples, *"Let not your hearts be troubled. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself."*

This group of believers was now in a community, doing life together with shared experiences, obeying Jesus' instructions. They were using their gifts to edify the saints and they had the expectation that Jesus would return one day. They believed they should always be ready for Him to come back—but until then they were active in the work He left for them to do.

That's the kind of community Village Bible Church needs to be like—and every church that wants to resemble the church of Pentecost. We need to live life together. We need to do the work of the Lord together and we need to have the hopeful expectation that Jesus will keep His promise to return. As we experience these things together, this is where the Holy Spirit comes and fills us as a group with power that does not come to us as individuals. So in our text, the Holy Spirit is not only about to change 120 people, He's about to change the world.

## **When looking for a church, look for life-giving power.**

In addition to these people being together as a community in one room, we also see that life-giving power is given to them. Acts 2:2–4: *"And suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. And divided tongues as of fire appeared to them and rested on each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance."*

This is the coming of the Holy Spirit—more commonly called Pentecost. We see that they're gathered a room where all 120 would fit. It could have been a temple room or a large home. As they're waiting, suddenly—without any notice—things start changing. There's a mighty noise like a rushing wind. What appear to be tongues of fire are swirling over each of their heads. This is what is called "the baptism of the Holy Spirit."

Jesus spoke about this in Acts 1:5: *"For John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now."* Jesus uses the image of baptism. When Jesus Himself was baptized, He was plunged into the Jordan River and brought out again. So in a sense He's saying they were going to be dunked into the Holy Spirit. Notice that when you're dunked under water, there's not any part of you that stays dry. The water invades your entire body. Likewise, when a person is baptized with the Holy Spirit, he is plunged into the Spirit and there is no part of him that is not touched and changed by the invading work of the Holy Spirit.

Let me pause for a moment. There are a lot of questions about what the baptism of the Holy Spirit is. There are churches that call themselves Pentecostal. They use this text as a focus and they want to be known as churches of the Pentecost. I disagree with their view, but they believe that the baptism of the Holy Spirit is an experience subsequent to salvation. So they teach that a person comes to know Jesus as Savior, and then at some later point—maybe because the Spirit is moving in a service or in their prayer life—something like a "recharge" takes place, a new baptism takes place. This event moves the person from being an ordinary individual to something extraordinary. It can include receiving gifts such as speaking in tongues, prophesying or other ecstatic signs. We respect that they have this view of Scripture, but we don't see that in the book of Acts. Let me share our church's position on the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

### **The baptism of the Holy Spirit is the inauguration of the Christian life.**

Just as we inaugurate Presidents on January 20<sup>th</sup> to signify the beginning of their presidency, the baptism of the Holy Spirit is given to each believer when they are born again. It is not something reserved for those who have somehow reached a certain level in their Christian lives. Paul says in 1 Corinthians 12:13, *"For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body."*

Therefore, if you have bowed the knee to Jesus and have humbly confessed your sins to Him, if you have invited Him into your life and made Him Lord and Savior, then you have been baptized into the Holy Spirit. You have received the deposit guaranteeing your inheritance, which is the gift of the Holy Spirit in your life. It's not something to look forward to later. It is not a criterion requiring you to do certain things. This is something God does in the lives of all His children. So if you are a true child of God, you have been baptized into the Holy Spirit.

Luke tells us a couple things about this baptism. First, he said these people were sitting in one place. That's important. He does not say they were doing any religious activity that prompted the Spirit to come. There were two postures for praying in New Testament days: kneeling and standing. Sitting was a casual posture. Maybe they were visiting like guests would do in a home. Maybe they were reclining at a meal. But when it was time to pray, they either got on their knees or they stood up. We see these two postures in Luke 18:10–13, in the story of the poor man and the rich Pharisee who were both praying in the temple.

As Jesus told Nicodemus, the Holy Spirit comes when and however He chooses. It is not something we influence. It doesn't require a worship team to play certain music that tears at our heart strings. There's no need to build up some sort of emotional excitement by repeating a chorus 4,372 times, until people are crying and broken. That's an experience that's manipulated. But these 120 believers were sitting together when suddenly the Spirit came. He didn't come because any individual did something, but because God sent Him.

### **The baptism of the Holy Spirit is invisible yet moving.**

Acts 2:2 says, *"Suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting."* We're told, not that the Spirit was wind, but that He came with a sound like a wind. It was so loud that it didn't just fill the room, but people outside the room were blown away by the sound, and they wanted to know what the sound was all about.

Think about it this way: You don't see sound. You can't see the sound of the words coming out of my mouth which are being amplified through speakers. But you know that my voice is moving from here to there. That's what we need to understand about the Spirit. He is an invisible Person, but He is a moving Person. That means He is active and dynamic—and as a result, He is impacting us, not only our senses, but He is going to our very hearts as individuals.

## **The baptism of the Holy Spirit is illuminating.**

The Spirit at Pentecost was filling the entire room, but we also read that He was an illuminating Person. We're told that tongues of fire began to appear. We don't know exactly what that means. Luke is trying to explain what is transpiring. Have you ever witnessed something so amazing that it was hard to put into words? That seems to be what Luke is struggling with as well. In any event, it was an awesome pyrotechnic show.

While the room was being filled with sound, tongues of fire—little fires—are also in the room, but they were resting on individual people. Fire indicates that He is an illuminator. Fire itself helps us see. And as a result of this baptism, the followers of Christ would then be able to see the world in a new way.

Perhaps they were able to see things that had been concealed from their sight in earlier days when they walked and talked with Jesus. Even in Acts 1, the disciples were still trying to figure out what God was doing. They wanted to know when God's Kingdom would be established and when they would get their thrones. But now, after the arrival of the Holy Spirit, He gave them new illumination and after this they saw the world differently.

When you came to know Christ as your Savior—particularly if you were an adult—isn't it amazing how your view of the world changed through the indwelling Holy Spirit? Things that you used to say were fun you now see as being sinful. Things you used to give your time and attention to, thinking those were right, are now replaced by new things of God. That's the Holy Spirit illuminating your life.

## **The baptism of the Holy Spirit is intense.**

Besides illuminating, fire is also intense and useful for heat. When we are cold, we stand near a fire. Our houses are warmed by contained fire, from which warm air is blown through the building. This fire of the Holy Spirit caused the disciples to burn with a passion to do the work of the Lord. No longer were they concerned to protect their own skin, even to the point of denying Jesus. Now they would go out into a world that needed a Savior without fear of how the world would treat them. The trouble, pain and sorrow they would encounter was replaced by a desire to be obedient to Jesus regardless of any consequences. They wanted to share Him with the world. It was intense.

In the same way, the Holy Spirit should be causing an intensity in us—a fire and a passion that brings us to see our neighbors and coworkers and even strangers differently—as people who need the gospel. That's why the Holy Spirit came.

## **The baptism of the Holy Spirit is for the individual.**

Even though the Holy Spirit came to a corporate group at Pentecost, ultimately He comes to us as individuals. These tongues of fire rested on each one of the people present. But let's say we were in Acts 2 when the Holy Spirit came into our room, but He only came to a handful of us with tongues of fire. Maybe the rest of us got to enjoy the leftovers of that experience, but didn't receive Him personally. That's not what it says in the text.

Clearly it says that all who were in the room had tongues of fire rest upon them. If you've never been baptized in the Holy Spirit by giving your life to Jesus, don't think that by osmosis you have it through your spouse or your parents or your friends or your pastor. The indwelling Holy Spirit must indwell each of us as individuals. Will we make that decision to ask Him into our lives, to forgive our sins, and for Christ to be our Lord and Savior? Or will we continue in our rebellion, going our own way? It is an individual gift of the Spirit.

## **When looking for a church, look for an awe-inspiring presence.**

So the Spirit has now entered that place and His presence will change their lives. Oh, to be a fly on the wall that day, to see what God did there. Many of you long for such an ecstatic experience. We want signs and wonders. But I would tell you that the gift of the Holy Spirit comes within. He's not letting us down; sadly, it is we who are letting Him down. Still, He affects lives in a new way. Let's look at how the disciples are changed through the presence of the Holy Spirit in their lives.

## **The Holy Spirit's presence isn't found in a holy place but in a humble person.**

First of all, by way of clarification, our experience of the awe-inspiring presence of the Holy Spirit doesn't require us to be in a holy place. Rather, He comes to a humble person. We don't have to go find that room in Jerusalem. We don't have to make a pilgrimage there to find the Holy Spirit. We don't have to make elaborate travel plans to hopefully go to the place where He was.

That's what the Jewish people had to do before Christ came. But now through the gift of the Holy Spirit, the "holy place" is not somewhere where we are not—it's in us. We are the temple of the Holy Spirit. He dwells in a humble person who has given his or her life to Jesus. We no longer have to go searching for Him.

### **The Holy Spirit's presence places a fire within each of us.**

When the Holy Spirit indwells us, certain things take place. First, He places a fire within each of us. People ask me how to know if they have the Holy Spirit. Paul tells us He will bear witness to His own presence. How does He do this? Well, let me ask you this. Do you have passion for the things of the Lord? Do you long to serve Him? Do you long to use the gifts He's given you to serve Him in the ways He's called you to?

Or let me ask you this: do you want to be like Jesus? The Holy Spirit illuminates the work of Jesus and causes us to want to be like Him. If we don't want to be like Him—if we don't even think about that—then it's very questionable whether the Spirit is dwelling in us at all. To be sure, these longings will rise and fall in intensity. At times we will even grieve the Holy Spirit. But can you see as a pattern in your life that you long to be like Jesus and to serve and please Him?

If you can see that fire, then you've been baptized in the Holy Spirit. If you don't, then maybe something needs to be done. Either there's the initial work of being saved, or some confession of sin in a place where you have grieved the Holy Spirit with the purpose of restoring your fellowship with God. If you confess your sin, He promises to be faithful and just to forgive those sins and to cleanse you of all unrighteousness (1 John 1:9).

### **The Holy Spirit's presence propels us into the world, not out of it.**

Think about what happened in Acts 2. The 120 are gathered in a room and experience this amazing event. I wonder if any of them thought, "Let's just stay here and keep it to ourselves. Just us 120; nobody else. Let's not tell others about it, because that might take away some of what we're enjoying."

But we see in verse five that God Himself caused them to go out. They can't stay in that upper room. Why not? *"Now there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men from every nation under heaven. And at this sound the multitude came together, and they were bewildered."* The people outside the room heard the sound. They didn't experience everything the 120 did, but they heard enough to want to know what was going on in there. That led the disciples to tell their story.

I want you to know that the Holy Spirit is going to indwell you in such a way that at some point you're going to have to give an account of why you are the way you are. Will you rebel against Him in that moment—as the disciples did before the Spirit came, protecting themselves—or will you, now filled with the Holy Spirit, tell the great story of what Christ has done. The apostles made the latter choice. Through the Holy Spirit, Jesus propelled them out into the world.

Here's the crazy thing. Jesus had told them, "You will be My witnesses." And notice—they didn't choose the timing of that witness. God did. For us as well, God will choose the moments and the people to whom we also will bring His good news. God had arranged for a multitude of devout Jews to be in Jerusalem that day—thousands were there for the celebration of the Feast of Weeks—and He said, "Now is the time. You're going to share my message. You're going to be My witnesses in this moment."

### **The Holy Spirit's presence pushes us out of our comfort zones.**

The last thing the followers of Jesus wanted to do that day was to "go public." Fifty days earlier they watched their Leader be hung on a cross. They certainly didn't want to get the attention of the Pharisees. They didn't want to make a public proclamation about Who Jesus is.

In particular, we now see a change in Peter. As we'll learn next week, he will be the one who stands up and announces to the church, "This is what's going on." That's a very different man from the one we saw 50 days earlier, who was hiding and running and who even swore to a young girl that he wasn't a disciple of Jesus. But now he will stand before thousands of people and proclaim that Jesus is Lord and Savior. In fact, he will tell them, "It was you—with the help of evil men—who put Him to death."

Our comfort zones will be challenged. When we are filled with the Holy Spirit, we're going to be asked to do things we're not altogether comfortable with. But we need to be obedient in that moment, even if it costs us our popularity. We might lose friends. But we need to take a stand where the Spirit calls us to stand.



## When looking for a church, look for gospel-spreading pursuits.

When we are pushed out of our comfort zones, this will cause us to look for gospel-spreading pursuits. The disciples are now out in the community. To their amazement, the people who have come to Jerusalem are hearing them speak in their own languages. Notice all the different places mentioned in verse nine, each with different dialects and accents and idioms, but all hearing the same message.

They are seeing the Galileans, who only know Hebrew and Aramaic, now speaking in languages the hearers know they don't speak. These are new languages for these people from Galilee. The Holy Spirit moves us to spread the gospel, and notice how this gospel is spread.

### It spans all life-styles.

We see in the record of the different places that people are from all different cultures and backgrounds, and no doubt from all different places in life. The Holy Spirit sends us out with the gospel, not just to talk to people like us—I am not just to talk to the 41-year-olds, the dads, the self-employed, or the pastors of the world. The gospel sends us out to talk to people of all life-styles, whether we think they are going to believe or not.

### It spans all locations.

The gospel should be spread to all locations. Notice all the different places that are mentioned—more than 15 locations are described. They're all different—some are big, some are small; some have the same God, others have different gods; some were rich places, some were poor places; some were filled with debauchery and sin, while some were maybe filled with more devotion to the God of the universe. They're all different. We are told in Acts 1:8 that we are to be God's witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the uttermost parts of the world. And God says, "Let me give you a head start. I'll bring the world to you. And today, more than ever before, the world is coming to us. And we need to share the good news and spread the gospel to all locations. That's why we have a missions program. That's why we go on short-term mission trips—to go to locations where God isn't being worshiped. So we witness and send missionaries to tell of the good news for every life-style, location, and language.

### It spans all languages.

The Galileans are speaking a different language—each one of them. I want to be careful again, because this is where the Pentecostals will say, "Here is where we get the gift of tongues." I won't spend much time on what tongues are in the charismatic and Pentecostal movement. Tongues are not languages, but they are ecstatic utterances where individuals will say they are speaking a heavenly language. This is not what's happening in Acts 2. What is happening is that now ordinary men are speaking all the different languages of the world. All those represented there that day were hearing the gospel in their own language. Is that still going on today? If God wants it to, then it should be. God can use people and languages in that way.

Notice that this is a reversal of the Tower of Babel, where God confuses the language for the sake of the gospel. He now is bringing a miracle so that the languages could be understood. So these Galileans, who didn't know a lick of the languages of any of these places represented, now with perfect clarity are able to speak the languages so that people can hear. Why? So that those people can go and tell the story of Jesus to the world.

These are known languages that the people who were hearing could understand and languages that the Galileans didn't know. This tells us that the gospel is the great change agent in the world. This gospel can impact people from all life-styles, all locations, and all languages because of the work of the Holy Spirit.

### These pursuits will spur all kinds of responses.

We will get into this more in the weeks to come. Sometimes we may get frustrated because it feels as though the Holy Spirit has led us to a friend or neighbor. We share the good news with them, and they say, "You believe this? You're crazy!" And you say, "But in the book of Acts everyone believed."

No, they didn't. As the Spirit moves, as they tell the mighty works of God (verses 12 and 13), *"all were amazed, and perplexed, saying to one another, 'What does this mean?' But others, mocking said, 'They are filled with new wine.'"*

When we share the gospel and we tell the good news of the filling of the Holy Spirit and how He's changed us, there are three responses. There will be those who marvel, those who misunderstand, and those who mock. Either you've experienced that in the

past, or you will experience it in the future—and that's okay. The Holy Spirit will change lives. He's changed ours. But there will be people who say, "I don't get it, dude. Why do you believe that? How can you believe that?"

Others will say, "You're just drunk. You've lost your mind. You're filled with something—you need help." We need to recognize that the filling of the Holy Spirit is not so spectacular and amazing that people can explain it away. He's an invisible, moving Person Who has impacted our lives through illumination and intensity, so that we will go out and spread the good news of Jesus Christ.

So my question is this: Are we a church that's filled with the Holy Spirit? Are we filled with the Holy Spirit so that when we gather together we are so energized and excited about what we've experienced that we go out in the world to tell people the good news of Jesus Christ, being completely okay if some marvel, if some misunderstand, and even if some mock? We're okay with that because we've been commanded by our Lord and Savior to be His witnesses throughout all the world. Does it cause us to look at every person as an opportunity to be sought and found by Jesus, the King of kings and Lord of lords? Is that the kind of church we are? And here's the thing—the church collectively is made up of people, and we will only be as strong as the weakest person here. So each of us needs to ask the question: Am I being filled with the Holy Spirit? Am I living my life in accordance with Him? Am I receiving all that He has for me? Or are sin and preferences and my own selfish desires keeping me from that? If so, let's ask the Lord for forgiveness; let's ask Him fill us anew with His Spirit so that we may walk in accordance with Him. And by God's grace and mercy, may we see some of the life change that was seen on the day of Pentecost.

Village Bible Church | 847 North State Route 47, Sugar Grove, IL 60554 | (630) 466-7198 | [www.villagebible.org/sugar-grove](http://www.villagebible.org/sugar-grove)

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