



SERMON NOTES

ACTS OF THE SPIRIT

Empowered for Mission

“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.” (Acts 2:1-6)

“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.” (Acts 2:16-18)

“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.” (Acts 2:22)

“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.” (Acts 2:32-33)

Implications:

- The coming of God's presence
- The coming of the future

DEVOTIONAL GUIDE

Description for Series

Acts is a bridge for the writings in the New Testament as it joins the ministry of Jesus to the work of the early church. The phrase “began to do and teach” is the key phrase that links the teaching and ministry of Jesus in the gospels to the apostles’ teaching and ministry in the book of Acts. The theme of the book is best summarized in Acts 1:8 and becomes an outline of the rest of the book as the gospel goes forth into the world. The foundation of the ministry is the power and presence of the Holy Spirit who works through the apostles and the new converts to Christianity who proclaim the gospel throughout the world.

Before you begin this study, take time to think about your relationship with Jesus. We are embarking on a journey through the book of Acts where we will see how the power and presence of the Holy Spirit directed and guided the lives of the early disciples. Have you started on a journey of faith by receiving Jesus’ redemptive work for yourself? The Holy Spirit indwells those who have accepted the gift of salvation and then empowers them to experience change and transformation. If you don’t know what it means to receive Jesus and live by the power of the Spirit, reach out to Deb Hinkel at dhinkel@hersheyfree.com.

Prayer Focus

Pray these prayers for the month of September and give the Spirit freedom to work in you and others as you posture yourself before the throne with anticipation and expectation that God will hear and answer you.

Pray for your neighbors, coworkers, teachers, and friends.

Dear Lord, my heart is burdened for my family and friends who don’t know the hope of the gospel. I know how hard life can be, and for many, there seems to be no way out. I pray that you will soften their hearts and give me opportunities to share the good news of Jesus. I pray that you give me wisdom and courage as I seek to make a difference and bring hope in the darkness.

Pray for the churches in our area.

Dear Lord, I pray specifically for Hershey Free Church as we seek to share the gospel with those in our communities who don’t yet know the truth. Help us to faithfully preach the gospel and be a people who love others. Show us how we can care for others. I pray this same prayer for all the local churches. Protect those who lead these churches and give them wisdom and strength.

Pray for the schools in our area, especially the ones in your district!

Heavenly Father, thanks for the hard work of the teachers and administration in educating children. Please let the children, the teachers, and the staff of our school come to understand their need for your grace. May the school be a safe and life-giving place that helps these young people to thrive and reflect your character.

Pray for the local government authorities to have wisdom and courage as they lead.

Gracious God, thank you for establishing authorities to keep peace and order. May our leaders have wisdom and courage as they lead through difficult times. Let there be peace even in the midst of difficult political times.

DEVOTIONAL GUIDE

SEPTEMBER 18

The devotional guide will continue the same rhythm that we used for the last devotional guides where we practiced the 3 x 20 pattern. Spend at least 20 minutes, 3 times a week, in God's word. Each of the three days you will be asked to implement the **Read. Reflect. Respond.** pattern to help get more deeply into God's word.

What comes to your mind when you hear the word "power"? Perhaps we think of the power of politicians, corporate executives, or social influencers. In one sense, the book of Acts is a book about power, but it's a different type of power. It's the power at work when God's presence is at work. Acts 2 describes the coming of God's Spirit at Pentecost, and it reveals what it's like for us to be the recipients of God's power.

DAY ONE

This week's study focuses on the coming of the Spirit. Forty days after the resurrection, Jesus left his disciples with a promise and a mission. For ten more days, the believers prayed together and prepared. As they waited, the Jewish feast of Pentecost began commemorating the Old Testament Feast of Weeks, or the Day of Firstfruits. On Pentecost, the Jews brought offerings of Firstfruits of the wheat harvest to the Temple in thanks to the Lord for his goodness. In Jesus' time, Pentecost was associated with the renewal of the covenant made with Noah and then Moses. God chose this time to give the gift of the Spirit.

Read: Acts 2:1-41 to get an overview of the chapter. Focus on verses 1-13 for today's study.

1. Why is it significant that the Spirit was given during the feast of Pentecost? How does it connect to promise of the Covenant given in the Old Testament?
2. Describe the scene when the Spirit came upon the believers.
3. Why do you think the Holy Spirit came with wind and fire? What do wind and fire represent?
4. How did the various groups of people respond to the believers who were speaking in different languages?

Reflect on the scene described in verses 1-4 and imagine yourself as one of the believers in the room. How do you think you would have responded?

Respond by thanking the Holy Spirit for his presence in your life. Write down ways you have experienced his presence and power.

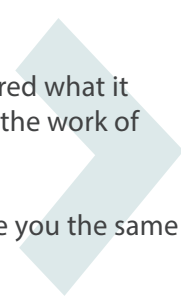
DAY TWO

Read Acts 2:1-41 again. Focus on verses 14-21 for today's study.

1. Why does Peter stand up and address the crowds? Who is the focus of this sermon?
2. Peter uses the phrase, "*In the last days*," and refers to the Old Testament book of Joel. Why is the phrase Peter uses significant both then and now?
3. What does it matter to the church today that the Spirit is being poured out on both young and old, men and women?

Reflect on verses 17-19. How did pondering the truth of these verses impact you? Have you considered what it means to have the Spirit poured out in you? Be honest about your fears and uncertainties to receive the work of the Spirit.

Respond by praying for openness to the work of the Spirit in your personal life. Ask the Spirit to give you the same boldness to share the gospel as the early believers did.



DAY THREE

Read Acts 2:1-41 again focusing on verses 22-41 for today's study.

1. How does Peter start this segment of his sermon? What is his purpose in summarizing the ministry of Jesus?
2. Why does Peter spend so much time reviewing the death and resurrection of Jesus?
3. Read verses 36-37. How do the Jews respond to hearing Peter's poignant and direct words? How many chose to follow Christ that day?

Reflect on how you have responded to the message of the gospel in your own life. Thank Jesus for the gift of salvation and the gift of the Spirit to live a life that reveals the redemption you have been given.

Respond by reading verses 22-24 again which are a great example of how to share the gospel succinctly. Re-write these verses in your own words as a way to prepare how you can share the gospel with someone in your family, workplace, or community.

SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS

1. Read the verses. How would you summarize this passage (2:1-41) in a few sentences? What are the highlights?
2. How have you been enabled by the Spirit to do or say something that was challenging? Share some examples.
3. What does it mean to be the "mobile temple of God's presence?" How do you respond to this reality?
4. What does it mean to you to live a life that can only be lived by the power of the Spirit? How would living this way change your outlook, attitudes, and behavior?
5. As you conclude your discussion, take some time in silence to listen to the Spirit and how he may be directing you to act this week. If you are comfortable, share what the Spirit said to you and pray for one another.