

Acts 2:1-6 (NIV)

1 When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. 2 Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. 3 They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. 4 All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them. 5 Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven. 6 When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard them speaking in his own language.

Acts 2:12-18 (NIV)

12 Amazed and perplexed, they asked one another, “What does this mean?” 13 Some, however, made fun of them and said, “They have had too much wine.” 14 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. 15 These men are not drunk, as you suppose. It's only nine in the morning! 16 No, this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: 17 “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. 18 Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy.”

44-02-06-What Does This Mean?

Pentecost, Holy Spirit, spirituality, unity, divisions, sanctification
Acts 2:1-6, 12-18

On the Day of Pentecost, God united what sin divided.

INTRODUCTION:

–Sin damages life by *division* or *alienation*. Three forms of division immediately resulted from the first sin in the Garden of Eden:
1st–Adam and Eve became emotionally *alienated* from God’s goodness in their naked bodies; **2nd**–they became relationally *divided* from each other as a couple; **3rd**–they became spiritually *separated* from God.
 –As history progressed these divisions, and many others, became more deeply rooted in cultural thinking and behavior. Some people even consider such divisions to be *holy*. But **HOM.idea**. By the way He came, the Holy Spirit healed many of these divisions, and He wants to heal more. Our **text** in Act 2 shows us a few of them....

I. A Holy Merging of the Sacred and the Secular

- A. Humans are naturally *religious*, attaching *sacred significance to objects and places*, such as *altars* or *temples* (God allowed this in the OT, but in the NT the *sacred focus* becomes Christ: He calls His body *the temple*; when He lives in us, our bodies are *temples*!)
- B. The Holy Spirit didn’t come at *the temple*, but at a *house*, a private dwelling, where *mundane, ordinary, secular* things took place.
- C. In fact, the early church had no buildings—they met in homes for many years (Christ had promised, “I will build my Church,” and by building it in the home, He made the secular *sacred*).

TRANS: God has not stopped using certain things in a special, sacred way: we call them “*means of grace*” (*holy water* or *anointing oil* or the *Communion Table*). But God’s grace can also work through a *poem*, a *painting*, a *movie*, a *bookmark*, a *tiny flower*.... The same is true about people: in Christ there is no division between the secular and sacred. Pentecost ushered in...

II. A Joint Ministry of Clergy and Laity (v.3-4a, tongues of

fire...separated and came to rest on **each** of them. **All** of them were filled with the Holy Spirit...)

- A. Humans like to designate other select humans to handle *spiritual affairs*, usually because they *feel inadequate* for it, but at Pentecost the Holy Spirit enlisted *all believers to be ministers* of God.
- B. By themselves, no one is *adequate* for God's ministry—no apostle, prophet, pastor, or pope!—2 Cor 3:4-6a (ESV), Such is the confidence that we have through Christ toward God. Not that we are **sufficient** in ourselves to claim anything as coming from us, but our **sufficiency** is from God, who has made us sufficient to be ministers of a new covenant...

TRANS: Personally, you may feel inadequate to *minister* to others, but deep in your heart, you know better. He's called you to be a vessel of His grace. The presence of His indwelling Holy Spirit has made you into that vessel. Don't worry about what you'll say. At Pentecost all the believers "*began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.*"

III. A Divine Message in Diverse Languages

- A. Jews from other nations were in Jerusalem that day to worship. God could have spoken to them in Hebrew, but He didn't. When He spoke to them in their own *tongues*, it ended the idea of a sacred language [Roman Church sadly tried reviving a sacred language in Latin].
- B. Using *other tongues* at Pentecost was God's first step in transferring His Gospel from the grip of Jewish exclusivism to international stewardship. (Sadly, when church growth plateaued in Jerusalem, it took persecution to drive the Gospel out into the Gentile world.)
- C. God is into *communication*. He wants His truth conveyed in words people can grasp [Modern Bible translations are important!]

TRANS: But the best translation is not *written*, it is *lived*. How well are we translating the Gospel message for those around us? Again, we can't do this on our own. The key is this: "*They...began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.*" God will *provide* the right words to help people understand, but we must wait upon His Spirit's enablement, as they did at Pentecost. When it happened back then, God cancelled some other very strong divisions by *giving*....

IV. A Single Vision among Separated Groups

- A. When the crowd asked, "*What does this mean?*" Peter explained, "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.'

- B. In other words, Peter was saying, "*I'll tell you what this means. It means the Holy Spirit is abolishing our nice little categories that we've pigeon-holed people into. He's putting His Word to parents in the mouths of their kids. He's annihilating the generation gap between youth and old age. Masters and slaves are on the same level now in His Kingdom. And get this! He's pouring out His Spirit on women preachers as well as on men, and you men better listen up when He starts prophesying through them!*" (This was **radical stuff** for that day, and **it still is!**")
- C. At Pentecost—when the *divine dream*, the *prophetic word*, the *single vision*, came to all sorts of people, young and old, slave and free, male and female—God was fulfilling a prophesy in Isa 40:3-5 (ESV), A voice cries: "In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD; make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain. And the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together, for the mouth of the LORD has spoken."

CONCLUSION:

—**On the Day of Pentecost, God united what sin divided**. No more division between *secular and sacred*: ALL is SACRED! No more division between *clergy and laity*: ALL are MINISTERS! No more special *holy lingo* (NOT even *Christian-ese*): ALL must adopt God's priority—simple COMMUNICATION. **What does Pentecost mean?** It means that *the high and mighty* have been lowered and *the lowly and disenfranchised* have been raised to **one level**: the *status of royal ambassadors...chosen ministers of Christ the King*. That is what it meant on the Day of Pentecost; that is what it means for you now.