

Pentecost: A New Kind of Power

Acts 1:4-11 (ESV)

⁴ And while staying with them he ordered them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, he said, "you heard from me; ⁵ for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now."

⁶ So when they had come together, they asked him, "Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" ⁷ He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by his own authority. ⁸ But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." ⁹ And when he had said these things, as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. ¹⁰ And while they were gazing into heaven as he went, behold, two men stood by them in white robes, ¹¹ and said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven."

Context

Before Pentecost, the disciples were still thinking in old ways. Even after Jesus' resurrection, they were asking whether this was the moment Jesus would restore Israel politically and overthrow Rome. Their understanding of power was still shaped by domination, control, and victory over enemies.

But Jesus introduces something completely different.

Instead of political power, He promises the power of the Holy Spirit, a holy power that does not destroy, exploit, or elevate self, but empowers believers to become like Jesus and witness to the world.

Pentecost is the moment where the old gives way to the new:

- old paradigms become new ways of living,
- old brokenness is renewed,
- and a new Spirit-filled community is born.

The passage unfolds in three ways.

DISCUSS

1. Receiving a New Paradigm (Acts 1:4-5)

Jesus tells the disciples to wait for the gift of the Holy Spirit.

The disciples were still operating with old assumptions about power, success, and the kingdom of God. But Jesus introduces a new reality: the Holy Spirit is not something earned through effort or merit, but received as a gift of grace.

This is a shift from a merit-based mindset (“What must I do to earn this?”) to a gift-based relationship with God (“Receive what I freely give”).

What old ways of thinking, fears, hurts, or assumptions might be limiting what God wants to do in your life today?

2. Receiving a New Kind of Power (Acts 1:6-8)

The disciples expected power to look like political victory and military strength.

But Jesus speaks about a completely different kind of power, the power of the Holy Spirit.

This power is “holy”: wholly greater than, but also wholly different from, the powers of the world. Unlike worldly power that dominates, consumes, or destroys, the Spirit’s power gives life, serves others, and enables believers to become like Jesus.

Pastor Andrew’s sermon illustrated this through Moses and the burning bush. The bush burned, yet it was not consumed. Moses encountered a power unlike anything he had seen before, a holy power that did not destroy.

The Holy Spirit empowers believers not to exalt themselves, but to love enemies, forgive others, serve sacrificially, and live with the character of Christ.

How does the world normally define power? In what ways is the Spirit’s power different from worldly power?

3. Receiving Power to Be Sent (Acts 1:8-11)

Jesus says: “You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you; and you will be My witnesses...”

The purpose of Pentecost is not merely personal spiritual experience, but mission. The Spirit fills the church so that the church can be sent into the world.

After Jesus ascends, the disciples stand looking into the sky until the angels ask:

“Why do you stand here looking into the sky?”

The Christian life is not simply about gathering or having spiritual moments. The Spirit empowers believers to go into the world as witnesses of Jesus, displaying His love, forgiveness, humility, and grace in everyday life.

Pentecost is not only about receiving. It is about releasing.

What might it look like for you to live as a Spirit-empowered witness in your workplace, family, school, or daily relationships this week?

Pray For:

1. Openness to God’s New Work

Pray that God would reveal old patterns, fears, hurts, or assumptions that may be limiting our walk with Him. Ask the Holy Spirit to renew our minds and make us open to the new things He wants to do in and through us.

2. To Live by the Spirit’s Power

Pray that we would not seek worldly power, recognition, or control, but instead receive the Holy Spirit’s power to become more like Jesus, growing in love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, and self-control.

3. Boldness to Be Witnesses

Pray that the Holy Spirit would send and empower us to reflect Jesus wherever God has placed us. Ask for courage to love sacrificially, serve faithfully, and point others to Christ through both our words and our lives.