

# Coffee to Go | Pentecost Sunday

## SUMMARY KEYWORDS

Holy Spirit, Pentecost, fire, wind, bewilderment, witness, first fruits, Festival of Weeks

## SPEAKERS

Karin Peter, Blake Smith

### **Karin Peter** 00:27

Welcome to Coffee to Go where we center ourselves in the scriptures, seasons and holy days of the Christian tradition. I'm Karin Peter, and I'm thrilled to be here today with Blake Smith. We welcome you on the journey. We are talking about the day of Pentecost today. And Pentecost means the 50th day or 50th. And on the 50th day after Passover and Jews celebrated with a festival, and it's that festival where this scripture takes place as Christianity had not yet happened and become into a church where we're still Jews celebrating Jewish festivals, but for Christians the Pentecost marks the 50th and final day of Easter season, so we've kept that tradition. And at Pentecost, the Spirit moves among the disciples and crowds of onlookers, or you could say, us, the Spirit moves among us on Pentecost and reminds us on Pentecost that we are to be about our Spirit-filled ministry. At Pentecost, the Holy Spirit is often depicted visually and in words and illustrations as flames like tongues of fire or like a dove descending on the people. So we'll listen to Blake share, and we'll see what images come to our mind today. Blake.

### **Blake Smith** 01:55

All right, well, we've got really two passages, we're going to take just a piece from the Gospel according to John the 15th chapter, the 26th and 27th verse to set up, then the passage from Acts chapter two, 1 through 21. "When the advocate comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who comes from the Father, He will testify on my behalf, you are also to testify, because you have been with me from the beginning." When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly from heaven, there came a sound like a rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. Divided tongues as a fire appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages as the Spirit gave them ability. Now there were devout Jews from every people under heaven living in Jerusalem. And at this sound, the crowd gathered and was bewildered because each one heard them speaking in the native language of each. Amazed and astonished they asked, are not all these who are speaking Galileans and how is it that we hear each of us in our own native language Parthians, Medes, Elamites, the residents of Mesopotamia, Judea, and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, the visitors from Rome both Jews and proselytes, Cretins and Arabs in our own languages, we hear them speaking about God's deeds of power. All were amazed and perplexing to one another. What does this mean? But others sneered and said, they are filled with new wine. But Peter, standing with the Eleven, raised his voice and address them, fellow Jews and all who live in Jerusalem, let this be known to you and listen to what I say.

Indeed, these are not drunk as you suppose, for it is only nine o'clock in the morning. No, this is what was spoken through the prophet Joel. 'In the last days it will be God declares that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters will prophesy. And your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams. Even upon my slaves, both men and women in those days I will pour out my Spirit, and they shall prophesy. And I will show portents in the heavens above and signs on the earth below, blood and fire and smoky mist. The sun shall be turned into darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the Lord's great and glorious day. Then everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.' So as always, we ask the question, why does this matter? I think for me, one of the important pieces here is that we often relegate the Spirit to the four walls of the church, or maybe at an extreme to a camp grounds, where we have experienced the presence of the Spirit, but it's in very defined spaces in our religious life. And what Acts describes is this presence of the Spirit invading a community gathering in the regular communal gathering places just in everyday spaces. And this is a time of festival, the Festival of Weeks, and it's a harvest festival, where they are celebrating the first fruits of the harvest. And here in this passage, we see the Spirit as a first fruit or a good gift from God to all who follow Jesus. So part of that celebration becomes a celebration of the Spirit. And the presence of the Spirit is something in this passage, at least, that can be seen and heard and felt as wind breath, fire, dove, as you mentioned before, Karin, and it empowers everyone, everyone, to witness which, for many of us, a terrifying thought to be put in that spot, but the Spirit empowers everybody there... women, children, old men, young men, as as in the prophecy from Joel ... it's to talk about their encounters with the Spirit. Witnessing isn't, doesn't have to be a hard thing. It's just about talking about how we experience the Spirit in our life. And, in this passage, it was actually for some, it was the cause of doubt, and bewilderment. So we might find some comfort for ourselves when we have those experiences, where we just don't know what to do with it, or how to receive it. And yet, we might also receive comfort in knowing that the Spirit does interact with us in every day in the everyday places. And so our call is to share those experiences and that, in fact, is witness to share that first fruit. Wendy Farley, a commentator on this passage writes about this endless energy of the Spirit to infiltrate our hearts. to infiltrate our hearts, it kind of implies that we're not exactly throwing the door open wide and, and welcoming in the Spirit. Sometimes the Spirit has to do the work of infiltrating us and and so it might catch us off guard, it might be uncomfortable, but it is something for everyone.

**Karin Peter 08:03**

So I appreciate and Wendy Farley's work in that. I think sometimes when we think about Pentecost, and the coming of the Holy Spirit, or at least the Holy Spirit making itself known in this new and for some people kind of disconcerting and even confusing way, it takes away that kind of implied piousness that we're supposed to be so holy, that, you know, we have the Holy Spirit, and then we're all ready to witness of God's grace, when really it was confusing and intriguing and frightening and awe inspiring all at the same time. And so yeah, her words of the Spirit infiltrates really stuck with me this morning.

**Blake Smith 08:49**

Well, some questions that we might ask, given this understanding of infiltration of the Spirit as those questions might be, when has the Spirit touched me, in a sense of wonder, amazement, resilience, or delight, and I would add maybe even in bewilderment. Another question, how has the Spirit infiltrated my heart, my relationships and my community? Do we allow that to happen? Or do we create walls that

keep the Spirit out? And what good gifts does the Spirit bring into my life? We think about Spirit as first fruit, what good gifts does the Spirit bring into our lives? So just a few things to think about. How can we experience that this week?

**Karin Peter** 09:42

Well, what came to mind Blake when you were reading through the Scripture, and also as we kind of rested in Wendy Farley's comments about Pentecost, it brought to mind when Community of Christ was using seasons of the Spirit for its Sunday School material And it was several years ago. And it's a wonderful resource, it's still I think produced, but in that resource, they would call attention to what they call Spirit sightings. I think that was the term used, or noticing the Spirit really, it was just like this. Just noticing the Spirit around you in everyday life, what was happening and, and paying attention to the Spirit being present, we kind of refer to it in our mission prayer, to be awake and ready to respond to those Spirit sightings in our life. So this week, I was thinking maybe you can identify ... each of us could identify ... an image or a sound, that kind of brings the Spirit to mind for you. For me, it's, it's those flames, like tongues of fire that always brings a Spirit to mind for me, and then look for that image. Or if it's a sound like the rushing wind, that works for you, then listen for that sound this week. And each time you see that image or hear that sound, notice it. Really give it a moment of your attention, and offer just a short statement or prayer of thanks for this first fruits or good gift in your life. So for me, it's flames and Ray and I light a candle every night at dinner time. So that's kind of my plan this week is a flame, lights for our dinner candle to just take a moment to notice and give thanks for the Spirit, in our home and in our lives. And if you've got kids at home, or books that act like kids at home, sometimes that's what we've got. Ask them to join in and participate, maybe drawing an image that brings them joy or delight or amazement or wonder and talk with them about how the Spirit is present in their joy, or in their delight or in their amazement, or in their wonder, and ask them to share with you any Spirit sightings they might notice this week. Let's see if we can keep Pentecost alive in us this week.

**Blake Smith** 12:14

Great. I was just thinking as you were talking about that putting together the pieces of identifying an image or a sound that brings the Spirit to mind and then talking about children. I know, unfortunately, a number of the congregations that I serve don't have children regularly attending, so, when I am in a congregation where there are children making noise, that makes some uncomfortable, but for me it is a sound and an image of the presence of the Spirit.

**Karin Peter** 12:45

Absolutely ... spirits sighting.

**Blake Smith** 12:48

That's a Spirit sighting for me. All right, well, our blessing comes from Hildegard of Bingen, and it is this...

Holy Spirit, comforting fire. Life of all creation, anointing the sick, cleansing body and soul. Fill this body.  
Holy Spirit, sacred breath, fire of love, sweetest taste, beautiful aroma. Fill this heart.  
Holy Spirit, filling the world from the heights to the deep, raining from clouds, filling rivers and sea. Fill this mind.

Holy Spirit, forgiving and giving, uniting strangers, reconciling enemies, seeking the lost and enfolding us together. Fill these gathered here.

Holy Spirit, bringing light into dark places, igniting praise, greatest gift, our hope and encourager, Holy Spirit of Christ. I praise You. Amen. [Amen.] Well, thanks to all of you our listeners for joining us here at Coffee to Go. We invite you to join us next time for another episode and the next part of our journey through the liturgical seasons and holy days of the Christian tradition.