



# GROWTH GROUP

## Pentecost

Week of 5/31/2020

With the festival of Pentecost, the Christian Church begins its celebration of the non-festival half of the church year. During the very long season of Pentecost (which lasts until the middle of autumn), the lessons and Gospel for the day concentrate on our lives of Christian sanctification (sanctify=to make holy). As we will see today and over the next several weeks, our sanctification—like our salvation—depends entirely upon the working of our almighty God, through the good news of eternal salvation. This good news naturally moves Christians to bear good fruit in their lives. Yes, our new life as Christians depends on the power of the Holy Spirit.

### Getting Started

Have you been thinking more about the end of the world lately? Why or why not? Some might be thinking more about it in light of recent events and concerns in our world. Others might not be thinking about it very much. Neither is right or wrong. Today’s study, though, will get us into the context of the end times and the gift of the Spirit poured out on God’s children in these last days.

### Into the Word

Read **Acts 2:1-21**.

Identify different evidences of the Holy Spirit’s presence in these verses.

The sound like a violent wind from heaven (the Holy Spirit is often associated with wind); the tongues of fire over the disciples; speaking in other languages; boldness in the face of ridicule; communicating the Word of God (prophecy); others? Notice how the people thought that the disciples must have been drunk (filled with wine), yet they were actually filled with the Holy Spirit. Paul contrasts being filled with wine and being filled with the Holy Spirit in Ephesians 5:18.

Not everything Peter quoted from the prophet Joel took place on Pentecost. Some is yet to come before the Last Day. Which things from this quotation did take place and what makes them so astounding?

Signs like blood, fire, smoke, the sun darkening, and the moon changing colors didn’t happen on Pentecost (as far as we know). Those are things yet to come before the great Day of the Lord (the Last Day). But the Spirit was poured out on God’s children. This was huge, and the answer to Jesus’ promise to send the Advocate. Also, by the Spirit’s power, all those who called on the name of the Lord on Pentecost were saved. (Later in Acts 2 we hear about thousands repenting, being baptized, and believing in Jesus by the mystery and might of God the Spirit.

Read **Joel 2:28-29**.

As Joel, with God’s help, looked into the futures, he saw the New Testament era from Pentecost to the Last Day. In this era, God pours out his Holy Spirit on all his children. Explain how, when you receive the Spirit, you get:

- A person

The Lord’s says that he will pour out “my Spirit.” Scripture makes clear that this Spirit of God is a real person—the third Person of the Trinity. When the Spirit is poured out on God’s church, we get a relationship, interaction with, and fellowship with God himself—a real Person of God!

- Lots of him

This isn't just a trickle of the Spirit. God floods his church with the Holy Spirit. This is abundance and a generous outpouring of this Person of God. It's as if we can bathe in his goodness!

- Prophecy

Every child of God can communicate the Word of God with the authority of God. We're treated with such value, honor, and dignity—as if we were priests and prophets of the Old Testament. Because we have the full revelation of God in his Word, the Bible, all believers can share the saving message with anyone and say with confidence, "This is the Word of the Lord."

### Apply

Share examples of the Spirit working among children. Share examples of the Spirit working among adults.

Answers will vary. Think of a little child who's been baptized saying, "And Jesus loves *me!*" Think of the preschool students saying before Christmas, "And Jesus came for *you!*" Think of the elderly with much free time who fill those moments writing gospel-saturated cards and praying. Think of the adult friend or relative to says, while looking in your eyes, "God's not mad at you. Because of Jesus, he still forgives you and you're his child." This is evidence of the Spirit being poured out on all God's people—men, women, young, old—so they can prophecy.

Explain how having the Spirit poured out on all people of God's church equips us for:

- Evangelism

We have God himself poured out on us. We can communicate the gospel with confidence. We have God's power and presence to encourage, guide, and energize us for the mission he's given us to proclaim the gospel and make disciples of all nations. This would be impossible on our own. Thank God we have the Spirit!

- Trials in life

In this world, we will have trouble. But Jesus sends the Advocate—the Comforter. The Holy Spirit. The Spirit comes alongside to bring us through difficult times, to shine the light on Christ, and to lead the way. This would be impossible on our own. Thank God we have the Spirit!

- Preparing for the Last Day

There will be ominous signs around us in nature before the end comes and Jesus returns. There will be plenty of resistant to the message of Jesus. We will all have to stand and face a holy God on the Last Day. But we don't stand alone. We have the Spirit who equips us with faith in Jesus and will strengthen us until we're home. This would be impossible on our own. Thank God we have the Spirit!

### Around the Room

Share your highs and lows for the week.

### Pray

**Prayer suggestions:** For the outpouring of the Spirit; for courage in sharing our faith; for those who don't know Christ by the Spirit's power; for all those who are sick, suffering, or facing persecution around the world.