

# Pentecost.

by Andrew Bonar

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of praying for the Holy Spirit's outpouring and the need for continued prayer, fasting, and self-denial to receive the Spirit's blessing.*

**Scripture:** Acts 2:1

**Topics:** "The Holy Spirit", "Prayer and Revival"

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## Description

Andrew Bonar preaches about the significance of the Day of Pentecost, emphasizing the outpouring of the Holy Spirit as a fulfillment of God's promise after Jesus' glorification. He contrasts the work of the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament with that in the New Testament, highlighting the greater fullness available to believers today. Bonar illustrates the anticipation of the disciples as they prayed in the upper room, leading to the miraculous arrival of the Spirit, which empowered them to boldly proclaim the Gospel. He stresses the importance of persistent prayer for the outpouring of the Spirit, noting that true transformation and revival come through divine intervention rather than human effort. The sermon concludes with a call for believers to seek the Spirit's presence actively, as the early church did, to experience the same powerful results.

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## Transcript

The subject is the outpouring of the Spirit on the Day of Pentecost, the fiftieth day after the Passover. It might be interesting and profitable at another time to take up the question, 'In what did the work of the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament saints differ from His work in the hearts of New Testament saints?' Sometimes the words used might seem to imply that the work in the New Testament saints was so great as to cause His work in the saints of Old Testament times to fall into the shade. 'The Holy Ghost was not yet given,' says one passage (John 7. 39), 'because Jesus was not yet glorified,' as if there had been, so to speak, scarcely anything worth mentioning in regard to the working of the Spirit in former days. But let us remember that this is said because the Holy Spirit wished to impress upon us the fulness of the blessing that came after Jesus was glorified. It is like the passage in Rom. 8. 23, where it is said that we, the adopted sons of God, are groaning in ourselves for 'the adoption' - that is, the full adoption, on the resurrection morning. We are already adopted, but have not yet received all that is implied in that adoption. Similarly, the Holy Spirit was in Old Testament believers, but was not given in His fulness; His anointing was given to the saints of the Old Testament, but not in the same measure as in the New Testament.

There is another subject that might have engaged our attention. Every one of us who is a believer has the Holy Spirit dwelling at this moment in his heart; and He will abide there for ever. And a question is sometimes raised in connection with this - viz., Is it right to pray for His outpouring, since He is already in the Church? As to this question we reply: Every unconverted soul is a soul into which in the hour of conversion the Holy Spirit must enter, or in other words, on which He must be poured, for that soul is dry ground that needs the shower. We have Bible authority for asking the Spirit in these terms. In reference to the latter days the prophet Isaiah, says, 'I will pour My Spirit upon thy seed, and My blessing upon thine offspring' (44. 3). Zechariah also, in chapter 12. 10, 'I will pour upon the house of David and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and of supplications.'

But now, passing from these points, let us come to the Day of Pentecost. Let us read Acts 2. 1-4. Let me ask you to visit two localities in Jerusalem - Mount Moriah and Mount Zion. We go to Moriah, the Temple Mount, on the day called Pentecost, the fiftieth day after the Passover, and what do we find that morning as we enter the temple courts? Everywhere around us are spread out the firstfruits of the completed harvest. You might almost think the spies had just arrived from the brook Eshcol. See such delicious clusters of grapes and pomegranates, see such figs, and olives, and all manner of other fruits and flowers in abundance, carried in by worshippers at sunrise that morning, and piled up in the courts of the temple. These are the firstfruits of the completed harvest, brought on that day into the courts of God's house, a gift to Him; and there is nothing here like Cain's offering; for first of all there has been poured out the blood of sacrifice, not only the morning lamb, but seven lambs, in addition two bullocks, one ram, one kid of the goats. The blood has been poured out as a declaration that all we receive is through atoning blood.

And now, look well here at the firstfruits. There was (I may say) a type, a figure in all these firstfruits. As you look on these varied fruits you may call up to your mind the fruits of the Holy Spirit: love, joy, peace, goodness, longsuffering, gentleness, faith, meekness, temperance, brotherly-kindness, godliness, knowledge, charity - and other such heavenly graces, represented in these courts by the firstfruits. Let us, however, pass from that scene, and visit Mount Zion. We have yonder, on Mount Zion - I do not here take time to show reasons for believing that the 120 disciples met in the old upper room where the Master so often met them. I cannot believe they would be found anywhere else, when waiting for the promise of the Father. It was a large 'upper room' (Luke 22. 12), and if at the time they did not see the reason why so large an apartment was fixed upon, now it became plain why the Master had said 'a large room.' They were to meet there after He was departed, in larger companies, than when He was with them. You know how they continued meeting there for prayer during the ten days. They had got the promise of the Spirit, but promise does not supersede prayer; it stimulates prayer during the ten days. They had continued praying these ten days.

No doubt that season would pass very quickly. In the life of the missionary, David Brainerd, it is beautifully told of his congregation, on one occasion, when he informed them that he must leave them that afternoon of the Sabbath, to go to a distant station, but wished they would assemble and continue in prayer the rest of the day; they agreed, and beginning in the afternoon, one prayed, and then another - in short, the spirit of prayer was given them to such a degree that the time passed very quickly, so that, till a person entered and told them that the morning star was up in the sky, they never thought of the lapse of time. It would be even thus, no doubt, in that upper room, as the 120 disciples prayed these ten days for the promise of the Father. But now the tenth morning had come, and it was the well-known Pentecost, the fiftieth day. I rather think they may have been expecting something extraordinary to happen. They had begun to get a new insight into Scripture, as you see by Peter's words in the first chapter of Acts. They have been led to

expect the close of their waiting, intimated by the close of the harvest. At any rate, there they were met that morning with one accord. It was a full meeting, no Thomas was absent; and whether they were expecting something extraordinary on that particular day or not, they were met with one accord. We may imagine them - can you not, Christian friends, imagine them - intently looking up to the risen Saviour and calling on Him now, at last, to send the promised Spirit. Look at the 120 on their knees, and oh, listen to their earnest cry! Once, in the year 1519, at Leipzig, there was a large meeting of Protestants. There were to be some matters discussed of vital moment, but it was proposed they should first of all have a diet of prayer. It was agreed upon, and the great assembly resolved that they would not move a step, till they sought the presence of the Holy Spirit. They dropped on their knees and together sang a hymn, the well-known hymn, beginning, 'Veni Creator Spiritus.'

'Creator Spirit! by whose aid

The world's foundation first was laid,

The source of uncreated light,

The Father's promised Paraclete.

Thrice holy fount, thrice holy fire,

Our hearts with heavenly love inspire;

Come, and thy sacred unction bring

To sanctify us while we sing.

Plenteous of grace, descend from high

Rich in Thy sevenfold energy;

Make us eternal truths receive,

And practise all that we believe;

Give us Thyself, that we may see

The Father and the Son by Thee.'

When they had finished the last verse, all still kneeling on the floor, with one accord they began to sing again, 'Creator Spirit,' etc., and when they had finished a second time, all felt as if they could not yet rise from their knees, but a third time sang the same hymn, the whole assembly filled with longing for the mighty working of the Spirit. It must have been a scene like this which was witnessed on the day of Pentecost. As the rising sun cast his bright beams on that upper room on Mount Zion, while the disciples were again calling on their risen and ascended Lord to send 'the promise of the Father,' suddenly there was heard a sound from heaven. 'Suddenly,' notice it, for the thing was of God, and when God works He works at once. This sound which so suddenly burst upon their ears was the presence of the Spirit - the arrival of the Comforter. He was come at last. Who can tell the feelings of the disciples when they found that the long waited for gift was now given! It is said there was a 'sound.' Peter says of the voice on the Transfiguration hill (2 Peter 1. 17), it was 'such a voice!' and no doubt he would have said of what they

heard this day, it was 'such a sound!' It was a sound as of a rushing mighty wind (says our translator), but not a wind in the common sense of the word, but a wind like what is mentioned in Ezekiel 37. 9, 'Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live.' It is the word used in Genesis, 'And the Lord formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul.'

There was the sound of a mighty breathing, and it was like a river rushing or pouring along. It was the river of the living breath of God. It was the pouring out of the Spirit. It was what Joel had foretold, 'I will pour out My Spirit upon all flesh.' There is the pouring out of the Spirit, and that is 'on all flesh.' For, look round the room! tongues of fire are to be seen. Tongues! why tongues? Because every nation must hear the tidings of the great salvation. It is the Spirit poured out 'on all flesh. ' There is a tongue to be given that they may be messengers of the glorious Gospel to all nations.

But we must hasten on to watch the results. The hour for morning prayer (the third hour) was now near, and the 120 disciples repair to the temple. They cannot keep to themselves what they have got. Some think that the multitude came together to them at their upper room building, but it is more likely that they went to the temple. At any rate, they are found surrounded by Jews of all nations under heaven, all full of amazement and bewildered with surprise. But turn from them and look at the twelve. Peter, in their name, rises up; what composed boldness there is in him; he is calm, yet full of zeal and fervour; he speaks, and nothing could be plainer than the language used. It is clear, plain, and distinct. The words used everybody can understand. But, oh, how authoritatively and surely he gives forth his testimony to Christ risen and ascended, and calls on all to hear and obey, and the great multitude are awed as he speaks. Oh! for such a day of power to us. Oh! for such a coming of the Holy Spirit to every minister, to every worker. We long for this. We look for this. And in passing, notice there is not a syllable in all Scripture that intimates that when the Spirit fills a man, he shouts. When the Spirit fills a man he is calm. Notice that. What did Christ do? No noisy shout did He send forth, He did not cry, nor lift up, nor cause His voice to be heard in the streets (Isa. 42. 2). For the Spirit comes calmly and gently, though with over whelming power, enabling the man to bear witness for the Lord. There is awe upon the spirit of the man whom the Spirit fills, and deepest reverence; for he feels Jehovah's presence with him. But look at the people to whom Peter and his fellow-apostles speak, how are they affected? As soon as Peter has given his testimony - 'This is the Lord of glory, whom you have crucified, but whom the Father honours, and who is now at the right hand,' conviction pierces their hearts. The Lord had said (John 16. 8), When the Comforter is come to you, He will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment. This has begun to take place. The people, as Peter is speaking, are pricked in their hearts. What shall we do? they cry. They have made a discovery that He whom they crucified is the eternal Son of God, the Lord of Glory. As John Newton puts it of his own discovery of his unbelief,

'Alas, I knew not what I did,

But now my tears are vain;

Where shall my trembling soul be hid,

For I the Lord have slain?'

But forthwith the scene alters. Three thousand souls, men, women, and children, are awakened, as Peter is finishing his appeal; and when he changes his voice, and preaches glad tidings of pardon, how speedily the tidings enter their hearts. 'They gladly received his word.' How speedily the message of salvation

enters in, opening the heart to hear. We have not time to dwell upon particulars, but look now at the Pentecostal firstfruits. Look at that goodly company, three thousand souls. They go away praising God. They go home to eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart. Observe their brotherly-kindness, their fellowship with the apostles, their liberality and unselfishness, and other graces. And there is one specified that we are surprised at. They 'continued in prayer.' They had got what they prayed for during the ten days. Yet they are praying on! Three thousand souls is a good beginning, but it is only a beginning. They pray on, and what we hear next is, Souls were daily added to the Church of such as should be saved. And the work goes on. What do we hear after Peter's next sermon? They are still praying, and the result of that sermon is, 'five thousand men' (chap. 4. 4) are added to the Church. The river of the Spirit is pouring along. What follows next? Soon after we hear that the river has risen, and has reached the temple. 'A great company of the priests are obedient to the faith.' Then we hear (chap. 6. 7) that the river is flowing on still, for old Samaria receives the Word of God, and there is great joy in that city. And now comes another wonderful piece of news. The youths who sat at the feet of Gamaliel have been reached by the river. Saul of Tarsus, one of the most talented students of Jerusalem, is now sitting at the feet of Christ, and now forth he goes with all his learning, and all his talents, to proclaim Christ, throughout all the East. The river of the Spirit has been poured into his soul so abundantly, that he is able to write such words and truths as are found in Ephesians.

We might go on, but there, that is a sample of what the Spirit did when poured out from on high. May we get the same. Remember that was only the beginning. The river is flowing on still. That was only the beginning of results, but let the Lord's people remember, we must ask for the Spirit to be poured out; and there are some things we do not get when we ask only once or twice, though we ask in faith. We must ask for them often before we get them. Elijah, when bringing down the fire upon Carmel, had only to ask once, but in the afternoon, he required to pray seven times with his head between his knees, before he got abundant rains. And have you noticed that Daniel, on one occasion, set himself to pray for his city and people, and he was scarcely done with praying when Gabriel was beside him with the answer; but in the tenth chapter, he set his face to pray again, and he had to pray for twenty-one days before he got his answer. We must continue in prayer if we are to get an outpouring of the Spirit. Christ says there are some things which we shall not get, unless we pray and fast, yes, 'prayer and fasting.' We must control the flesh and abstain from whatever hinders direct fellowship with God. We must leave other things untouched, that we may give ourselves to prayer for a time. Do that often and bring down a blessing. Leave off other reading. Leave off other employments. Give up some of your work, and pray down the Spirit that we may have a great Pentecostal blessing. Our only hope is in the Holy Spirit. Eloquence will not move a man's conscience, nor will intellectual power. It is the Spirit that we need, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Oh! for such days! When the Spirit has been poured out, and we stand up to preach the Word, we have scarcely spoken to the people before they are moved and melted: 'Repent, for the soul that sinneth it shall die'. As it was said in a revival in olden days, the people were like 'slaked lime,' when the preachers called on them to flee from the wrath to come; and when we tell anxious souls, 'Come unto Me,' says Christ, 'and I will give you rest,' in a moment they will rise, and go to Him. When we cry, Behold He cometh in the clouds! every eye will look towards the Coming Saviour, and rejoice in the glory to be revealed. And if the Spirit is at work, when we say to believers, this is God's message, 'Be ye holy, for I am holy,' there will follow 'the sound as of a mighty breathing,' filling the whole temple of the soul.

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