**Spirited By Words**

Based on [Acts 2:1-21](http://biblia.com/books/esv/Ac2.1-21)

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The Day of Pentecost

By Pastor Nathan Fuehrer

Today is the day of Pentecost. It’s a word that means “Fifty” and so it’s nicely situated Fifty days after Easter. Fifty days after the first Easter, the Holy Spirit descended as divided tongues of fire upon the apostles. Must be where we get the expression, “He’s On Fire.” You see, during Pentecost, all sorts of people came to Jerusalem, people from Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia...all devout Jews making their pilgrimage there. They were Jews, but all spoke different languages, and so there was a bit of a communication barrier. And so the Spirit comes, and the apostles began to speak in different languages, or more like, they began to speak and everyone heard what they were saying in their own language. Yes, it was a wondrous miracle. So wondrous that the people thought the apostles were buzzed on wine, but they weren’t, they were buzzed on the Holy Spirit...yeah?

And the first sermon of the Christian church was Preached from the mouth of Peter, with the final result of converting and Baptizing 3000 souls. Pretty exciting, huh? Don’t you want to be on fire with the Spirit? Well what are you waiting for?

What do you think about the Holy Spirit? Do you expect to see the Holy Spirit flying around like a bird in the sky, and crashing into people with fiery flames...I mean, it’s like watching the Avengers or Iron Man 3 with catastrophes and explosions and rolling on the ground swinging our arms saying, “**There’s the Spirit, can’t you feel it working?**” Is that how the Holy Spirit works?

Adventure, excitement, a Jedi craves not these things...neither does the Christian. And yet, I thumbed through a book recently talking about the Holy Spirit. What it came down to was that you aren't a Christian if you can't ***see*** the Holy Spirit at work in your life. Now I thought, **“I see the Holy Spirit at work every Sunday, giving forgiveness life and salvation in Jesus body and blood, hearing of God’s law and gospel. I know the Spirit is at work in these things because Jesus says so**.”

But that's not what the author of this book meant by “the Spirit at work in your life.” They mean that you're not a Christian if you're not seeing special unique, inexplicable things happen. And so your job as a Christian isn’t simply to do what God says and believe in Jesus and receive him in Word and Sacrament, and responsibly carry out your vocation, whatever it is, in faith and love. Anybody can do that...how boring. No, this author claims, your job as a Christian is be on the lookout for unusual happenings, special coincidences, and when you see them happen, your job is to give credit to the Holy Spirit...and of course pat yourself on the back for being so perceptive, so “spiritual”. And if you don’t see the Spirit at work, it’s because you aren’t taking enough “risks for God.”

Ladies and gentlemen, what a silly Gospel, to preach that the reason Jesus sent the Holy Spirit was so he could play hide and seek with us. The Holy Spirit is hidden in that we can’t see him; but he’s not hidden from faith, because we know exactly where He is. He’s at work in Word and Sacrament. Yet the world makes a huge assumption. It assumes that the Holy Spirit only works in supernatural, “magical” “airy-fairy” “defy the laws of nature and probability” ways. He *can* defy the laws of nature—he created them--but tell me where in the bible it says that faithful people have the right, let alone a responsibility, to see miracles in their day to day life? Frankly, nature itself is a miracle, and to demand supernatural signs and wonders does not come from faith, but a lack of it. After all isn’t God at work when food finds its way to your table; or do you need to see bread from heaven to believe? Martin Luther said that there is no more “spiritual” work than when a mother changes her baby’s diapers. Parenting itself is a miracle.

The Holy Spirit is not here to put on a magic show. Jesus says in our Gospel that **the Holy Spirit is here to *teach* you all things**. St. Paul says, you are to **to equip the sword of the spirit which is the *word of God***. St. Peter says, **Believe and be baptized and receive the gift of the Holy Spirit**. The bible says that the spirit comes *whenever the Word is taught, and people are baptized*. These are very natural things involving vocal cords, eardrums, water and words...just because they are not patently supernatural, does that make them less Spiritual? By no means, You can trust that the Spirit is at work wherever God’s Word and His sacraments are...even if the laws of physics remain intact. Jesus wants you to seek His Holy Spirit in ***these things***, if he wants the spirit to reach you in other ways, He will find you, just like he did the apostles at Pentecost without their own initiative.

Ladies and gentlemen, the first Pentecost is not the day that the Holy Spirit gave the apostles a supernatural “buzz”, or a glory “high.” In fact, there is no mention of their feelings at all. Most of us understand the Holy Spirit to be a feeling, or heightened awareness...these things that can be accomplished by drugs, or alcohol, or a rock concert.

The day of Pentecost is important, not because the Holy Spirit did a miracle, with divided tongues of fire. It is important because it was the day that the Holy Spirit **broke down barriers of communication**. It was the day that the Holy Spirit reaffirmed the fact that faith comes, through audible hearing of the Word of God.

You see, thousands and thousands of years ago, mankind was all of one language; and they were using language to render God obsolete by building a tower in Babel. So God “divided their tongues”, why? Well it was a curse, the curse of the law, the curse that kept mankind from lifting itself up to heaven. Not that God was afraid that we’d storm the gates and take his throne; but because, like Eve in the Garden, mankind wanted to become like God.

And so what did God do. God became like man. He became a man. And this God/man Jesus Christ lifted up his own way to heaven, only it was not made with bitumen for mortar, or Bricks for Stone, it was made with wood. And He made a name for himself, “**Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews**”—the name above all names. And there he was lifted up as a bridge between heaven and earth. And the distance was so great, the rebellion from earth was so wicked and the wrath from heaven was so powerful, that as he was lifted up he became the fuse which was set between these polar opposites of sin and righteousness.

At Babel, God postponed the full connection between heaven and earth lest the whole earth be destroyed, by dividing tongues and confusing languages. When heaven and earth finally did collide, Jesus was at the point of contact. He died on impact, but on the third day he rose again, the breaker was reset and so he made the beginning of a new creation. No more towers to heaven, for he had built the only way; no more sacrifices on the altar, for he made the only sacrifice to God worth anything; no more language barriers, for now the words of eternal life can be spoken to all.

And so dear Christian friends, don’t let anyone make you feel guilty for not being “Spirited” enough because you’re not taking enough “risks for god” or because you aren’t “on fire, buzzed, or high on the Spirit.” The world wants to make things so complicated, but Christianity is not complicated. **It’s hard, very hard for sinners to lead a god pleasing life. Hard but not complicated.**

Jesus says, “**If anyone loves me, he will keep my word.”** Notice, he doesn’t say, “**If anyone loves me, he will have supernatural experiences that cannot be explained without divine intervention.”** He says, If you love me, you will keep my word, treasure it, value it...trust it. And yet we say, “God is too big for words...TOO COMPLICATED” and run to some sort of “spiritual experience.” We say, “**The bible can be interpreted a million ways, who knows which is the right one...IT’S TOO COMPLICATED”, and so instead I’ll just let the spirit lead my heart.”**

Jesus says, that the Holy Spirit will not lead your heart, but will lead your mind, bringing to remembrance all that He had said in audible words to the apostles. And when you believe that **Jesus came, he died, he rose, and he will come again**; then you don’t have to worry about finding God in your life...for you believe, and therefore you already have the Spirit.