

# **“PENTECOST: BREATH, WIND, AND SPIRIT”**

May 31, 2009

Ezekiel 37:1-14, Acts 2:1-21

## **Introduction:**

The longer I live, the more convinced I become that everything on Earth worth-while, is accomplished through the agency of God’s Holy Spirit. Sometimes, we work with a sense of conscious cooperation with the Spirit; other times, the Spirit is influencing us and we don’t even recognize it – we truly think we are that smart, or talented. The bottom line, is God’s sovereign will is being accomplished – with our partnership, or in spite of us.

Today is Pentecost Sunday, and we are celebrating the day God poured His Holy Spirit on the disciples of Jesus Christ. They were waiting in the same Upper Room where they had previously eaten that last Passover Meal with Jesus; where He had appeared to them after the Resurrection; and where they now waited, as Jesus had instructed, to receive “power from on high”. On that day, God gave birth to the Church. This is recorded for us in

## **Acts 2:1-21:**

What happened on that particular Day of Pentecost was the fulfillment of a vision God gave the Prophet Joel: that in the last days God would pour out his Spirit on all flesh; old men would dream dreams, and

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young men would see visions; and all who call upon the name of the Lord would be saved.

It is 9:00 in the morning. The City of Jerusalem is bursting with pilgrims from every country around the Mediterranean Sea. They have come for the Holy Days of Pentecost and the Festival of Weeks. In Jerusalem they can finally bring a sacrifice to the Temple of God for the forgiveness of their sins.

The street below the Upper Room is packed with people working their way to the Temple. “Suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind.” If you’ve ever heard the sound of a tornado I suspect you’ve heard something close to what the Disciples experienced that morning.

Only it wasn’t the wind that blew into that room. It was God’s own Spirit being poured forth and rushing into their presence; “and suddenly it filled the entire house where they were sitting.” Do you know that the Greek word, *pneuma*, used here in Acts 2, can be translated three ways: breath, wind, and spirit? The breath of God, was the wind of God, was the Spirit of God that blew into that Upper Room.

The Spirit arrived with the rush of a Tornado and He manifested his presence with fire – “Divided tongues

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as of 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.”

On that first Pentecost, God – by the agency of the Holy Spirit – gave birth to the Church. The Church is to be a body of believers filled with God’s Spirit, continuing and fulfilling the earthly ministry of Jesus Christ.

That morning Peter – who only seven weeks earlier denied even knowing Jesus - went to the balcony of that Upper Room and preached the first Spirit-anointed Christian sermon. That morning, “about 3,000 souls accepted his message that salvation lies in calling upon the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. They believed, were forgiven of their sin, and were baptized.

Pentecost is about the birth of the Church – but, even more

### **Pentecost Is About The Ministry of The Holy Spirit:**

There is a verse in the Old Testament that underscores our need for God’s Spirit to minister through us. From Zechariah 4:6, *Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, says the LORD of hosts.* If we are doing it in our own power it is not Spirit-anointed ministry.

The lesson from Ezekiel illustrates that

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importance of God's Spirit. Without the breath, the wind, the spirit of God new life cannot be brought forth. As I discuss the scene from the Valley of Dry Bones I want us to also

### **Claim These Promises For Holy Cross Church:**

*<sup>1</sup>I felt the power of the LORD on me, and he brought me out by the Spirit of the LORD and put me down in the middle of a valley (named Holy Cross Church). It was full of bones. <sup>2</sup>He led me around among the bones, and I saw that there were many bones in the (church) and that they were very dry. <sup>3</sup>Then he asked me, "(Preacher), can these bones live?"*

*I answered, "Lord GOD, only you know."*

*<sup>4</sup>He said to me, "Prophecy to these bones and say to them, 'Dry bones, hear the word of the LORD. <sup>5</sup>This is what the Lord GOD says to the bones: I will cause breath to enter you so you will come to life. <sup>6</sup>I will put muscles on you and flesh on you and cover you with skin. Then I will put breath in you so you will come to life. Then you will know that I am the LORD.'"*

*<sup>7</sup>So I (preached) as I was commanded. While I (preached), there was a noise and a rattling. The bones came together, bone to bone. <sup>8</sup>I looked and saw muscles*

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*come on the bones, and flesh grew, and skin covered the bones. But there was no breath in them.*

*<sup>9</sup>Then he said to me, “Prophecy to the wind. Prophecy, preacher, and say to the wind, ‘This is what the Lord GOD says: Wind, come from the four winds, and breathe on this church who was destroyed so they can come back to life.’”*

*<sup>10</sup>So I preached as the LORD commanded me. And the breath came into them, and they came to life and stood on their feet, a very large congregation.*

*<sup>11</sup>Then he said to me, “Preacher, these bones are like all the people of discouraged churches. They say, ‘Our bones are dried up, and our hope has gone. We are destroyed.’ <sup>12</sup>So, prophecy and say to them, ‘This is what the Lord GOD says: My people, I will open your graves and cause you to come up out of your graves. Then I will bring you into the land of promise. <sup>13</sup>My people, you will know that I am the LORD when I open your graves and cause you to come up from them. <sup>14</sup>And I will put my Spirit inside you, and you will come to life. Then I will make you visible in your own community. And you will know that I, the LORD, have spoken and done it, says the LORD.’”*

I don't know what you heard in that scene from Ezekiel? I heard the Lord God confirming his promise to

## **PENTECOST: BREATH, WIND, SPIRIT**

Holy Cross Church that if we let the breath of God blow into our lives, His Spirit will perform great works through us. We will be restored, viable, a powerful witness for the presence of Almighty God in our time and place.

This season of Pentecost we are going to learn all we can about the person and ministry of the Holy Spirit, about Spirit-anointed prayer and ministry in the name of Jesus Christ. We are going to reconnect with our historic neighborhood and be a major force for good within our community.

I believe God wants Holy Cross Church to re-experience Pentecost. He wants us to wait on the Lord until we have been clothed with power from on-high. Then, we will be His Spirit-filled witnesses in our neighborhood, our community, our county, and in different places around the world. There will be a chance to discuss this more at the Bible Study in the Parish Hall after the Fellowship Time.

I'm excited about this new chapter in our corporate life. What about you?