



Gentile Pentecost

Acts 10:34-48

1. Preaching the Gospel (verses 34-43)

2. Receiving the Spirit (verses 44-48)

At Rock Valley Bible Church, we have been working our way through the book of Acts. From chapter 1, in August last summer, to chapter 10, where we find ourselves today. In fact, this is my 37th message on the book of Acts since August.

Through our travels through this book, we have seen some wonderful things. We have seen thousands of people repent of their sins and believe in Jesus (Acts 2, 4). We have seen the formation of the church, and a community, where people are living together in unity and love (Acts 4). We have seen the leadership of the church guide the church through some trying times, by filling the office of Judas, who betrayed Jesus (Acts 1). by serving the widows who were neglected in their care. Doing so in a way that preserved the unity of the church. We have seen the apostles express their love for Jesus in great ways, defying the orders of their authorities (Acts 5), to continue to preach Christ, receiving rebukes and beatings, and in the case of Stephen, even death for preaching Christ. But such was their devotion to Jesus. We have seen entire villages turn to Jesus in Samaria (Acts 8). We have seen the church's greatest opponent, Saul of Tarsus, repent of his wayward ways and trust in Christ! proclaiming the faith he once tried to destroy. We have seen miracles, healing lame people arise and walk! like the beggar at the gate (Acts 3) and like Aeneas, who had been bedridden for 8 years (Acts 9). we have even seen Tabitha, raised from the dead (Acts 9).

Arguably the greatest miracle of all, which empowered all of these wonderful things in the church, was been the coming of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2). When the Holy Spirit came like a mighty rushing wind, filling the house where the small band of believers of Jesus were assembled. This was no calm event. There was chaos in the room. A mighty rushing wind would have been loud. It would have stirred the objects around the room. Your hair and your clothes would be rippling. Then, there was light. The Holy Spirit then "divided tongues as of fire and rested on each of the believers, [who] began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance" (Acts 2:4) You had a room full of people who were given the ability to speak languages that they had never known, nor had ever studied.

Those in Jerusalem were "bewildered and amazed and astonished" (Acts 2:6-7). They said, "Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? And how is it that we hear, each of us in his own native language? Parthians and Medes and Elamites and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabians—we hear them telling in our own tongues the mighty works of God." And all were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, "What does this mean?" (Acts 2:7-12). Peter, then, responded to the crowd, telling them that they were witnessing the fulfillment of the prophecy of Joel, who foretold of the day when the Lord would pour out his Spirit upon his people, and they would see visions and dream dreams and prophecy. "It shall come to pass," Joel said, "that everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Acts 2:21). And on that day, 3,000 people called upon the name of the Lord, and were saved from their sins.

Not only was that the first and greatest revival that the church had ever known. But it was a turning point in history. It was the time when the Lord was bringing in the new age, the age of the church. Until this time in history, God's focus was upon the sons of Abraham, the people of Israel. the Lord dealt with them according to the law of Moses. where sacrifices were needed for sins, where priests were needed to make those sacrifices. and worship was required to take place in Jerusalem. But with the coming of Jesus, the promised Messiah, and the outpouring of the Spirit, things were changing.

God began to work in the hearts of his people in great ways. This is the promise of the New Covenant. Which was brought about by Jesus, the Messiah. Consider the prophecy of Jeremiah: "Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. ... For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the Lord: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people" (Jeremiah 31:31, 33). In other words, when the New Covenant would come, God would change the hearts of the people of Israel. No longer would they be stubborn and rebellious. Instead, God's law would be within them. They would follow the Lord with a willing heart. Ezekiel gives more clarity about the New Covenant. He describes how the coming of the Holy Spirit would cause this to happen in the hearts of his people: He says, "And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules" (Ezekiel 36:26-27). That promise of God's Spirit in God's people came to pass on the day of Pentecost, when the Spirit came to dwell in our hearts. in a new way, not known or experienced in the Old Testament.

The book of Acts is the working out all that it means that the Spirit comes. Many believe that the book of Acts shouldn't be called, "The Acts of the Apostles," but "The Acts of the Holy Spirit." because the Holy Spirit is so prominent in this book.

The most prominent display of the power of the Holy Spirit was on the day of Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit came upon the Jewish people. But that wasn't the only time that the Holy Spirit was poured out upon a group of people. In Acts, chapter 10 (our text this morning), we see the Holy Spirit coming upon the Gentiles! In Acts 10:44 we read, "While Peter was still saying these things, the Holy Spirit fell on all who heard the word." Those who heard the word were Gentiles, not the people of Israel. In many ways, Acts 10 is the Gentile equivalent of what took place on the day of Pentecost. In fact, this forms the basis of the title of my message this morning: "Gentile Pentecost."

Now, before I actually read our text, I have to set the stage for you, by bringing us back to verse 1, where the story begins, which we looked at last week. Last week, if you remember, the story began in Caesarea, with a centurion named Cornelius, who saw an angel. This angel told him to send some men to Joppa, to find a man named Peter, who had a message for him to hear. And so, Cornelius sent these men on their way to Joppa.

Now, while they were on their way, Peter saw a vision. He saw a vision of a huge sheet coming down from heaven upon which were “all kinds of animals and reptiles and birds of the air” (Acts 10:12). Peter was told to kill the animals and eat them. However, Peter, being a strict Jew, had never eaten these animals before, as he they were forbidden by the law of Moses to eat. Yet, the vision persisted, “Rise, Peter, kill and eat” (Acts 10:13). And Peter refused three times. But the voice in the vision said, “What God has made clean, do not call common” (Acts 10:15).

This vision confused Peter. He was “inwardly perplexed” as to what it might mean (Acts 10:17). And at that very moment, as Peter pondered the vision (verses 17-20, the men from Caesarea arrive at Peter’s house, looking for him. And so, Peter arose, summoned a few of his friends, and goes to Caesarea (verses 21-24). Finally, after a day and a half of travel, Peter arrived at the home of Cornelius.

Peter then meets Cornelius (verses 25-33) and they exchange stories. Peter said to Cornelius and those in his house, “You yourselves know how unlawful it is for a Jew to associate with or to visit anyone of another nation, but God has shown me that I should not call any person common or unclean. So when I was sent for, I came without objection. I ask then why you sent for me” (Acts 10:28-29). Apparently, on the walk, Peter was gaining some clarity as to the meaning of the vision that he saw. It’s meaning wasn’t dealing with food. It was dealing with people, people who Jews would consider unclean and untouchable. God was saying, “Don’t call them unclean anymore.”

Then Cornelius responded with his story, about the angel that he had seen, who told him to send for Peter in Joppa. Then Cornelius said, in verse 33, “Now therefore we are all here in the presence of God to hear all that you have been commanded by the Lord.” What a great statement to describe a church meeting! What a great statement of the heart of those who God delights in. God delights when his people gather together. God delights when his people gather together to hear a message from the Lord. God delights when his people are ready to obey. Is this you, this morning? You have gathered here in this place. That’s wonderful. Have you gathered to listen to me preach. That’s wonderful. Is your heart soft before the Lord? Is your heart willing to believe? Is your heart willing to obey? That’s the heart of those who gathered in the house of Cornelius.

Can you picture yourself in that room in the house of Cornelius? There were no cell phones in those days, so Peter couldn’t have texted ahead and said, “We are running a bit late. We will be there about 4:15pm.” So as to give people the ability to arrive a few minutes before Peter arrived. No, it wasn’t like that. Basically, Cornelius said to his friends and relatives, “If all goes to plan, I expect this Peter to arrive sometime this afternoon. So, come at noon for lunch, and we will wait for him. he has a message for us.” They could have been hours waiting for Peter to arrive. and they weren’t assembled in a large room like our auditorium. they were at the house of Cornelius. So, even his biggest room probably not large enough to hold everyone. So, they were crammed in a room in the house of Cornelius. In that hot climate, without air conditioning, it may not have smelled so nice. But they were going to hear a message from the Lord. and this was worth the wait.

So now, we come to our text. Listen to the “Gentile Pentecost.”

Acts 10:34-48

So Peter opened his mouth and said: “Truly I understand that God shows no partiality, but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him. As for the word that he sent to Israel, preaching good news of peace through Jesus Christ (he is Lord of all), you yourselves know what happened throughout all Judea, beginning from Galilee after the baptism that John proclaimed: how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power. He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him. And we are witnesses of all that he did both in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They put him to death by hanging him on a tree, but God raised him on the third day and made him to appear, not to all the people but to us who had been chosen by God as witnesses, who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. And he commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one appointed by God to be judge of the living and the dead. To him all the prophets bear witness that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name.”

While Peter was still saying these things, the Holy Spirit fell on all who heard the word. And the believers from among the circumcised who had come with Peter were amazed, because the gift of the Holy Spirit was poured out even on the Gentiles. For they were hearing them speaking in tongues and extolling God. Then Peter declared, “Can anyone withhold water for baptizing these people, who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?” And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked him to remain for some days.

My outline this morning is simple. It has two points. The first is this:

1. Preaching the Gospel (verses 34-43)

There is really, nothing new about Peter’s message, especially for those of us who have been working our way through the book of Acts. We have constantly seen Peter follow a simple outline in their preaching the gospel. They speak about the life of Jesus. Then, they speak about the death of Jesus. Then, they speak about the burial of Jesus. Then, they speak about the resurrection of Jesus. Then, they speak about the ascension of Jesus. Then, they speak about the exaltation of Jesus. Then, they apply the message, by calling their hearers to repent and believe in Jesus.

Now, not all of these points are made every time in every sermon preached by the apostles, but it’s pretty close. This is a good outline of Peter’s message on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2). This is a good outline of Peter’s message after healing the lame beggar (in Acts 3). This is a good outline of Peter’s messages to the Sanhedrin (Acts 4-5).

Now, there are times when we see content of the message preached in Acts in summary form. When we get to Philip preaching in Samaria⁸, we are simply told that Philip “preached the good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ” (Acts 8:12). When preaching to the Ethiopian Eunuch, he simply told him “the good news about Jesus” (Acts 8:35). We can only assume that much of what was said is similar to Peter’s preaching of the gospel, that Jesus lived a perfect life, but was put to death by the religious establishment in Jerusalem. He was buried in a tomb, but God raised him on the third day, and he appeared to his disciples, who saw him ascend into heaven, where now he sits at the right hand of God, awaiting his return where he will judge the world.

This simple outline (life, death, burial, resurrection, ascension, exaltation) is all that Peter does here in our passage this morning. Then, the Holy Spirit came upon all who heard the word.

This is all that you need to do in your preaching of the gospel to others. In your being a witness for Jesus. You simply need to tell others of the life of Jesus. This is what Peter does, after a brief introduction.

His introduction comes in verses 34 and 35,

Acts 10:34-35

“Truly I understand that God shows no partiality, but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him.”

This is the great lesson that God was teaching Peter with the sheet coming down from heaven with the animals upon it. “What God has made clean, do not call common” (Acts 10:15). When it comes to people, that means, that God “shows no partiality” (verse 34). But anyone from any nation can come to the Lord.

We have lived so long with this truth, that we don’t even see what Peter was grappling with. We are Gentiles. We live in history after Acts 10. We live in history, long after Acts 10. We know that the church of Jesus Christ is global. We may not know many people personally who live in Russia or Brazil or Australia or Argentina or Poland or Japan or Indonesia or Ireland or Sri Lanka or Denmark or Morocco or Kenya or South Africa. But we know that the church is there! We know that believers are there. In some places, the churches may be strong. In other places, the churches may have only a few believers. But we know that there are some who believe, even in the difficult, Muslim nations, like Iran or Pakistan. God’s church is all across the globe. We know that. We love that.

We love that the God we worship here this morning is the same God that is worshiped all around the world! But this wasn’t Peter’s mindset. In his mind, followers of the Lord were only found in Israel. Everyone else was unclean. And the Jews really thought this: that foreigners were unclean.

Few of us have ever experienced this. I remember the trip that Yvonne and I took to Israel, some 20 years ago. It is said that “A trip to Israel is worth a semester in Seminary.” I totally agree. One of the things that I learned while there was how unclean I was in the mind of the Jews. I remember one time when Yvonne and I were out walking in Jerusalem. We were on a busy street, in the city itself. Waiting for the light to turn green, so we could walk across the street. I remember that Yvonne and I were just a bit lost, or were looking for a particular building or something. We knew that any local could totally help us. “Excuse me, do you know where the library is?” “Excuse me, do you know where this monument is?” “Excuse me, do you know where this plaza is?” So, I turned to a Hasidic Jew who was waiting to cross the street with us. And I asked him, “Excuse me, do you know where the parliament building is?” It was as if I was asking a statue. He didn’t acknowledge me. He didn’t turn and look at me. It was as if I didn’t exist. I had never experienced such coldness in my life. But it was because he believed I was unclean. He could not even acknowledge my existence, lest my conversation with him make him unclean.

This was the case with Peter. It was unlawful for him to visit with or associate with anyone from a foreign nation. But as he went to the home of Cornelius, his world was being transformed. He came to understand (verse 34). “Truly I understand that God shows no partiality, but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him.”

With that introduction, Peter then preaches Jesus. He first talks about the life of Jesus.

Acts 10:36-38

“As for the word that he sent to Israel, preaching good news of peace through Jesus Christ (he is Lord of all), you yourselves know what happened throughout all Judea, beginning from Galilee after the baptism that John proclaimed: how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power. He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him.”

Peter begins by appealing to their common knowledge. Even though these people lived in Caesarea, by the coast, word got around. They had heard about this man, named Jesus from the town of Nazareth, some 30 miles away. They had heard about Jesus being a preacher. They had heard about him preaching “good news of peace.” They had heard about John the Baptist, and his baptism. How he was in the Jordan river, calling people to repent of their sins and to be baptized in the river as a sign of their repentance. They had heard about Jesus. They had heard about how special this man was. He had been anointed with power from the Holy Spirit. He had such power that he was healing “all who were oppressed by the devil.” Surely, they heard of some of the examples of the healing ministry of Jesus. How he healed the lepers. How he gave sight to the blind. How he gave hearing to the deaf. How he healed the paralytics so they could walk. How he healed withered hands. How he cast out demons. With these miracles, it was clear that “God was with him” (verse 38). Peter said that he was “Lord of all” (verse 36).

But all these things about Jesus, those in Caesarea merely heard from afar. But Peter says that he saw them up close and personal.

Acts 10:39

“And we are witnesses of all that he did both in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem.”

In other words, "You may have heard about the wonderful things that Jesus did, but we saw them! we witnessed all that Jesus did in Galilee and in Jerusalem. Indeed, Jesus was wonderful!" But the most important thing we saw was Jesus dying upon the cross. "We saw his death." It was a cruel death,

Acts 10:39

"They put him to death by hanging him on a tree,"

They took Jesus, laid him flat on a log. They took out some rusty nails, and proceeded to bang them through his hands and his feet. They hoisted him up for all to see. and over a period of a few hours, he felt the pain of the weight of his body on those nails. and died of asphyxiation. he could not breath. But the story didn't end there. Peter didn't simply talk about the life and death of Jesus. Peter tells of the resurrection of Jesus in verse 40.^[1]

Acts 10:40

"but God raised him on the third day."

That's all that Peter says of the resurrection: "God raised him on the third day." He doesn't show it from the Scripture. He doesn't prove it from the prophecies. Because, these are Gentiles, who may be somewhat familiar with the Scriptures. but they didn't grow up with them and know them as they know the back of their hands. Further, the Scriptures may not have had authority in their lives, like for a Jew.

So, Peter didn't prove the resurrection from the Scriptures. But he proved it from his own eyes.

Acts 10:40-41

"but God raised him on the third day and made him to appear, not to all the people but to us who had been chosen by God as witnesses, who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead."

Peter said, "I saw this Jesus in life. I saw this Jesus in death. I saw this Jesus, risen from the dead. And he wasn't a spirit. Nor was I seeing Jesus in a dream. I ate with Jesus. I drank with Jesus. I talked with Jesus. after he rose from the dead. Not only me, but all of the apostles. everyone who God chose to be a part of his ministry. And in our discussion with Jesus, he told us a few things." First off, ...

Acts 10:42

And he commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one appointed by God to be judge of the living and the dead.

These words have allusion to the exaltation of Jesus. That is, he is seated at the right hand of God, waiting for the judgment. And Jesus is the judge! You need to get right with him! This is the message that Jesus told Peter to preach! "He is the judge! He's coming back to judge the living and the death."

Such a message isn't so popular today. Most often we hear a message about the love of Jesus. "Jesus loves you! He wants you to believe in him! He wants you to trust him! Please don't go astray. Turn to the one who loves you!" While none of this is wrong, it's hard to get from there to Jesus as judge. "Will Jesus really judge those he loves? If he loves me, then he will certainly not judge me." But preaching Jesus as judge is not only Biblical, but commanded by Jesus. And doing so helps to bring into clear focus the issue in all of our lives. Someday, we will stand before Jesus. He will either say, "Well, done, good and faithful servant." Or he will say, "Depart from me, I never knew you."

One of the resources that we have made available to all of you is what I like to call, "The Mr. Good Guy" tract.^[2] It speaks about a good guy, a really good guy. But when confronted by a few of the Ten Commandments, we see that he isn't a perfect guy. He has committed many sins in his life. But he still thinks it's OK, because he is so much better than many people on the planet, that God will just forgive him. But the tract brings us into a courtroom. We discover that only a corrupt judge would forgive someone who transgressed the law. It's only then that the gospel is clear. God is the judge, who cannot forgive without a punishment. Instead, he dies in our place, so that he can forgive, because Jesus has taken the punishment that we deserve.

The clear message of the tract is that we must get right with Jesus, the judge. The good news is that Jesus is tender. He is loving. He is forgiving. That's where Peter continues in verse 43, ...

Acts 10:43

To him all the prophets bear witness that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name."

This is the great call of the gospel! Believe in Jesus! He will forgive your sins! Then, you will be able to stand before the judge. Not because you are innocent, but because you are forgiven. And he has nothing against you. And he will say, "Enter into the joy of your master!" Church family, believe in Jesus. experience his forgiveness! Those in Caesarea that day experienced forgiveness. We see this in my second point .

2. Receiving the Spirit (verses 44-48)

That's exactly what happens here. They received the spirit.

Acts 10:44

While Peter was still saying these things, the Holy Spirit fell on all who heard the word.

These words indicate that Peter's sermon was interrupted. He was still speaking when the Holy Spirit fell upon those in the house of Cornelius. This is how Peter describes it in chapter 11, when he tells those in Jerusalem what happened. He said, "As I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell on them just as on us at the beginning" (Acts 11:15). In other words, Peter was only in his introduction in his sermon, when the

Holy Spirit stepped in. There was no three points and a poem. There was no closing song. There was no dimming of the lights. There was no altar call. There was no introspection into their lives. The Holy Spirit simply fell upon those who heard the word.

You ask, "What exactly does this mean, that the 'Holy Spirit fell'?" The best place of interpretation is Acts 2. For Peter says, "The Holy Spirit fell on them just as on us" (Acts 11:15). How was that? That was a sudden, "mighty rushing wind" (Acts 2:2). That was a wind that came and "filled the entire house" (Acts 2:2). That was the loud wind that came with chaos that stirred the papers in the room, that blew the hair on their heads, that rustled the clothes, that was loud and confusing. Then, there were tongues of fire, which cause people to speak in tongues, languages not known to the speakers.

Acts 10:45-46

And the believers from among the circumcised who had come with Peter were amazed, because the gift of the Holy Spirit was poured out even on the Gentiles. For they were hearing them speaking in tongues and extolling God.

Perhaps these were Gentiles who knew only Latin, but now were speaking perfect Hebrew! Though they had never studied Hebrew, these Jews understood what they were speaking. How else could the Jews who came with Peter know that they were "extolling God," but if they understood what they were saying? In other words, this wasn't gibberish, like much of the supposed tongues-speaking today. Tongues in the Bible are known languages. Languages when the speaker doesn't know but that the hearer knows.

This is miraculous! And it only happened a few times in Acts. It happened on the day of Pentecost in Acts 2. It happened here in Act 10. We will see it only one more time in Acts 19.

But notice that this amazing the Jews who came with Peter (verse 45). I ask, "What were you expecting?" You came with Peter from Joppa to Caesarea. You heard the story that Cornelius told. All along the way of the several day journey, Peter is sharing with those who came for him about his vision and what it meant. You were traveling to preach to the Gentiles. You were coming to understand that the Gentiles weren't unclean (Acts 10:34). "What did you expect? Did you expect them to repent and believe at the preaching of Peter?"

My hunch is that those traveling with Peter expected them to believe. But to come into the assembly as proselytes, just like Gentiles had always come into the fold of the people of God. But with the coming of the Spirit of God, these unclean people were given the clean Spirit of God! How can this be? Then Peter declared, ...

Acts 10:47-48

"Can anyone withhold water for baptizing these people, who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?" And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked him to remain for some days.

These words are consistent with all of Acts. You come to faith in Jesus, believing in him and then you are baptized. You aren't baptized, and then you believe. Have you come to faith? Have you been baptized? This is the call upon all believers in Jesus.

Regarding their understanding of baptism, it would have come from their understanding of John's baptism (see verse 36). He baptized people by immersing them in the river after they had repented of their sins. The baptism was a sign of their repentance. Those who sought baptism without repentance were refused (Matthew 3:7; Luke 7:30).

So, they went out and found some water someplace and were baptized. We aren't sure of exactly how many this is. But it is many of Cornelius' family and friends. Perhaps 20. Perhaps 50. Perhaps 100. However many there were, they all received the word; they all received the Spirit; and they all were baptized.

Then, they asked Peter to remain with them. Surely he did and continued to rejoice in what the Lord was doing in Caesarea. But think about this ritually clean Jew staying in the home of an unclean Gentile. The Lord was beginning to break down the cultural barriers between Jews and Greeks. This is a predominant theme throughout the rest of the New Testament, ... how Jew and Gentile can live together in harmony in the gospel.

This sermon was delivered to Rock Valley Bible Church on June 27, 2021 by Steve Brandon.

For more information see www.rockvalleybiblechurch.org.

[1] For what it's worth, Peter skipped the burial of Christ, which is often mentioned in the preaching of the apostles, but not always.

[2] You can read it and purchase a bunch of copies [here](#). You can watch a nicely done video of the tract [here](#).