

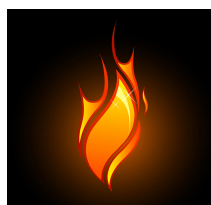
(Acts 2:1-47)

God's Spirit comes in power. Immediately, He causes the Good News to be shared, and people's lives to be transformed. Those who respond also obey by being baptised. The new church is a community – a picture of God's Kingdom on earth.

Introduction

After Jesus ascended in heaven, His followers continued to wait in Jerusalem for God's Spirit. A few days later there was a very special religious festival in Jerusalem.

Tongues of fire



On the day of the festival, all the believers were together. The sound of a mighty windstorm swept through the house. Something that looked like tongues of fire came and rested on each person's head.

Everyone was filled with God's Spirit and began speaking in other languages.

People come running



Many heard this and came to hear. Some were happy to hear the Good News in their own languages. Others said the believers were drunk.

Peter's sermon

Peter stood up and said:

We're not drunk! This is God fulfilling all He has prophesied many years ago, and He is fulfilling His promise to send us His Spirit. God sent Jesus and endorsed Him by the miracles He did. You killed Jesus. God raised Him from the dead. Jesus is now sitting in a place of honour in heaven. God has made Him the Promised King!



The reaction

Peter's words pierced the people's hearts and they asked, "What should we do?"



The answer



Peter said, "Turn away from your disobedience and turn to God and be baptised in Jesus' name to show that you have done this and have been forgiven.



God will give you His Spirit. This promise is for you and all who come after you who believe in Jesus.

The first church

About 3000 people responded and were baptised on that day. The new believers:

- Met together
- Shared everything they had
- Worshipped and prayed together
- Ate together



More and more were added to their number every day.

Weekly Meditation and Reflection

Below are some questions and further reading if you would like some extra food for thought on this story. Some may find it helpful to journal the answers, and others may simply want to read and pray through them.

1. When given an opportunity to speak, Peter very simply gave a “history” of God’s people and Jesus’ life and significance. Then when the people asked what they should do, Peter answered very simply and clearly. When given these opportunities, are you able to answer as simply and clearly? Peter was filled with God’s Spirit, but so are you! If you don’t know what you would say in a similar situation, spend some time asking God to remind you of the things you have learned about salvation throughout this story set, and ask Him to help you come up with a simple way to express them. Thank Him for His gift of His Spirit, which enables you to do this!
2. What do you see about the work of God’s Spirit in this story? List some characteristics of God’s Spirit. How do you see those characteristics being shown today, all around you, and in your own life?
3. How does the earliest fellowship of Jesus’ followers match your experience of church life today? Is there anything that needs to change in your involvement in church life as a result of what you’ve learned in this story?

Meditate on the following passages:

1. Luke 3:16-17
2. Joel 2:28-32