

WEEKLY REFLECTION

Fire and wind, and the unity of the church. When the Holy Spirit descended on the early church in Acts 2:1-13, He did two things: He manifested Himself in fire and wind, and He bestowed on those who received Him the ability to speak in different languages.

Though Luke tries his best to capture what happened, the closest he can get to an accurate description of an entirely supernatural event is through comparisons and metaphors. Thus the Holy Spirit descended with a noise like a rushing wind and rested on those present with tongues as of fire (v.2-3). Moreover, the Jewish audience reading Luke's account would immediately have recalled the many times God presented Himself in the Old Testament, as He often used fire and wind to manifest His presence.

Through His bestowment of the gift of tongues, the Holy Spirit also brings unity. There were people in Jerusalem from "every nation under heaven", gathered to celebrate Pentecost (also called the Festival of Firstfruits). When these people came to see what was going on, they heard native Galileans speaking in a different language—the tongues of Asians, Europeans, and Africans—the mighty works of God (v.11). The Jewish audience would have snapped back to the Tower of Babel in Genesis 11, where God dispersed the people and their common language for their good. This was the reversal of that!

Right at the moment of their birth and inauguration, the early church was sent out to proclaim the mighty acts of God. They gathered to receive the Holy Spirit and scattered immediately afterwards to witness about Him! Our question, as we reflect on gathering and scattering, is whether or not we have experienced the fire and wind of the Holy Spirit. Have we felt that same fervor and compulsion to go? If not, it is never too late to ask for the Holy Spirit to fill and move us. If yes, where else can we go to proclaim the mighty acts of God?

QUESTIONS

QUESTION ONE:

We see in Acts 2:1-13 the birth of the early church as its members received and were filled by the Holy Spirit for the first time. As mentioned on Sunday, we cannot claim to understand everything that the Holy Spirit is, and what He fully does. Different traditions also have different understandings. However, we can deduce from the Scriptures some of the roles that He performs in our lives.

Go through the passages listed below, and discuss with one another. (John 3:5-8; 16:5-11; Acts 4:31; 13:52; Romans 5:5; 8:16, 26; Galatians 5:22-23; Ephesians 1:13-14)

QUESTION TWO:

How have you seen the Spirit working in your life? How has He empowered you as you gather with the church, and how does He move you to scatter? How might you use the specific gifts He has given you to build up the church and to reach the unreached around you?

QUESTION THREE:

Consider Luke's depiction of the multitude in Acts 2:5-11, along with Revelation 5:9-10; 7:9-10; and 21:1-4, which highlight the church's multicultural and diverse nature.

What insights about God do you think the church of Hong Kong can offer to churches from other cultures? What unique perspectives do these different cultures bring to the Church? How and what can we learn from these cultures? Lastly, what can we be doing to foster this diversity within both our church and the Church at large?