

**From Denial to Declaration**  
**Acts 2; Luke 22. 54-62; Ephesians 5:15-21**  
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Wind mills have been used to harness energy from the wind for a long time. The obvious success of these huge mills is placing them in areas of the country where the wind blows the hardest and most often. There was one of these wind mills on Howard's Knob, the largest mountain overlooking Appalachian State University. We drove up to see not only the 100' panels but the view you could have on a clear day. It was a sad day when they disassembled our wind mill to relocate it to a place that had more consistent winds. Experts in this field realize that the best winds are not at ground level but six miles in the air, at the height of the jet stream.

A company called Sky Wind Power has developed a flying generator, one that looks like a cross between a kite and a helicopter. Picture an H-shaped frame with rotors at the ends of the four points, tethered to the ground by a long cable. The rotors provide lift, like the surface of a kite, and as they lift the frame they also turn dynamos that generate electricity. This electricity is then transmitted to the ground through aluminum cables.

It seems that if you want to catch the wind, you have to put yourself where the wind is blowing.

I remember one of my toughest professors at seminary telling us this same thing about our faith. Disciples can only put him or herself in the most likely places where you can expect Jesus to show up (worship, prayer, Bible reading, fellowship, etc.).

Today in the Christian calendar we celebrate Pentecost. This is the day we celebrate Jesus sending the Holy Spirit on all believers, not just a few. The disciples put themselves in the most likely place to meet Jesus. For them it was waiting and praying in a small room in Jerusalem. This is where Jesus tells them to wait. It is such an unusual event it is hard to really understand what happened. There is rushing wind (word means Spirit) and fire, two symbols from the Old Testament that symbolized God's presence. The tongues of fire are hard to explain - something like a flame above each believer's head - symbolizing the Holy Spirit was given to each person. Each disciple began to speak in different languages.

God's timing is amazing and sometimes breath-taking. This whole event of sending the Spirit into the lives of believers occurred on the Feast of Pentecost or Feast of Weeks at the end of Passover. It was a celebration to recognize all of God's blessings and grace. It led into a time to renew one's faith. Thousands of Jewish people were in Jerusalem from all over the country. Our scripture lists 15 countries that people represented. Basically this was an international crowd.

We are not told that as the disciples were speaking in different languages they left their room. This is how the crowds of people heard them speaking and gathered to listen.

Here is the miracle - these were simple men from Galilee but they were speaking languages of countries they had never visited. The miracle could be in the speaking or the hearing.

I am told that Glenclyff Elementary School has about 20 different languages spoken by the children attending. The Pentecost event would be like a teacher being able to teach all those children in their own language. As the teacher taught addition and subtraction, each student heard her speaking in his or her own language but she was teaching in English.

"These men do not know our language but we hear them speaking." What message did they hear? They heard these men speaking about God's power and love in Jesus Christ. This drew a crowd of thousands of people. People were asking, "What does this mean?" Some in the crowd came to conclusion that these men were drunk - which might have been more of a miracle!

It is Peter who first preaches. He explains that these men are not drunk but this is a work of God fulfilling Old Testament prophecies. Peter tells them the truth about Jesus Christ. God was present in him showing power, wonders and signs. He was handed over to the authorities (says you) who crucified and killed him. God raised him up freeing him from death. All this was God's plan - God made him Lord and Messiah. There were over 3,000 people who repented, baptized and joined the church.

There are many amazing details of this day but I want to focus on Peter - the power of God changing him. It was not long ago when he denied even knowing Jesus.

Read Luke 22:54-62

This is the kind of power that Pentecost brings into the lives of believers. It changes people from denial to declaration. Peter went from fear and rejection to courage and declaration. This is the way God's Spirit works in people's lives.

It has always been that way. From the very beginning God's Spirit brought new life into people's dead lives. Genesis tells us that after God created Adam from the dust of the ground he breathed into his nostrils the breath of life and the man became a living being. The word "Breathed" is the same word as Spirit. God's Spirit breathes new life into people. It transforms people into active, living persons. It changes people from deniers to declarers.

In college I roomed with a friend who was part of a church who believed people needed to do certain things to show they were Christians. They used the language of being filled with the Spirit. You had to do something in order to be filled and if you did not show evidence of being filled by the Spirit you were less Christian and missing something. The problem with this theology is that God's work depends on us. We have to do something, as if we earn a filling of the Holy Spirit.

Everything we have looked at today is dependent on God's grace and love and not dependent on us. In Ephesians the writer tells the church to not be filled with wine but with the Holy Spirit. The meaning is "Keep on being filled with the Spirit." It is something that Jesus does in us and not something we do ourselves. As my professor said we can put ourselves in the most likely place.

Have you ever tried to fill a moving cup? I wonder if we are like that. God tries to fill us with his Spirit and we are moving so much that our cup does not stay full. There are some ways to put ourselves in the path of where the wind is blowing, like Skywind Power.

It is very similar to the first century disciples. They gathered together for fellowship, prayer, and worship. They met in community and they waited expecting God to fill them.

How much do you pray during the day? I am not talking about auto-prayers while you are driving or quick thought prayers. I am talking about concentrated prayers in which you pray, listen and think about God.

Reading the Bible often? Meeting with other Christians to learn together, to eat and share life together?

Is worship important to you or is this just another scheduled event in your busy, routine life? Are you expecting to meet God here, wanting God to speak to you?

Would God see you as one of his disciples who are waiting to be filled?