


**A Five-Day Devotional Journey**
**January 20 - 26, 2008**

Acts 2:1-36

# Surprised by the Power of the Spirit

 Would that all God's people were prophets.  
 Would that God would put his Spirit on all of them.

Numbers 11:29

## 1 The Spirit spread through their ranks

**Read.** Acts 2:1-4 Message

When the Feast of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Without warning there was a sound like a strong wind, gale force—no one could tell where it came from. It filled the whole building. Then, like a wildfire, the Holy Spirit spread through their ranks, and they started speaking in a number of different languages as the Spirit prompted them.

**Read.** John 3:7-8 Message

Don't be so surprised when I tell you that you have to be 'born from above'—out of this world, so to speak. You know well enough how the wind blows this way and that. You hear it rustling through the trees, but you have no idea where it comes from or where it's headed next. That's the way it is with everyone 'born from above' by the wind of God, the Spirit of God."

**Think.**

- What was the most recent and/or the most significant encounter you have had with the Holy Spirit?
- How would you describe your personal experience of the Holy Spirit up to this point in your life:  
 a) blown away b) breezy c) doldrums d) gone with the wind  
 e) other \_\_\_\_\_. Why?
- Considering these two passages, what initial conclusions do you draw about the presence and working of the Spirit?

**Pray.**

Spirit of the Living God, fall on me! Come as *you* will, when *you* will, how *you* will...but *come!*

**Live.**

Spend quiet time this week praying for a fresh empowering of the Spirit of God in your life.

It was business as usual in the temple courts.

The shuffling of feet bearing worshippers into the temple for morning prayer. The bleating of sheep and goats standing ready for the morning offering. The clamoring of money changers and dove merchants hawking their wares. It was Shavuot, the feast of weeks, so the number of those pressing into the temple courts was higher than usual. A diverse, multicolored lot! Jewish pilgrims from the four corners of the earth were flocking into the temple. Parthians and Medes, Phrygians and Egyptians, Libyans and Jews all the way from Rome. The murmur of foreign tongues filled the courts. Babel revisited. The rays of the sun had just climbed over the eastern ramparts of the temple courtyard as yet another festival week began in Jerusalem.

And then it happened.

A tempest roars from a clear blue sky. People stop, startled, wondering, looking. The sound blows past the pilgrim throng, but nothing moves, no wind is felt. Instinctively the crowd surges towards the southern courtyard where the sound seemed to go. And then, nothing. Silence. A low murmur works its way through the throng as they stand there, looking around in wonder, waiting for something to happen. People had just started turning back to their morning routines when a large group — uncouth Galileans from the look of it — rushed into the courtyard. Excited, some leaping, many of them shouting praises and others preaching loudly. Different languages. *Their languages.* An audience numbering in the thousands now stands about them, some agitated, some mocking, all listening. Then a burly Galilean from the group steps forward and speaks of prophecy fulfilled; promises kept; Messiah come.

And the church is born.

## 2) They were thunderstruck

**Read.** Acts 2:5-13 Message

There were many Jews staying in Jerusalem just then, devout pilgrims from all over the world. When they heard the sound, they came on the run. Then when they heard, one after another, their own mother tongues being spoken, they were thunderstruck. They couldn't for the life of them figure out what was going on, and kept saying, "Aren't these all Galileans? How come we're hearing them talk in our various mother tongues? Parthians, Medes, and Elamites; visitors from Mesopotamia, Judea, and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene; immigrants from Rome, both Jews and proselytes; even Cretans and Arabs! "They're speaking our languages, describing God's mighty works!" Their heads were spinning; they couldn't make head or tail of any of it. They talked back and forth, confused: "What's going on here?" Others joked, "They're drunk on cheap wine."

**Think.**

- What is the most baffling encounter with the Spirit you have ever either experienced or witnessed? What happened?
- With which part of the crowd do you most identify when you are exposed to more charismatic expressions of the Spirit? Why?

**Pray.**

Holy Spirit, shape in me a childlike heart that is able to be surprised, but not put off by your presence.

**Live.**

Watch for the Spirit in unexpected ways and places today.

## 4) Jesus the Nazarene...

**Read.** Acts 2:22-28 Message

"Fellow Israelites, listen carefully to these words: Jesus the Nazarene, a man thoroughly accredited by God to you—the miracles and wonders and signs that God did through him are common knowledge—this Jesus, following the deliberate and well-thought-out plan of God, was betrayed by men who took the law into their own hands, and was handed over to you. And you pinned him to a cross and killed him. But God untied the death ropes and raised him up. Death was no match for him. David said it all:

*I saw God before me for all time.  
Nothing can shake me; he's right by my side.  
I'm glad from the inside out, ecstatic;  
I've pitched my tent in the land of hope.  
I know you'll never dump me in Hades;  
I'll never even smell the stench of death.  
You've got my feet on the life-path,  
with your face shining sun-joy all around.*

**Think.**

- Considering the fact that Peter's audience was from all over the world, how familiar do you think they were with the facts of Jesus' life? What are the essentials of the "gospel" as spelled out in Peter's sermon?
- What was the most recent opportunity you had to verbally share the story of Jesus with someone? What happened? What was most scary about doing this? What was most rewarding?

**Pray.**

Spirit of Christ, from the palette of my words and deeds, paint lavishly the beauty of Jesus before the passing world.

**Live.**

Watch for an opportunity to share the story of Jesus in your life.

## 3) What the prophet Joel announced

**Read.** Acts 2:14-18 Message

That's when Peter stood up and, backed by the other eleven, spoke out with bold urgency: "Fellow Jews, all of you who are visiting Jerusalem, listen carefully and get this story straight. These people aren't drunk as some of you suspect. They haven't had time to get drunk—it's only nine o'clock in the morning. This is what the prophet Joel announced would happen:

*"In the Last Days," God says,  
"I will pour out my Spirit on every kind of people:  
Your sons will prophesy, also your daughters;  
Your young men will see visions, your old men dream dreams.  
When the time comes, I'll pour out my Spirit on those who serve me, men and women both, and they'll prophesy..."*

**Think.**

- How do you account for Peter and the apostles going from scared behind closed doors to public preaching in the temple courts?
- Where in your life are you sensing a need for "bold urgency"?
- What do you find most striking about Joel's prophecy? To what extent have you personally experienced its fulfillment in your own life?

**Pray.**

Spirit of God, fill me, shake me, settle me, remake me today. Strike the chords of my life and let me not fear that others hear.

**Live.**

Be bold in sharing the life of Jesus with someone.

## 5) No longer room for doubt

**Read.** Acts 2:29-36 Message

"Dear friends, let me be completely frank with you. Our ancestor David is dead and buried—his tomb is in plain sight today. But being also a prophet and knowing that God had solemnly sworn that a descendant of his would rule his kingdom, seeing far ahead, he talked of the resurrection of the Messiah—'no trip to Hades, no stench of death.' This Jesus, God raised up. And every one of us here is a witness to it. Then, raised to the heights at the right hand of God and receiving the promise of the Holy Spirit from the Father, he poured out the Spirit he had just received. That is what you see and hear. For David himself did not ascend to heaven, but he did say, 'God said to my Master, 'Sit at my right hand  
*Until I make your enemies a stool for resting your feet.'*

"All Israel, then, know this: There's no longer room for doubt—God made him Master and Messiah, this Jesus whom you killed on a cross

**Think.**

- For Peter, what left no doubt as to the reality of Jesus as Messiah? What has been the most convincing proof to you? Is there any way in which the "jury is still out" for you? If so, how?
- How do you think others would say it is most evident that Jesus is Master and Messiah of your life?
- Where in your life would you like to experience a fresh "Pentecost"?

**Pray.**

Spirit of Jesus, let me drink deeply of you today. Wash over me, revive me, refresh me...and through me pour out your grace into the lives of others.

**Live.**

Be a faithful Jesus-witness today.