

¹ When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. ² Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. ³ They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. ⁴ All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.

⁵ Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven. ⁶ When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard them speaking in his own language. ⁷ Utterly amazed, they asked: “Are not all these men who are speaking Galileans? ⁸ Then how is it that each of us hears them in his own native language? ⁹ Parthians, Medes and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, ¹⁰ Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome ¹¹ (both Jews and converts to Judaism); Cretans and Arabs—we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues!” ¹² Amazed and perplexed, they asked one another, “What does this mean?”

¹³ Some, however, made fun of them and said, “They have had too much wine.”

¹⁴ Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd: “Fellow Jews and all of you who live in Jerusalem, let me explain this to you; listen carefully to what I say. ¹⁵ These men are not drunk, as you suppose. It’s only nine in the morning! ¹⁶ No, this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel:

¹⁷ “ ‘In the last days, God says,
I will pour out my Spirit on all people.
Your sons and daughters will prophesy,
your young men will see visions,
your old men will dream dreams.

¹⁸ Even on my servants, both men and women,
I will pour out my Spirit in those days,
and they will prophesy.

¹⁹ I will show wonders in the heaven above
and signs on the earth below,
blood and fire and billows of smoke.

²⁰ The sun will be turned to darkness
and the moon to blood
before the coming of the great and glorious day of the Lord.

²¹ And everyone who calls
on the name of the Lord will be saved.’ (NIV84)

POWER ON DISPLAY

On Pentecost

In Me

Through Me

Have you ever seen the World’s Strongest Man competition? If you haven’t you should check it out some time! It broadcasts usually on ESPN, but I bet you could find some videos on You Tube. The biggest, bulkiest, thickest men in the world gather to lift, drag, pull and flip some really heavy things all in an effort to determine who is the World’s Strongest Man. There’s a competition called Atlas Stones. You have to pick up 5 heavy stones and lift them onto a platform. The lightest stone weighs 220 lbs. if

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you make it to the fifth one, all you have to do is lift a 350 lb. stone about 4 feet in the air and get it to settle onto the top of the platform that is 33 feet from where you started! Pretty easy stuff right?!?

Have you ever tried to drag your refrigerator out from its hole to clean underneath it? Maybe you have, or maybe you've tried and found it to difficult. What you need is a World's Strongest Man. There's a competition called the Fridge Carry. But it's maybe a little different than you might expect. They take 2 refrigerators and connect them with a giant wooden yoke and the strong man has to squat between the two appliances that weight together 904 lbs. And if they can stand up without their head exploding, then they simply need to walk those two refrigerators almost 100 feet to the other side of the course.

It's impressive enough to see the thick necks and bowling ball biceps that those competitors have, and then to see what those muscles can do? Wow!! It's a pretty awesome Display of Power.

Today you saw and we celebrate Power on Display! And it's even better than the Strong Man competition. It's more power but on greater display. What they do not many people can replicate. What we see today, none can do, except the Holy Spirit who came that day 2,000 years ago with his Pentecost Power and we'll see he's still flexing his muscles even today.

Let's look at that Power on Display – Power he put on display 1) On Pentecost, 2) Power he put on display 2) inside of each of us, and Power that he puts on display 3) through us.

1) On Pentecost

² Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. ³ They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. ⁴ All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.

Pentecost Power!! Displayed through the working of the Holy Spirit, the disciples knew that it was time. Jesus words to them were coming true ***I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high*** (Luke 24:49).

God's Power was on display! The Spirit clothed those disciples with ***power from on high!*** They saw and themselves did some amazing things, beginning on that Pentecost. The Spirit's Power was on vivid display that day and it was unmistakable. Even though there were skeptics that day, what they were suggesting was a pretty weak explanation. ¹³ ***Some, however, made fun of them and said, "They have had too much wine."*** There's a few problems with that explanation: Being drunk doesn't make you smarter! It doesn't give you abilities that you didn't have before! And it certainly doesn't make tongues of fire appear or the sound of wind to blow.

It was Pentecost Power that they heard, setting the stage for the real power to come. The Jews were gathering in Jerusalem to celebrate one of their major festivals – *Shavout* or what we call the Festival of Weeks. It was a Feast that commemorated the giving of the Law – Israel would gather to remember how God gave Moses the 10 commandments at Mt. Sinai.

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And God used that gathering of his people to form another beginning. The gathered crowds got to see the Spirit's Power on Display, and they got to hear the message that Peter delivered, announcing sin and grace and forgiveness through Jesus.

And it worked. The Spirit worked, the gospel worked. Later on in the chapter we read this verse: ***Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.*** (Acts 2:41). Three thousand baptisms in one day! Power on display!! The birth of the Christian Church came about by the Spirit's power. And it grew and grew and grew!! The Spirit worked on Pentecost and he still works today. That's why we can see the Spirit's **Power on Display** in ourselves.

2) In Us

You all have unique stories on how you got here! How you came to be who you are today, how you came to be a member or friend of Peace Lutheran Church. But there's something that's the same for all of you – it's the power of the gospel that brought you here. It's the Spirit putting his **Power on Display** in you!

And it's a good thing that he did, because before he did, it was all up to us. And we don't have the power that the Spirit does. In fact, the only power that we have to serve ourselves. The only power that we can display is the power of selfishness! Before the Spirit changed us, maybe you were a decent person, but you were spiritually bankrupt. All you could do, all I could do was serve my master, and before Jesus took that place, you know who it was! It was the devil. I could only reject the gospel, I could only look out for me. I could only keep doing the things that my sinful nature still longs for me to do. I could only follow the hollow and empty ways of the world. But none of those things made me closer to God, in fact each day I marched further away!!

But the Spirit flexed his muscles and called me to be his own. He chose me and made me his. Through the powerful words of the gospel of Jesus. Martin Luther taught that in his explanation to the Third Article – words that we'll use in a few moments as our confession of faith today. He taught us to confess the truth about the Holy Spirit:

I believe that I cannot by my own thinking or choosing believe in Jesus Christ my Lord, or come to him, but the Holy Spirit has called me by the gospel, enlightened me with his gifts, sanctified and kept me in the true faith

I didn't have the power to choose him, but he had the power to gather me to his side and thank God that he did. He saved me from the death I deserved and the hell that should have been my eternity.

Water is powerful when it comes through your town in the thousands of gallons. A river cuts its way through land and carves out new banks each day. A flood can decimate a thriving population and put a halt to everything, even life. But when water comes 3 drops at a time it can't do much – unless those three drops are connected with the gospel of Jesus. Then it's what Paul describes (God saved us through) ***the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom God poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Lord*** (Titus 3:5-7).

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Did you ever think about that? Baptism is your Pentecost Day. Baptism is the day that the Holy Spirit was poured out on you. Baptism is how the Spirit **Displayed his Power** in you. Snatching yet another soul from the grasp of the evil one and placing you and placing me on our Father's lap. The Spirit gives us faith to believe in our Savior's saving work for us. We couldn't get there on our own, but the Spirit's miraculous power makes it reality for us.

3) Through Us

There was lots of **Power on Display** on that Pentecost Day, but the greatest miracle was the conversion and baptism of 3,000 people. Three thousand new believers, a banner day for the Church of God!! We can look back on that Day and thank God for the success of his infant Church. We can see ourselves among those 3,000, as those that would one day stand in their place and receive the blessings that were shared with them on that day!!

But we can see ourselves in another role from Pentecost. How about the disciples? What about Peter? God hasn't given us the ability to speak in tongues or to perform miracles, but he's put that powerful gospel in us and gives us the opportunity to put the **Power on Display** through us.

Maybe you'll never get into a pulpit and preach a sermon like Peter. Maybe you'll never get a chance to stand before a crowd and proclaim the truths of salvation the way that the disciples did. Maybe you'll never actually perform a baptism, but you can still put the Spirit's **Power on Display**!!!

You can do it with the life that you live to his glory! You can be a walking living testimony to the change in attitude, worldview, mindset that the Spirit gives. You can be a shining example of the bright glowing love of Christ. You can let your light shine so that others *may see your good deed and glorify your Father in heaven* (Matthew 5:16).

And as the Spirit builds you up for those works of service, as he enlightens you to ways that you can serve God and others, he'll alert you, remind you, show you ways that you can put his **Power of Display** by proclaiming the gospel. He'll empower you to put his power on display in the words of truth that you can share. It doesn't have to be a sermon; it can be way simpler than that. An encouragement, a statement of your beliefs, a word of gospel comfort to the one that is hurting. Look for ways to put Jesus on your lips. Pray for those opportunities and watch that prayer be answered right before your very eyes. That's one that our God loves to answer. Try it out, and see if I'm right!! And then rejoice in the opportunities you're given to put the Spirit's **Power on Display**!

I don't see many bowling ball biceps or thighs that could be mistaken for tree trunks here today, but what I do see is a lot of Strong Men and Women and Children. Not strong because of body building, but because the **Spirit's Power has been put on display among us!** It was his power and love that gathered us to his side and worked faith in our hearts to believe that heaven is ours through Jesus' blood. And now he calls us to **display that power** through lives lived to his glory and the gospel shared with many more. Through the disciples, thousands heard the gospel and thousands came to faith in Christ. May God grant that we have the similar success that the kingdom might grow and that God's power and love are made known around the world! It is awesome to see that very thing happening; it's awesome to be a part of that kind of **Display of Power**. To God be the glory!! Amen.