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Upper Thames Missionary Church  
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We The Church:  
People of the Flame  
NOTES  
Acts 2:1-4

**1 When the day of Pentecost arrived, they were all together in one place.**

- what is *Pentecost*?

Some might be quick to say, well that's when the Holy Spirit came down on the disciples!

Well, yes.... And no.

That's what's about to happen in the story, but it's clear that Pentecost is already an event, *before* the events that are about to unfold.

Pentecost is a Jewish festival that begins 50 days (that's what the word Pentecost means (50) after Passover. If you remember, Passover weekend is when Jesus was arrested and crucified.

Pentecost at the time of Jesus was primarily a farming festival - farmers, did you know that? It's the day the first bundle of wheat was packed up and brought to the temple and offered to God as a sacrifice of gratitude and also as a prayer that the rest of the harvest would go well.

- the first Passover - the plague of death that swept through Egypt but God protected Israel – just before their exodus out of Egypt toward the promised land

-50 days after it Israel arrived at Mount Sinai and Moses went up on the mountain and brought back down the 10 commandments etched in stone.

Pentecost is all about God's provision

God provides a way for Israel to become HIS PEOPLE and God provides the practical needs of HIS people – like the harvest. **The God who dwells on High is making provision to form and sustain a people.**

Notice one other aspect of just this one verse - the next phrase says "they were all together in one place"

-Jesus had told them before his ascension (as recorded in Luke 24:49:)

49And behold, I am sending the promise of My Father upon you. But remain in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high.”

- they had **obeyed** - they were gathered together and they were waiting, as they have been instructed.

-Obedience is the air the church breaths - without obedience to Jesus, the church dies.  
- the formation of the church back then, and its perseverance up to this very moment in time is dependant on **Obedience to Jesus it's Lord.**

- God can and does work independently from us, but he Loves to work WITH his Children to accomplish his mission in the world.

Let's be totally clear - **People do not start and sustain the church the church.**

-Beginning another congregation of the church is hard work and took all of these men and women - but they didn't create the idea - they couldn't sustain the thing that had begun.

-Obedience means accepting someone else in in charge, someone else has plans, someone else is forming and sustaining the church. - Jesus says in Matthew 16:18 "I Will Build My Church" -

Let's Look at Verse 2

**2And suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting.**

That would be terrifying!

In this moment, do you think they were contemplating the parallels of Mount Sinai and the Festival of the First Bundles of Grain with what they were experiencing?

- we should recognize that God was showing up in a special way

Notice that the sound came **from Heaven** - God was breaking into our world, our time, our space, in a unique way. This is the moment that forever changed humankind.

God's presence broke into creation that moment and it did not just descend to the mountain top and then go back up again like at Sinai - God broke in and stayed in.

- Pentecost is both a once for all event, but also an ongoing event. The sound and fury dissipated, but God's presence remained Heaven broke into Earth, and the first connections were fused, not in a temple, not on a sacred object, but in people. People became the meeting point of heaven and Earth. People became Temple (not temples – but collectively one Temple).

**3And divided tongues as of fire appeared to them and rested on each one of them.**

The Sign of the New Beginning

*The sound of the wind was like a trumpet blast signalling the entrance of the King – the Wind was creation's loud cry of joy and announcement that God had shown up – that the Spirit of God was to take up residence in physical creation – in the beating hearts of those who pledged their Faith to Christ.*

- The church was born. The Church – the people of God, together, who are filled with the Spirit of God to carry on the Mission of Jesus.

-The flame of the Spirit, the huge and untameable God of the Universe came to rest peacefully on each one – the immensity of God graciously and gently bestowed on each tiny little human being there. We are part of that family – our lineage goes right back to the original “people of the flame” and we too are people of the flame.

Do we all have the same experience they had in that upper room? Of wind and flames and (as we're about to see, tongues?) – no, and that's not the point of this passage at all. This is a moment recorded to show us who we are and where we come from as a church.

The God of Sinai, the God who pours out his Spirit on all flesh, the God who is for all nations is Our God, and his Spirit is in us.

The events of Pentecost are a family forming moment – when all the powerful symbols of wind and fire and tongues-from-every-tribe-and-nation come rushing together to show us just what the Church is and what it is formed to do.

**We are God's people (the wind, the power, Sinai), we are the meeting place of Heaven and Earth (the Spirit IN us), we have a mission to bring God's message and God's presence to all the corners of the earth – to every people and nation and tongue. And God's power will sustain us for this work.**

**4And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.**

Let's pause here to reflect at the end of our short passage today –

We have been given **The Power to Act**.

**Acting** means proclaiming, serving, and building up unity and relations within the church, as the rest of the book of Acts goes on to make very clear.

-We are a church and part of a denomination that believes God is sovereign, and that these gifts have by no means stopped, even if they are special and limited in their appearances.

- Of course, these things are always in harmony with the Word God has already spoken in scripture.

-For many others, the power to Act isn't in these unusual events, but in the events of daily service. The Holy Spirit led the disciples very quickly to establish ways of caring for the poor and vulnerable around them.

-It was the right gift for the right time to accomplish God's purposes.

God wants to give this church the right gifts at the right time to accomplish his purposes here in Mitchell.

- the important thing above all of these things is that we keep our eyes fixed on Jesus and continue to **obey** Him. That way, we'll be prepared for whatever surprising way God shows up.

Ask God today – what will you have me do? Listen, trust, obey – and let's see what God has in store.