

Pentecost Sermon notes



Introduction

Thank you so much for considering using the Wycliffe Pentecost sermon notes.

These are designed to be a clear, brief and easy-to-understand unpacking of Acts 2, communicating the key messages.

As you read through the following notes, the titles for each section are in bold italics and the sections beneath these are written as a shorthand sermon outline to provide more context for each point.

Along with our sermon notes we have a short video to introduce this passage. If you haven't downloaded it already, the video is available at wycliffe.org.uk/pentecost-download.

We also provide a small-group resource which is designed to be used to follow on from this talk, unpacking the application of this further for individuals and church family.

We are offering these resources free of charge, but if you would like to make a donation or take up an offering, you can find all the information you need at wycliffe.org.uk/church-giving.

Thank you so much for considering using the Wycliffe Pentecost resources. I pray that you and your church find them a blessing and an encouragement this Pentecost.

God bless,



Neil Graham
Director for Churches
Wycliffe Bible Translators

Sermon notes – summary

A clear, easy-to-understand unpacking of Acts 2, sharing the transformative power of Pentecost and how we can apply it to our own lives in the service of the gospel.

Key points:

1. Power to witness

| Jesus promised Holy Spirit's power for witnessing (Acts 1:8).

Application:

| Embrace the Spirit's strength to enable us to share Jesus everywhere.

2. Declaration of God's wonders

| Holy Spirit empowers disciples to speak in diverse tongues (Acts 2:5) and proclaim God's wonders (Acts 2:11).

Application:

| Share openly God's greatest wonder of all – sending his Son to die for each one of us.

3. Universal salvation and Spirit's reception

| Peter's explanation: fulfilment of Old Testament prophecy (Acts 2:18, 21, 33) and the call for repentance, baptism, salvation, and Spirit's reception (Acts 2:38).

Application:

| Enabling all to hear the gospel through having the Bible in their own language.



Introduction – setting the scene

- | It is 10 days after the ascension of Jesus. Jerusalem is full of Jewish pilgrims who have travelled to celebrate the Festival of Weeks.
- | The disciples were also in Jerusalem, following Jesus' command to them to stay there after his ascension and to wait for the gift of the Holy Spirit, a gift that Jesus reminded them: 'My father promised, and which you have heard me speak about.' (Acts 1:4)
- | Watch the short video from Wycliffe Bible Translators, about what happened then, the impact it had at the time, and the impact it still has for us today.

Watch Wycliffe Pentecost video

Unless read earlier in the service, read: **Acts 2:1–41**.

Or if time is limited, you could use a shorter selection of verses: **Acts 1:4–8, Acts 2:1–18 and 36–41**.

- | The coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost has so much to teach us today about the 'wonders of God' (Acts 2:11) both in our own lives and in our calling as followers of Jesus to reach others for him.
- | Let's explore:
 1. What did Jesus tell the disciples about the Spirit?
 2. What was the immediate impact of the coming of the Spirit?
 3. What did all this mean?

1. The Holy Spirit will bring power to witness to Jesus

Explain:

- | Jesus said the Spirit would provide the power needed for the disciples to witness to Jesus.
- | In Acts 1 the very last thing Jesus said to his disciples, before he was taken up to heaven, was: 'But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.' (Acts 1:8)
- | Jesus told the disciples that the gift of the Holy Spirit would give them a power from beyond themselves: power from God.
 - | The power of the Spirit will change their lives, Jesus tells the disciples, and will enable them to be witnesses for him.
 - | And they are to be witnesses for Jesus in an expanding circle: to people locally (in Jerusalem), to people in their wider nation (Judea and Samaria), and to people everywhere around the world (to the ends of the earth).





Apply:

- | Jesus wants us to tell others about him – to be his witnesses locally, nationally, and internationally.
- | Often we struggle to do this, but he doesn't expect us to do this in our own strength but in the power of the Spirit.
- | So we pray for the Spirit to strengthen us and empower us, and trust that he will help us speak.

2. Filled with the Holy Spirit, people declare the wonders of God

Explain:

- | When the Holy Spirit came, as Jesus promised, he gave the disciples power from beyond themselves.
- | The Spirit enabled the disciples to declare the wonders of God.
- | People from 'every nation under heaven' were amazed to hear the disciples speak in their own languages (Acts 2:5).
- | But what did the Holy Spirit enable the disciples to speak about, that speakers of many different languages heard?
- | They spoke about the 'wonders of God' (Acts 2:11).
- | We're not told exactly which wonders of God they were proclaiming. But surely it must have been the greatest wonder of all, which had just taken place: that God loved the world so much that he sent his Son to die for us, and that Jesus rose again and has now ascended on high – as Peter goes on to explain.

Apply:

- | We have good news to share, and the Holy Spirit enables us to declare God's wonders.
- | We should speak openly about what God has done for us.
- | Our heart's desire should be for all people to hear for themselves the wonders of what God has done in Jesus.
- | So we speak of Jesus here in our localities.
- | And we stand in solidarity with our brothers and sisters who are today declaring the wonders of God in thousands of languages spoken around the world.





3. Now everyone can be saved and receive the Holy Spirit

Explain:

- | On hearing the wonders of God in their own languages, some of the crowd dismissed it ('they have had too much wine' (Acts 2:13)).
- | Others, while amazed, were also 'perplexed and asked one another, "What does this mean?"' (Acts 2:12)
- | So Peter stood up and addressed the crowd saying: 'Let me explain this to you.'
- | Peter told the crowd that the events on that day (the pouring out of the Spirit) were the long-awaited fulfilment of Old Testament prophecy.
- | Peter explained how the Old Testament promised that one day God would pour out his Spirit (Acts 2:18) and on that day everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. (Acts 2:21)
- | He then told the crowd that the day has now arrived: Jesus was raised from the dead, proving he is the Messiah as foretold by David, and he has now ascended to the right hand of God and has poured out the Holy Spirit. (Acts 2:33)
- | And, since the ascended Jesus has poured out the Spirit, now is the time to call on his name and receive salvation and the promised gift of the Spirit.
- | The impact of what Peter explained was that people were cut to the heart and they asked 'what shall we do?' (Acts 2:37)
- | Peter's reply was clear and is the same now as then: 'Repent and be baptised, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.' (Acts 2:38)

Apply:

- | What Peter explained on the day of Pentecost proves that we now live in a world where anyone – you, your children, those who are far away (Acts 2:39) – who calls on the name of the Lord can be saved and can receive for themselves the Holy Spirit. This is what the Old Testament prophets had promised.
- | The Spirit has come: now is the time to declare the wonders of God as we witness to Jesus.
- | As Jesus instructed the disciples in Acts 1, this is to happen locally, nationally, and internationally.

Application

- The message of the gospel in people's own languages continues to cut them to the heart and to change lives all around the world today.

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Akoete (pronounced A-coat-e), a Bible translator in Togo, read the words of Jesus in Luke 13:3 – ‘Unless you repent you will perish’ – in his language (Ifè, pronounced Ee-fay) and he said: ‘That really hit me, and through that I repented and I gave myself to Jesus.’

Now he is part of the team translating the Bible for the Ifè people – and since the Ifè New Testament was first distributed in 2011, they have seen the Ifè church grow. Akoete explains the difference: ‘In the past people worshipped idols and there were almost no churches. But now there are churches in nearly all the Ifè villages.’

That is the difference that is made when people have the Bible in their own language, telling them of the ‘wonders of God’.

And that is why Akoete and the Ifè team are working so hard to finish translating the Bible into their own language – they are on track to finish in 2026 – for they know that the impact of having the complete Bible in Ifè will lead more people to Jesus.

Indeed, we know about Pentecost because we have the Bible in our language. The Bible is the main way that God communicates with us today. So, having the Bible in people’s own languages – 1 in 5 people around the world don’t yet have the Bible in their language – is key to those from the ends of the earth hearing about Jesus.

Jesus’ instructions to the disciples – in the power of the Holy Spirit to be his witnesses locally, nationally, and internationally – is also a central part of our calling as his disciples today. So, this week may the Holy Spirit empower you to be a witness to Jesus to everyone you meet.

Pray to close

Wycliffe
Bible
Translators

PO Box 1643, Oxford OX4 9PB

0300 303 1111

hello@wycliffe.org.uk

wycliffe.org.uk