

June 8/25 Leader's Guide

Acts 2: 1-8, 12, 14, 16-18, 37-39, 41-47 "Do you yearn for fire?"

Pentecost is both a never to be repeated historical event and a present expectation. A present expectation that the spirit can be living and active in us in the same way now.

Read Acts 2: 1-8, 12, 14, 16-18, 37-39, 41-47; and Exodus 19: 16-18; 20: 1-3, 18-21

Pentecost was already a feast. Pente means fifty, fifty days after Passover, fifty days after God rescued his people from slavery in Egypt, fifty days journey into the desert the people of Israel come to the base of mount Sinai. Moses goes up the mountain to meet with God and there is fire and wind and Moses receives the 10 Commandments.

1. Acts 2 opens with the words – when the day of Pentecost arrived or more accurately in the Greek, when the day of Pentecost was fulfilled. What are the connections between the first Pentecost and this one? What does this tell us about the work of Jesus? the work of the Spirit?

Fifty days after Passover, 50 days after Jesus hung on a cross, 50 days after Jesus rescued a people from slavery to sin, 120 disciples gathered in an upper room. There was wind and fire, the Spirit descends and forms a people to live out the law, to live out love.

There was the prophetic promise from Ezekiel 36 that God himself would come and cleanse his people from sin and make them new by the Power of the Spirit. Turn their heart of stone to a heart of flesh. Shape and form them to keep the law in that same Spirit.

Although this detail wasn't in the portion we read some of your group may see the following connection. When Moses comes down the mountain he finds the people of Israel engaging in a drunken orgy in worship of an Egyptian God. The rebellion is quelled and 3000 die. The Spirit descends and 3000 come to new life in Jesus.

2. *The fire of his purity.* Peter invites the people to repent. Repentance is the means by which we tap into the transforming work of the Spirit – Discuss.

We run from repentance, instead we respond to our sin with remorse and resolution – I can't believe I did that – I'll do better next time. Or we will play the victim – I'm that way because of my upbringing – or this hurt or trauma I

faced. If I could just find out how this trauma impacts me I'll change. Or we will respond to our sin by trying to justify the vice as virtue. My anger isn't a bad temper its righteous indignation.

I sense Jesus patiently waiting for us to come to him in repentance – for when we do I also sense a loving smile pass his face. "Now – now we can get to work. I have so longed for you to come to me with that thing that I might rid you of what is making you and others so miserable, that I might heal you, might make you new"

Leading your group to engaging the practice of repentance is the goal here. Perhaps share how repentance has brought change in your own life would help nudge people in that direction.

3. *The fire of his presence.* The fire of his presence came down that first Pentecost and the people recoiled in fear asking Moses to be the go between. Now the fire of his presence comes down upon a gathered community. What does this tell us about where God is encountered post-pentecost?

This tells us that we ourselves are drawn by the Spirit into the presence, into the life of the Trinity, into the loving relationship between Father, Son, and Spirit. We are by the Spirit led to experience the affections of belonging to the family of God. For the Spirit is the Spirit of sonship by which we cry out abba father (Romans 8:15).

This tells us that God is encountered in a community formed and shaped by the Spirit. This will help shape the next question. A community empowered by the Spirit will answer the question – what is God like? What will his future reign look like?

Read Leviticus 23:15-22

The fire of his power. Pentecost was also an agricultural feast. It was the beginning of the grain harvest – the first taste of their future harvest. The Spirit empowers a people to live as a foretaste of Jesus' future kingdom.

4. In what ways is the church post Pentecost empowered to be a first taste of Jesus' future kingdom?

The Spirit empowers the disciples to speak of the great deeds of Jesus in all the languages of the earth forming a community where racial, ethnic, cultural, and socioeconomic divisions are healed.

The Spirit empowers the disciples in signs and wonders. To heal the sick, restore the broken, break the demonic hold of evil over people's lives.

The Spirit empowers a deep community of fellowship. A community where they listen, love, extend care and show compassion.

The spirit empowers the church to live in step with the apostles teaching. Living out the patterns of the kingdom, patterns of love, justice, mercy, grace etc...

The Spirit empowers the church to live generously, to leave the edges of their field uncut or to live actively beneath their means and give the rest away.

The Spirit empowers the church to draw many into its life.

5. How might we receive the fire of the Spirit?

We cannot manufacture or control the work of the Spirit in our midst, we can only receive, we can only steward, we can only put ourselves in the flow of the Spirit's work.

The disciples weren't trying to control the Spirit they were simply doing what they always did, they were in Jerusalem to celebrate the feast, living out their faith traditions.

The disciples weren't trying to manufacture a spiritual experience they were simply responding to Jesus' command. Wait in Jerusalem until you receive power from on high (Luke 24:49).

This invites us into a posture of – "keep doing what you are doing in Jesus – living out a long obedience in the same direction" with an expectation that Jesus has promised to fill us, to empower us to live as a foretaste of Jesus' future.