

“We Are a Powerhouse!”

Scripture: Acts 1:8; Acts 2:1-24

Graphics: Pentecost, fire, tongues, power stations, batteries

Big Truth: The church is powerless without the working presence of the Holy Spirit. The people of the Panama UMC are charged with receiving the Holy Spirit in order for their lives and the ministry of the church to be life-changing, world-transforming, and death-defeating. We receive the Holy Spirit individually and communally, which empowers us to witness to the love of Christ, the power of the Cross, and the mission of the church.

Focus Phrase: We are a Holy Spirit powerhouse for Christ’s mission.

1. Introduction

A. PRAY! (Jesus, you are Lord...)

B. Today is Pentecost and Pentecost is all about POWER!

C. Power history...

- i. Two hundred years before the birth of Jesus, coal mining started in China.
- ii. Then, about 800 years later, the first windmill was constructed in Iran. Human beings have always needed power, and for centuries, they’ve pulled it from both the ground and the air.
- iii. Around the year 1700, the Maori people began to use geothermal power for cooking and heating. In 1868, the first modern solar power plant was built in Algiers. We think of these technologies as being new, but they’re not.
- iv. In 1859, the first oil well was drilled in Pennsylvania. This fueled the gas-powered automobile developed by Karl Benz in 1885. Oil and gas are at the heart of the internal combustion engines that have propelled cars and trucks ever since.

D. Now, I’d classify myself as a sort of power junkie. Not power as in muscle cars or huge construction equipment, as cool as those are. But power in terms of ways to get and store electricity. I’m fascinated with solar power, wind power, power banks, portable generators, batteries, and just about anything that can generate and store power for devices or homes.

E. When my brother-in-law put solar panels on his house, I’d spend obsessive amounts of time in the basement, watching the control panels to see how much power was being generated...and being put back into the grid!

F. (power bank) I carry around a large power bank like this to provide power to devices like phones and watches and even my drone.

G. Yet, there’s a spiritual power-generating source that has nothing to do with fossil fuels, alternative energy, or even nuclear fission or fusion.

- H. The first Pentecost day had a whole different power source. The people who were following Jesus birthed the church, and became a powerhouse for Jesus!
- I. Jesus said to his disciples in Acts 1:8, right before he ascended back to heaven after the resurrection, “But you will receive **power** when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”
- J. Power comes from the presence of the Holy Spirit in the lives of Jesus-followers. Power comes through the church as Jesus-followers gather together for worship, mission, and service in Jesus’ name.
- K. We are a Holy Spirit powerhouse for Christ’s mission in this world.**
- L. Let’s read how that happened on the first Pentecost day...and then we’ll get charged up! We are a powerhouse!

2. Scripture

A. READ ACTS 2:1-13

- i. Up until this point in the life of the disciples, they’d been in hiding. They feared the Jewish authorities who convinced Pontius Pilate to have Jesus crucified. They feared the Romans who carried out the execution. They feared those who wanted the rest of Jesus’ disciples killed as well.
- ii. That fear made them powerless.
- iii. After Jesus’ resurrection, the disciples were hiding behind locked doors when Jesus showed up (through the locked door). In that encounter, Jesus promised them that He’d send them the Holy Spirit.
- iv. And so they waited...and worried...and were powerless to do anything but wonder when this would all happen.
- v. At Jesus’ ascension, Jesus promised them that they would receive POWER when the Spirit came. And yet, they waited and wondered.
- vi. But THEN...it happened! Luke, who wrote the gospel of Luke and the books of Acts, tells of this day - the day of Pentecost (which was a Jewish holiday) - when all the disciples were in one place. Suddenly - unexpectedly, surprisingly, out of no where - loud sounds like a violent wind, filled the whole house where they were hiding (?).
- vii. Tongues, like fire, appeared amount them - as a group, and a tongue rested on each one.
- viii. And (verse 4) ALL of them were FILLED with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, in the Spirit.
- ix. These languages were ones they didn’t already know. These weren’t the speaking in tongues we read about in other places in the NT. These were actual foreign languages - and Luke listed them out.

- x. When the violent wind sound and the cacophony of languages began to be heard in the streets (must've been loud!), people started to gather. They started to listen.
- xi. And the disciples started to speak! These disciples, who'd been powerless and holed up in a room in Jerusalem because they were afraid of what would happen to them, were filled with POWER and began to speak!
- xii. I'm convinced that God empowered them to speak in languages they didn't know SO THAT they wouldn't even BEGIN to think that THEY had done something amazing in their own power.
- xiii. It wasn't THEM. It was GOD'S POWER filling them.
- xiv. What was it they were speaking to this crowd?
- xv. Luke said in verse 11: "...we hear them speaking about God deeds of power."
- xvi. In order for us to know the power of God and how the church became a powerhouse for Jesus, we need to know more about what they were saying about God's deeds of power.
 - a. Psalm 77:11-15 says, "I will call to mind the deeds of the Lord; I will remember your wonders of old. I will meditate on all your work and muse on your mighty deeds. Your way, O God, is holy. What god is so great as our God? You are the God who works wonders; you have displayed your might among the peoples. With your strong arm you redeemed your people, the descendants of Jacob and Joseph."
 - b. It doesn't take long to recall the powerful deeds of God. I'm sure that the disciples were speaking in languages they didn't know and talking about some of these:
 - i) **Creation**, when God made something out of nothing. And the making of a man and a woman to populate the earth and care for it.
 - ii) They were proclaiming God's power to **deliver** the Jewish people out of Egypt...the Exodus from slavery!
 - iii) They may have been excitedly witnessing the **restoration of Job's** family and wealth. Our Men's group is studying that right now.
 - iv) I'm certain they were raising their voices to tell of the miraculous birth of Jesus Christ, the many miracle signs and wonder that Jesus did, the resurrection of Jesus Christ, and many others.
 - c. God's mighty deeds of power are all throughout the Bible and are there to be talked about and told and retold...in every language.

- d. AND...here's what the disciples REALLY wanted the people to know: (are you ready?) THE POWER of God that did ALL those mighty deeds, **is the SAME POWER that is living in you and me!**
- e. Here's how Peter described that. Now, this is PETER! The disciple that denied Jesus. The one that ran in fear. The one who got it wrong more than he got it right. Peter, FILLED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT, was powered up...and preached to the crowd...here's what he said:

B. READ ACTS 2:14-24

- i. The Holy Spirit gave Peter power! And, according to Peter, who with the rest of the disciples was proclaiming the powerful deeds of God, that power would change the world.
- ii. Your sons and daughter, and slaves, young and old, would prophesy - in the power of the Spirit. That means they would talk about what God was going to do in the lives of those who give their whole lives to Jesus' mission.
- iii. Young people will see visions of the Kingdom of God. Old men will dream dreams about God's future. A future when heaven and earth would be one and Jesus would return in glory!
- iv. And then, in verse 21, "...everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved!"
- v. The same power that saved the disciples, will save EVERYONE who calls on the name of the Lord. All those people represented by the languages spoken shall be saved. All the people from communities and countries around the world shall be saved when they call on Jesus' name.
- vi. And, in fact, salvation means that death will be defeated and everlasting life will be given to those who are saved.
- vii. The final mention of POWER in this section is the **power of death**.
 - a. At Creation, death wasn't a thing.
 - b. When sin entered the world, death was the price. Romans 6:23 tells us, "For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."
 - c. Jesus was crucified and those who wanted him dead thought that death had spoken...and that the power of death was greater than God's plan. Make no mistake...the power of death is real. People fear death more than anything else.
 - d. Yet, we read in verse 24, "But God...raised him up, having freed him from death, because it was impossible for him to be held in its power."
 - e. The power of death was, and has been for all time, replaced with the power of LIFE!

viii. On the day of the first Pentecost, the disciples went from death to life and became powerhouses for Jesus and His mission in the world.

3. Application

- A. On this Pentecost Sunday in 2022, we are called to be a Holy Spirit powerhouse for Christ's mission. Just like the first disciples on Pentecost, today is a day to be filled with the Holy Spirit.
- B. It's not the time to be powerless, even though you might feel like it. It's not the time, church, to be filled with fear, even though fear is contagious in our world. It's not the time to wring our hands or worry about the future, even though you can't see it clearly.
- C. It IS time to increase our witness to the whole world for Jesus, who is power, and who destroys fear and worry...and IS king of the future.
- D. Allowing the Holy Spirit to fill you is not just for salvation and the defeat of death - as powerful as that is. The in-filling of the Holy Spirit gave those first disciples - and gives you and the church - its mission.
- E. It's an individual in-dwelling to make you into a powerhouse for Jesus, and then a community of powerhouses together that becomes a transforming force in the world.
- F. One 9V battery can power a small electronic device for a few months. A larger D-cell battery can power a larger light. One car battery can power all the electronics in your car for a few years, if it's properly charged by the alternator. That single battery can do some amazing things, but it can't do everything.
- G. When you're filled with the Holy Spirit as a follower of Jesus, the Spirit turns you and I, as ordinary people, into extraordinary powerhouses for God.
- H. It's not by your own strength that you are used by God for Him...but by the power the Spirit brings into your life. Spiritual gifts are charged by the Spirit. Grace and love are charged up by the Spirit. Repentance and forgiveness are charged up by the Spirit. The part of you that God installed which desires to worship, serve, and please God gets powered up!
- I. Receive the Holy Spirit today, believer! If this is the first time you've heard that invitation, then open yourself today for that indwelling power! If this is NOT your first time hearing that, then open yourself wider again today!
- J. Come, Holy Spirit, Come!
- K. Yet, one battery is a limited powerhouse for God's mission. You can do great things for God individually, but what would it look like to put two batteries - or three or 100 or 1,000 batteries - together?
- L. It would look like groups of people worshiping and studying and praying. It would look like people on mission together for Jesus. It would look like us giv-

ing people inside and outside the church every opportunity to believe in and follow Jesus.

M. It would look like the Church!

- N. It's a powered-up, interconnected **battery bank**, with hundreds of batteries working together for one mission - one holy purpose to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of lives in this world. That's a POWERHOUSE for Jesus.
- O. The Holy Spirit is not the powerhouse... YOU and I and the CHURCH are the powerhouse... the Spirit living in YOU and ME is the POWER!
- P. When we join together in mission, to see God's vision become a reality in our families, our schools, our communities, and our world, then the CHURCH becomes the POWERHOUSE! We are a POWERHOUSE for God's mission in the world.
- Q. It starts with you and I being the battery for the Holy Spirit's power charge. And then, when we come together, we become the POWERHOUSE for Jesus.
- R. It's not a power that's not found primarily in programs, policies or institutions. This power is not about finances or buildings or even denominations. This power is found in the Holy Spirit of God.

4. Conclusion

- A. This Pentecost power is an energy source that can keep us burning with love for God and for the people around us... radiating warmth and light to a cold, dark world. SO that MORE people will hear about and see God's deeds of power - life transformation... healing... breaking addictions... invitation and welcome... death defeated and holiness pursued.
- B. ACTS 1:8 commanded the disciples to receive the power and THEN be witnesses in wider and wider circles for the transformation of the world!
- C. We can be that transforming force by turning our church into a Powerhouse. When we do that, we open ourselves to the Holy Spirit, an energy source that gives us both the courage and the ability to connect with people around us in life-giving ways.
- D. We are a POWERHOUSE for Jesus' mission!
- E. Be FILLED with the Holy Spirit, church!
- F. This is YOUR time. This is OUR time! This is God's time!
- G. Today is Pentecost and Pentecost is all about POWER!
- H. Let's pray... and then we prepare to come to the Table to receive the POWER!