

## WHERE THE WIND LANDS

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Acts 2:1–8, 12–18 | John 14:8–17 | Psalm 104:24–34, 35b | Romans 8:14–17

### WIND-CARRIED ROOTS

I was in Sunday school as a child in the church’s education building. I used to sit by the window—back when church windows actually opened—and I would look out at the garden behind the building, just beside Hugh Mercer’s Colonial Apothecary Shop.

And there, arrayed on the windowsill, were those little helicopter seeds—the maple seeds—that, when I flicked them, would float out into the air. I would just watch them dance their way down like no one was watching. One by one, they passed the time. And I’m sorry to my elementary Sunday school teachers for not paying better attention, but those helicopter seeds were really awesome.

I didn’t realize then how extraordinary it was that the maple seeds made their way onto that windowsill at all—because I was on the third floor. And there, three stories up, those seeds somehow had to be delivered to the windowsill. You know, mature maples grow sixty, sometimes eighty feet tall.

It’s interesting to look back on that very old garden where pavers and stones had been laid out just so, so Mr. Mercer could grow the herbs from which he would make his medicines. And some March or April long past, the wind had taken one of those little helicopter seeds and carried it to just the right crack at just the right time. And there it stayed, between some pavers, and rooted, and grew—to deliver those seeds for my enjoyment as a child in Sunday school.

You know, Pentecost is that kind of story—of how that happens. But not really in gardens or alleyways. It’s how it happens in us.

**Because where the wind lands, something begins to live. And where the wind lands, something begins to grow.**

### DIVIDED FIRE, SHARED BREATH

Acts tells us how the Holy Spirit arrived at Pentecost. And I think it’s important for us to remember also—it tells how the Spirit stayed at Pentecost.

*“When the day of Pentecost came, suddenly from heaven there was the sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting” (Acts 2:1–2).*

And then something even stranger: *“Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each one of them” (Acts 2:3).*

That’s a really vivid image, of course. And again, as a child, when I heard this Scripture read, I imagined forked tongues—like a snake. Or maybe those finger-like flickers from a campfire that flicker up into embers and then into emptiness.

But this is different. This fire descends. And when it divides, it doesn’t diminish.

The Spirit's flame divides in order to multiply. Multiply like loaves and fish that are passed out again and again until thousands are fed (cf. Luke 9:10–17). Or like the bread and the cup in the upper room—it's shared, it's not stored up (cf. Luke 22:19–20).

Each person receives their portion.

And here the Holy Spirit isn't just hovering like stage fog at a show. Instead, it's descending on each one like a crown. One by one—can you imagine it?

- Mary, who had carried Jesus in her body, now bears the Holy Spirit in her being (cf. Luke 1:26–38; Acts 1:14).
- And Peter, who denied Jesus, is not denied his portion (cf. Luke 22:54–62).
- Thomas, probably still doubting some things—he receives a flame of his own (cf. John 20:24–29).
- All the ones whose names we don't know—every one of them receives. And every disciple holds a share of the Spirit.

Psalm 104 says it so beautifully: “*You send forth your Spirit, and they are created; you renew the face of the ground*” (Ps 104:30).

And so, Luke here in Acts is not giving us a story to press into a memory page somewhere in a scrapbook. It's the living memory of what God planted there—and what continues to grow.

In all those who believe Jesus' word and wait, just as he said.

**Because where the wind lands, the Spirit forms a people of a particular purpose.**

### **THE SPIRIT SPEAKS FLUENT DIASPORA**

The people who had gathered there—Luke tells us—there in Jerusalem that Pentecost were part of the diaspora. And that means they were Jews, but they were scattered. Their ancestors had left the land generations earlier. Some had fled from violence. Others were drawn by opportunity. And they built lives in faraway places—places like Egypt and Arabia and Rome and Mesopotamia, Turkey.

They had raised their children there, with different languages, with different customs. Their Hebrew was probably rusty. Their spiritual home was in Jerusalem, but they couldn't really speak that language anymore. They were all Jews, but they couldn't understand each other.

And so, I think Jerusalem that day was very much like—if you can imagine it—a family reunion where everyone comes together, everyone knows they're related, but no one shares the same words. You know you belong. You just don't know how to say it out loud to each other.

And then Luke tells us something happens: “Each one heard them speaking in the native language of each” (Acts 2:6, 8). The pilgrims are stunned. They ask, “Aren't these Galileans?” (Acts 2:7). Because Galileans aren't the ones you'd expect to carry a message from God.

A little later in Acts, Peter actually self-identifies to some of those who are listening as being part of what he calls the *agrammatoi* (ἀγράμματοι)—which means illiterate, unlettered, untrained, uncredentialed (cf. Acts 4:13).

And yet it is they who preach. And the crowd hears the word—in their languages. The miracle isn't just that the disciples are speaking. The miracle is also that others can truly hear—that the message lands in the syllables of home.

Turns out, God speaks fluent diaspora.

And into all that, Peter says this: “This is what Joel saw coming—the Spirit being poured out on all flesh” (cf. Acts 2:16–17; Joel 2:28–29). And that message would have startled people who knew what he was pointing to. Because the idea of visions and dreams isn't just a poetic gloss that Joel has given us—or that Peter has picked up.

Visions and dreams were how they talked about the ways that God would reveal the future. And Joel now has thrown open the door to a whole new world.

- It's a world where sons and daughters will prophesy and speak—in a world where only sons were considered credible (cf. Joel 2:28).
- Where the young would be the ones who see visions, before they're given permission by their elders to do so.
- And the old will dream when the world tells them their time is up and they need to sit this one out.
- Slaves—men and women—they will carry and they will discern the word too, in a world that saw them as less than human (cf. Joel 2:29; Acts 2:18).

And so this isn't a story about how everyone just gets to belong. It's a story about how God will reveal God's self—and who has the privilege of revealing what God is doing.

And so the Spirit isn't reserved for the eloquent. The Spirit will move through those who make themselves available.

**Because where the wind lands, all flesh will find its voice.**

**All flesh.**

### **STILL SPEAKING**

And the crowd begins to murmur.

At this point, Peter stands—and he doesn't try to explain away the moment. Instead, he's naming what's really happening. And that's why he speaks from the prophet Joel: “This is what the prophet Joel told us to expect”—God's Spirit poured out on every kind of person (cf. Joel 2:28–29; Acts 2:16–18).

But central to the sermon he preaches to them is his reminder that this Spirit comes from God by the promise of Jesus. Because just one chapter earlier—in Acts 1:8—he told them to wait in Jerusalem. And he assures them: “You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses” (Acts 1:8).

And it's Pentecost that tells us that promise is kept.

The same Christ who was crucified rose from the grave—and now, in the Spirit’s power and in the Spirit’s arrival, has multiplied his life. He’s multiplied his faith. He’s multiplied his mission—poured out onto all kinds of people, in all kinds of places.

So this isn’t some historical one-off, some one-hit wonder.

It’s the beginning of a Spirit-filled movement carried forward by people who are willing to speak—and willing to hear.

And that’s what it means to be a witness: to speak the truth of God’s salvation in Jesus with your life, and to listen. To listen for how the same Spirit that can give you voice to say that is also speaking through others—in ways you don’t expect but are remarkably impactful.

We heard from Sebastian this morning. He’s a witness—not just because he represents Gideons International, but because he has seen how this wind of the Spirit has brought the Word to land where no one expected, and seen it germinate and take root and grow. In the motor pool. In a prison cell. In that drawer that’s opened at 2 a.m. in a hotel, when you can’t sleep—and the person who opens the book doesn’t even know it’s going to change their life.

He is seeing what Peter saw: how the Spirit brings the Word into our hearing right where we need it most.

And he reminds us that the church isn’t born just with the breath to speak, but with the ears to hear.

The church didn’t begin with the most polished sermon in the world. It didn’t have all of its programming laid out just so. It began with waiting. And with people who heard God speak—and then dared to believe it.

What if we lived like the Spirit moves like that?

What if our greatest calling isn’t always to have the right words in our back pocket—but instead to be witnesses?

To speak when the Spirit gives us voice.

To wait when silence is holy.

To listen when others carry God’s Word to us.

And to join the Spirit’s work—wherever the wind has landed.

**Wherever the wind lands, we are witnesses.**

## **THE TABLE AND THE WIND**

What filled that upper room wasn’t just some sort of noisy event. It was not a divine flex.

It was more elemental than that. It was more essential than that. It was life. Breath. And it stayed with those who waited there.

In Hebrew, the word is *ruach* (רוּחַ). In Greek, it’s *pneuma* (πνεῦμα). But both mean breath, wind, Spirit. One word saying that the breath, that same Spirit that hovered and brooded over the waters

in creation (cf. Gen 1:2)—the breath that animated all of life—now hovers over the gathered body of Christ. And where it lands, it inhabits.

“All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit,” Luke tells us (Acts 2:4). And Jesus assures us: “The Spirit of truth... will be in you” (John 14:17).

I can still remember how long the wait was in the delivery room with each of my three sons, who are here today. That moment when I stood there staring—sort of aghast—at Jeanell’s courage and what she had just endured. And the silence, except for the *whack, whack, whack, whack, whack* of the nurses on the baby’s back. And that bulb, sniffing to suck out all the mucus—until the baby breathes for the first time.

And you hear that cry.

The church’s first breath comes from God’s lungs. And we’ve been growing and breathing that air ever since.

That’s what the Spirit still does. It doesn’t just stir the air. It grows. It doesn’t just move through us. It stays in us.

The Spirit doesn’t come to heighten our emotions. The Spirit comes to shape our lives as witnesses. That same Spirit who created a new community at Pentecost sustains us. We remember it at this table today.

And for some, sitting right here, the Spirit may be calling you to something new. Perhaps calling you to life in Jesus. If you’ve never made that decision—or if you’ve quietly known for a while that it’s time to say yes—then let the wind root something where it has landed in you today.

We’re going to sing a hymn together at the end of the service. It’s going to be an enthusiastic one. Find your way forward and declare that decision with us—whether it’s to seek baptism, to join this church, or to step forward in faith.

That’s one invitation.

The other is prepared for us now.

We’ll come to this table. And here we’re not just going to remember—we’re going to receive. Because the same Spirit that gave breath to the church inhabits these gifts. The fire settles into bread. The wind slows into the breath of our praise and prayer across the room.

Because here, what was scattered has been gathered.  
And here is where the body is made one.  
Here is where the Spirit says: *This is for you.*

You don’t have to be perfect.  
You don’t have to be eloquent.  
You only have to be open and available to receive.

**The wind has landed. And the church is alive.**

**Come to the table.**