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empowered by the Spirit

LIFE
GROUPS
WEEK 4 • FEB 2

NORTHSHORE'S COMPELLING STATEMENT

Hope changes everything.

ICE BREAKER

Would you rather live for a year in a foreign city or a year in a cabin in the woods?

BACKGROUND

Pentecost is the Greek word for the Jewish feast day, called the Feast of Weeks or the Feast of Ingathering. This was one of seven required feasts commanded by God in the Law of Moses. For this feast they were told to wait seven weeks from the day they sacrificed the Passover lamb, forty-nine days. Then, on the fiftieth day they celebrated Pentecost. During the ceremony the priests took the first fruits of the wheat harvest and baked two loaves, made with yeast, which were lifted as a wave offering to God. Yeast, or leaven, was symbolic of sin. Of all the ceremonial offerings, these two loaves were the only made with leaven. Why? And why two loaves? The historical significance goes back to the first Passover, when Israel was delivered from Egypt. It was symbolized by eating unleavened bread and sacrificing the Passover lamb.

The Passover bread was unleavened because it signified the sinless body of Christ, who being without sin, became sin for our sakes. The two loaves of Pentecost were symbolic of Israel in whom was the leaven of sin. After the arrival of the Holy Spirit, the church recognized the loaves as the two bodies from which the church was formed; the Jews and the Gentiles. The yeast in the loaves reminds us that the Church, the body of Christ, is not made out of perfect people. It is made up of imperfect people who still battle the old sin nature.

After Jesus died for the sins of the world, He rose from the dead, and spent forty days with His followers. Right before He ascended to Heaven, He instructed the disciples to wait in Jerusalem until they would receive the Holy Spirit. This promise was fulfilled and the Church was born on the fiftieth day following the sacrifice of *the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world* (John 1:29).

REVIEW

What was meaningful from the above context or the sermon from last Sunday?



KEY VERSES: Acts 2:11b

"... we hear them telling in our own tongues the mighty works of God."

READ: Acts 2:1-13



HEAD LEVEL: These help us to examine what the Word tells us.

1. What three signs accompanied the Spirit's arrival?
2. What did the Jewish pilgrims in Jerusalem hear the Christians speaking about? How were they able to understand them?
3. What was the nature of the languages that were heard by the pilgrims (verse 11)?

DEEPER DISCOVERY

In the Old Covenant, the loaves offered to God represented the first fruits of the harvest. How has this Old Covenant symbolism been fulfilled through what began at Pentecost?

- a. James 1:18
- b. 2 Thessalonians 2:13
- c. 1 Corinthians 15:20-23

In what way does Pentecost fulfill this promise of what Jesus would do (Luke 3:16)?



HEART LEVEL: These help us wrestle with what we believe.

1. What reasons can you think of for the Holy Spirit to come in such a dramatic and noticeable way?
2. What different reactions came from the people in the crowd?
3. What does the crowd's reactions teach you about what you may experience when you express your faith in Jesus Christ to those who do not know Him?



HANDS LEVEL: These help us commit to a next step and live it out in our everyday lives.

1. To what extent do you experience the Holy Spirit filling and overflowing from your life? What does that look like?
2. Have you experienced someone rejecting or making fun of you for your Christian witness or the way you express your faith in Jesus Christ?
 - How did you react to this? Would you like to go back and change your response?
 - What wisdom have you gained from this?



MEMORY VERSE: James 1:18

He chose to give us birth through the word of truth, that we might be a kind of first fruits of all He created.

PRAYER REQUESTS

(Please remember that these requests are confidential and need to stay within the group.)