

## Sermon Title: What Makes a Great Church?

Sermon by Pastor Tom Harrington  
Week of May 23, 2010

### Sermon Based Small Group Discussion Guide

**Big Idea:** A truly dynamic church is faithful, welcoming, and impacting the community.

#### Icebreaker

**Sermon Text:** *When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. <sup>2</sup>Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. <sup>3</sup>They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. <sup>4</sup>All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.*

<sup>5</sup>Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven. <sup>6</sup>When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard them speaking in his own language. <sup>7</sup>Utterly amazed, they asked: "Are not all these men who are speaking Galileans? <sup>8</sup>Then how is it that each of us hears them in his own native language?<sup>9</sup>Parthians, Medes and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, <sup>10</sup>Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome <sup>11</sup>(both Jews and converts to Judaism); Cretans and Arabs—we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues!" <sup>12</sup>Amazed and perplexed, they asked one another, "What does this mean?"

<sup>13</sup>Some, however, made fun of them and said, "They have had too much wine."

<sup>14</sup>Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd: "Fellow Jews and all of you who live in Jerusalem, let me explain this to you; listen carefully to what I say. <sup>15</sup>These men are not drunk, as you suppose. It's only nine in the morning! <sup>16</sup>No, this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel:

<sup>17</sup>"In the last days, God says,  
I will pour out my Spirit on all people.  
Your sons and daughters will prophesy,  
your young men will see visions,  
your old men will dream dreams.

<sup>18</sup>Even on my servants, both men and women,  
I will pour out my Spirit in those days,  
and they will prophesy.

<sup>19</sup>I will show wonders in the heaven above  
and signs on the earth below,  
blood and fire and billows of smoke.

<sup>20</sup>The sun will be turned to darkness  
and the moon to blood  
before the coming of the great and glorious day of the Lord.

<sup>21</sup>And everyone who calls  
on the name of the Lord will be saved.

The disciples were transformed by the presence and power of the Holy Spirit. Read the passages below to see how they acted before the coming of the Holy Spirit.

<sup>25</sup>As Simon Peter stood warming himself, he was asked, "You are not one of his disciples, are you?" He denied it, saying, "I am not." <sup>26</sup>One of the high priest's servants, a relative of the man whose ear Peter had cut off, challenged him, "Didn't I see you with him in the olive grove?" <sup>27</sup>Again Peter denied it, and at that moment a rooster began to crow. - **John 18:25-27**

<sup>19</sup>On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jews... - **John 20:19**

**Luke 24:44-49** says of Jesus, <sup>44</sup>He said to them, "This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms." <sup>45</sup>Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. <sup>46</sup>He told them, "This is what is written: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, <sup>47</sup>and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. <sup>48</sup>You are witnesses of these things. <sup>49</sup>I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city

*until you have been clothed with power from on high."*

In what way does **Acts 2** reflect the fulfillment of God's promise in v. 49 of this passage?

Because Jesus died and rose to new life, the Holy Spirit now lives in all God's people. He is the One who makes them new, teaches them, and gives them freedom for a new life. What is the main idea or teaching about the Holy Spirit in each of the following passages of Scripture?

*<sup>15</sup>"If you love me, you will obey what I command. <sup>16</sup>And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever - <sup>17</sup>the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you." - Jn. 14:15-17*

Main idea:

*<sup>16</sup>"So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature. <sup>17</sup>For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other, so that you do not do what you want. <sup>18</sup>But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under law. <sup>19</sup>The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; <sup>20</sup>idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions <sup>21</sup>and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God. <sup>22</sup>But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, <sup>23</sup>gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. <sup>24</sup>Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires. <sup>25</sup>Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. <sup>26</sup>Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other." - Galatians 5:16-26*

Main idea:

*"The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God. <sup>11</sup>For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the man's spirit within him? In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God*

*except the Spirit of God. <sup>12</sup>We have not received the spirit of the world but the Spirit who is from God, that we may understand what God has freely given us. <sup>13</sup>This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, expressing spiritual truths in spiritual words. <sup>14</sup>The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned." - 1 Corinthians 2:10-14*

Main idea:

When are you aware of the presence and power of the Holy Spirit? Check as many as apply:

- Reading the Bible
- Sharing in a group like this
- In praise and worship
- Praying with friends
- Alone with God
- Spending time in nature
- Creating something
- Telling someone about Jesus
- Other:

How does the ministry of the Holy Spirit impact you?

In the space below write down one quality that you think makes great churches so appealing. Be prepared to explain why you chose the quality you did.

How did God lead you to Northwest Baptist Church (and/or this group)?

I think one strength of Northwest Baptist Church is:

I think one "growing edge" of Northwest Baptist Church is:

What does Northwest most need? Do you have a vision or a dream for our church? (See Acts 2:17)

To proclaim means “to declare something publicly.” To demonstrate means “to show the validity of something.” What happens when a church shifts from “proclamation alone” to “proclamation with demonstration?”

How can the Good News be demonstrated to people far from God - those outside the walls of the church?

It’s been said that the Church of Jesus Christ gathers to worship and then scatters to serve. Is this repeating pattern of worship and service true of the members of Northwest as a whole? Of you personally?

Taking it Home

1. Can the members of your group agree about something our church needs and pray together about it?
2. What is your next step as a disciple of Jesus Christ? Is there a specific action you might take with the help of the Holy Spirit and the support of your group?

Prayer Requests and Praises: