

SERMON TITLE: "The Promise for You and Your Children"
SERMON TEXT: Acts 2:1-6, 14a, 22-24, 37-42
PREACHER: Rev. Kim James
OCCASION: June 9, 2019, (Pentecost & VBS Wrap-Up) at First UMC

INTRODUCTION

We had a really great week at Vacation Bible School, and the children have done a good job sharing with you about the Bible stories they learned each day. The Bible has so many wonderful stories of challenges and faith. Over and over again, the stories of the Bible remind us that, when life is wild, unfair, scary, changing, sad—or even good—God is good!

PENTECOST

The story that Jonathan read to us from Acts chapter two wasn't included in our five days of Vacation Bible School. But I wanted him to read it to us today because, on the church calendar, today is a very **special holiday known as Pentecost**. The day of Pentecost was an amazing day when the Holy Spirit came with power on the Christian believers.

Kids, do you remember the rain on Wednesday and the wind on Thursday? The stormy weather made it hard to play our Bible School games outside, so we had to change and come indoors. Well, on the Day of Pentecost a long time ago, the disciples were indoors too, but the really strong wind blew in through the windows.

And do you remember the Vacation Bible School story when we had the campfires to roast the quail birds that God sent for us to eat? Well, on the Day of Pentecost, God sent fire like lightning from the sky. The Holy Spirit came on the disciples' heads like flames of fire. That's why so many of us are wearing orange or red clothes today. We want to remember the Day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit came like fire.

Sometimes wind and fire can be dangerous. But in the Bible story in Acts chapter two, we see that, when the Holy Spirit came with wind and fire, it was mostly to help **get the people's attention**. It

was kind of like when God punished the Egyptian Pharaoh with all those plagues. Do you remember the blood in the water, the frogs, gnats, flies, dead livestock, boils, hail, locusts, and darkness? After all those plagues, Pharaoh still said, No, the Israelites couldn't leave. But after plague #10, when God struck down the Egyptians' firstborn children, then finally the Pharaoh paid attention and listened to the message from God. **Pharaoh changed his mind** and let the Israelites have an **exodus** to freedom.

On the Day of Pentecost, something similar happened. Through wind and flames and a variety of languages, God got the attention of the Jews living and visiting in Jerusalem. God spoke to them through Peter's sermon, and they were "**cut to the heart.**" That means they felt bad in their hearts because they had crucified Jesus. They said they were sorry for all the wrong things they had done.

Do you kids remember what we did in Vacation Bible School on Thursday? We held a **stone** in our hands and thought about things we had done wrong. Then we dropped that stone at the foot of Jesus' cross and **asked Jesus to forgive us** for our sins.

On the Day of Pentecost, Peter told the Jewish people that they could be forgiven in the name of Jesus Christ and **receive the gift of the Holy Spirit**. Peter told them that this **promise was for them and for their children**. Through believing in Jesus, they could save themselves from the sins of their generation.

On that Day of Pentecost, **3000 people heard and responded** to that message. Three thousand people asked God to forgive their sins. They were baptized in the name of Jesus, and they received the gift of the Holy Spirit. They came together as a **brand new community of believers**, studying the Christian faith, sharing in meals, and praying together. They kept coming together because they never wanted to forget the important promise that God made them.

Kids, do you remember on Friday, how the **Israelites crossed the Jordan** River on dry ground? Remember, the river was so big and deep that it was flooding? There was no way we were going to be able to cross over into the Promised Land. But as soon as the priests carried the Ark of the Covenant

into the river, God stopped the water and held it back. Just like at the Red Sea, God made us a safe path through the water. Kids, do you remember how we picked up a stone from the river bed to **build a memorial**? We stacked up the stones so we would always remember the good things that God did to help us reach the Promised Land.

Even now, in our time, we celebrate the Day of Pentecost for this same reason. Every year, in late May or early June, we think about the **wind and fire** and remind ourselves of the good things that God does for us through Jesus' forgiveness of our sins and through the power of the Holy Spirit. Fifty days after Easter, we **wear red and orange** clothes and remember that God's promise of salvation is still available for us and for our children.

CONCLUSION

Three thousand is really a big number of people. Because such a large number of people repented of their sins and believed in Jesus on that one day, the Day of Pentecost is often remembered as the day the church was born. The Day of Pentecost is often called the **birthday of the church**.

So I have a piece of cake here and a birthday candle. I'm going to light the candle on fire, like the fire of Pentecost. And I want **Dayton and Dallas Fain** to come up here and help me. They're twins, and today is their birthday. They are 10 years old today. So Dayton and Dallas are sharing their birthday with the birthday of the Christian church.

I invite you all to join with me in **singing "Happy Birthday"** to the Church, to Dallas, and to Dayton. And then, with a great big Pentecost wind, the boys can blow out the candle for us.

Prayer

Thank you, God, for the Pentecost Day birthday of the Christian church. Thank you for forgiveness through Jesus and for the gift of the Holy Spirit. Thank you for this promise for us and for our children. Amen.