



**SPRING-TIME DAILY ENCOURAGEMENTS**

**Carstairs-Bancroft United Church**

*May 30, 2023*



Photo: Our Daily Bread

## WHAT ONLY THE SPIRIT CAN DO

*All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.*

Acts 2:4

**READ Acts 2:1 - 13**

During the discussion of a book on the Holy Spirit written by a ninety-four-year-old German theologian named Jürgen Moltmann, an interviewer asked him: “How do you activate the Holy Spirit? Can you take a pill? Do the pharmaceutical companies [deliver the Spirit]?” Moltmann’s bushy eyebrows shot up. Shaking his head, he grinned, answering in accented English. “What can I do? Don’t do anything. Wait on the Spirit, and the Spirit will come.”

Moltmann highlighted our mistaken belief that our energy and expertise make things happen. Acts reveals that God makes things happen. At the start of the church, it had nothing to do with human strategy or impressive leadership. Rather, the Spirit arrived “like the blowing of a violent wind” into a room of frightened, helpless, and bewildered disciples (2:2). Next, the Spirit shattered all ethnic superiorities by gathering people who were at odds into one new community. The disciples were as shocked as anyone to see what God was doing within them. They didn’t make anything happen; “the Spirit enabled them” (v. 4).

The church—and our shared work in the world—isn’t defined by what we can do. We’re entirely dependent on what only the Spirit can do. This allows us to be both bold and restful. On this day—the day we celebrate Pentecost—may we wait for the Spirit and respond.

**By Winn Collier**

### **PRAY & REFLECT**

**God, I've exhausted myself by believing that I must make things happen. Holy Spirit, come and help me. Amen**

How are you tempted to rely on your own efforts or tenacity? Where do you need to wait for what the Spirit can do?

### **SCRIPTURE INSIGHT**

Pentecost, mentioned here in Acts 2:1, was always celebrated fifty days after the first Sunday following Passover. It served as a centerpiece of Jewish worship and occurred during the Festival of Weeks (see Leviticus 23:15 - 21). Elsewhere, it's referred to as the "Festival of Harvest" (Exodus 23:16) and the "day of firstfruits" (Numbers 28:26). The Pentecost in Acts 2 occurred on the fiftieth day after the resurrection of Jesus. It's significant that the Holy Spirit descended upon the apostles on this Day of Pentecost. They were the "firstfruits" of the new covenant God was implementing through His Son, Jesus (see Romans 8:23). Pentecost is a prime example of how the Old Testament points to Jesus and His work in our behalf on the cross. — By **Tim Gustafson**

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