The Promise Of The Holy Spirit (Joel 2:28,29).

Introduction
On July 4, 1776, England’s King George III recorded the following in his diary: “Nothing important happened today.” How wrong he was.
Some people think nothing important happened on Pentecost in Acts 2. How wrong they are. The Holy Spirit came on Pentecost as God promised through the prophet Joel.

Message
1. The Holy Spirit came to us as God.
   God said, “I will pour out my Spirit” (Joel 2:28). The Holy Spirit is more than a higher power.
   a. He has characteristics of personality.
      What are traits of personality? The power to know, to feel, and to will — to name only three. The Holy Spirit has the power to know (1 Corinthians 2:10). He certainly has feelings (Ephesians 4:30).
      And He has a will (Acts 13:1–3).
   b. He performs acts only God can do.
      The Spirit of God created (Genesis 1:2); He raised the dead (Romans 8:11); He drove out demons (Matthew 12:28); and the Holy Spirit convicts of sin (John 16:8). These are acts only God can do.
      **Illustration:** An atheist was badgering a Sunday school boy. “Hey, Sonny, show me where God is and I’ll give you an apple.
      “Mister, show me where God ain’t and I’ll give you a bushel of apples!” The Holy Spirit is everywhere, and He is God.

2. The Holy Spirit came to us as promised.
   “I will pour out my Spirit” (Joel 2:28). Let’s learn that:
   a. God knows what we need.
      Many things in life are nice; a few things are necessary. The Holy Spirit living in our lives falls into the second category without a doubt (Romans 8:1–9).
   b. God knows how to meet our needs.
      There is a significant difference between knowing what someone needs and knowing how to meet that need. The Bible assures us that God is able both to will and to do His work in us (Philippians 2:13).
      **Illustration:** In Mark 5, Jesus demonstrated that He was not only willing to help but also able to help. He raised Jairus’ daughter from the dead.

3. The Holy Spirit came to us as a friend.
   “I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh.” Since it was our loving Lord who poured out His Spirit on all flesh, we must conclude that the Holy Spirit came to us as a friend.
   a. A friend to convict us.
      What a desperate condition every believer would be in if it were not for the faithful conviction of the Holy Spirit (Psalm 119:67).
      **Illustration:** A man had a rust spot on his car and foolishly covered it with paint. It looked great for 2 months. Then the rust ate through. How much wiser he would have been to get rid of the rust and then paint.
      The Holy Spirit convicts us to get the sin out of us. The devil points out sin to condemn us; the Holy Spirit points out sin to cleanse us.
   b. A friend to comfort us.
      Jesus called the Holy Spirit the Comforter (John 16:7). The Holy Spirit gives us God’s strength, which becomes our powerful comfort.

Conclusion
A child can easily bend a plastic straw. However, place a large nail in that straw and not even a strong man can bend it.
Life without the Holy Spirit is like that empty straw. God sent His Spirit to lead us to Christ so His all-sufficient power could stand like steel in each of us.
Do you have Jesus in your heart? If not, invite Him in today. If you know Christ as Savior, then depend upon God’s Spirit. He came as promised, and He will fulfill the promises of God in your life.
Thomas Lindberg, D.Min., is pastor of First Assembly of God, Memphis, Tennessee.

Introduction
A commercial for the American Express card reminds, “Don’t leave home without it.” In essence, Jesus said to His followers about the Holy Spirit, “Don’t begin your work for me without Him” (Acts 1:4).

How may a believer be baptized in the Holy Spirit, which is distinct from and subsequent to salvation? Jesus gave some essentials in John 7.

Message
1. We must desire after Christ.
   “If anyone thirsts” (John 7:37). Thirsting implies a desire. We need to:
   a. Desire to know Christ (see Philippians 3:10).
      As we desire to know Christ, God baptizes us in the Holy Spirit, whose ministry is to reveal the fullness of the person and passion of Jesus (John 14:26).
   b. Desire to be used by Christ.
      The baptism in the Holy Spirit is not for cleansing from sin but giving power for service. The person who desires to be baptized in the Spirit needs to offer himself to God for His use.
      Illustration: Due to the corrosive effect of the salty ocean air, the Golden Gate Bridge is continually being painted. Painters start at one end and continue until they reach the other end. Then they start over.
      As that bridge continually needs painting, God is continually looking for believers who desire to be used by Him. These He baptizes in the Holy Spirit.

2. We must come to Christ.
   “Let him come unto me” (John 7:37).
   It’s wrong to desire the gift more than the Giver (Acts 8:18–21).
   a. Who may come to Christ?
      Some teach that the Baptism is only for selected believers, but Acts 2:39 states otherwise.
      Only a handful of people could take that opportunity. However, all can be baptized in the Holy Spirit.
   b. How should we come to Christ?
      We must come with:
      (1) Selflessness in will (Luke 1:38).
      (2) Holiness in heart (Psalm 24:3).
      (4) Brokenness in spirit (Psalm 51:17).

3. We must receive from Christ.
   “Let him come to me and drink” (John 7:37). Drinking implies receiving. The baptism in the Holy Spirit is marked by:
   a. The initial sign of tongues.
      All believers possess the Holy Spirit (Romans 8:9). The baptism in the Holy Spirit is God receiving greater control of the believer. Speaking in tongues is the initial sign (Acts 2:4; 9:17; 10:46; 1 Corinthians 14:18).
   b. The ongoing life of power.
      We dare not reduce the baptism in the Holy Spirit to a date on the calendar; it is an ongoing life of power (Ephesians 5:18).

Conclusion
A short distance upstream from Niagara Falls boats skim across the river that feeds the mighty falls. As the river nears the falls, there is a bridge with a sign attached which asks boaters two vital questions: “Do you have an anchor on board? Do you know how to use it?”

Let me ask you two vital questions about your Christian life: “Have you been baptized in the Holy Spirit? Are you using His power in your life daily?”

Thomas Lindberg, D.Min., is pastor of First Assembly of God, Memphis, Tennessee.
The Purpose Of The Holy Spirit In The Church (1 Corinthians 12–14).

Introduction
A complaint letter arrived at a large department store. While typing a reply, a secretary planned to say, “We take a real interest in our customers.” However, she inadvertently wrote, “We fake a real interest in our customers.”

God takes a real interest in His church. He placed His Spirit in the church and with purpose.

Message
1. The Holy Spirit creates a diverse church (1 Corinthians 12:4–6).
   A diverse church does not mean a divided church. Diversity in the church through the Spirit is a strength, not a weakness.
   Illustration: The richness of a symphony depends upon its diversity of instruments. When each is tuned to a standard note, the diversity of instruments blend to make beautiful music.
   So it is with believers. Each has a Spirit-given role, and when each one is tuned to Jesus a church has beautiful ministry.

2. The Holy Spirit desires a united church (1 Corinthians 12:7).
   Church unity is based on two fundamentals: the ministry of the Word of God and the unity from the Holy Spirit. After the Day of Pentecost the disciples devoted themselves to doctrine (Word of God) and fellowship (Spirit of God) continually (Acts 2:42).
   The Holy Spirit grants unity, and we are to maintain it (Ephesians 4:3). Remember:
   a. Division in a church degrades the ministry of the Word of God.
   b. Division in a church disrupts the unity of the Spirit of God.

3. The Holy Spirit produces a loving church (1 Corinthians 13).
   A church without love is a contradiction of terms. As people yield to God, any church will enjoy the love of the Spirit (Romans 15:30).
   Illustration: A large quantity of radioactive material was stolen from a hospital. The hospital security notified the police and said, “Please warn the thief that he is carrying death with him.”
   The church does not carry death. We carry the Holy Spirit, who produces life and love.

4. The Holy Spirit makes a supernatural church (1 Corinthians 14:25).
   The Holy Spirit performs the supernatural works of God (Ezekiel 37:9; Zechariah 4:6). As people are filled with the Holy Spirit, signs and wonders follow (Acts 6:5,8).
   Example: What was the proof that Elisha possessed the spirit of Elijah? There were supernatural miracles (2 Kings 2). What is the proof that a church possesses the Spirit of God? The supernatural power of God will be present to transform lives.

5. The Holy Spirit empowers worship (1 Corinthians 14:26).
   Scholars debate the precise meaning of this verse, but there is a consensus that the Early Church was a worshiping church, and the Holy Spirit was the driving force.
   If our worship is solely based on spirit, we may become imbalanced. If based merely on truth, we may become inflexible. When we follow Jesus and “worship in spirit and in truth” (John 4:24), our churches become strong.

Conclusion
When explorer Roald Amundsen reached the North Pole, he released a homing pigeon. When the bird arrived back at his home in Norway, his wife shouted, “Roald is still alive!”
   God has sent the Holy Spirit into the church. Let us shout, “God is still alive!”
   “Fulfill your purpose in us through Your Spirit, Lord.”

Thomas Lindberg, D.Min., is pastor of First Assembly of God, Memphis, Tennessee.