

Sermon notes. Pentecost 2026

Summary

Louise preached on Pentecost as the birth of the Church and described it as the moment when God transformed ordinary people through the power of the Holy Spirit. She emphasised that the Church did not begin through human planning, organisation, or strength, but through God's presence symbolised by wind and fire.

She focused on several major themes:

- waiting on God before Pentecost,
- the transforming power of the Holy Spirit,
- holiness and inward renewal,
- unity across cultures and personalities,
- the Church's calling to proclaim Jesus,
- devotion to teaching, fellowship, communion, and prayer,
- and the responsibility of Christians to carry God's love into the world.

Louise challenged the congregation not to become comfortable or merely religious, but to remain spiritually alive, prayerful, compassionate, and outward-looking. She concluded by urging believers to become "carriers of the fire" who revealed the presence of Jesus through love, courage, obedience and service.

Main Themes

1. Pentecost began with waiting

Before the dramatic coming of the Spirit, the disciples spent ten days waiting, praying, and trusting God after Jesus' ascension. Louise emphasised that much of the Christian life happened in the painful space between God's promises and their fulfilment. Waiting was portrayed not as inactivity, but as obedience and trust.

2. The Church was born by God, not human effort

Louise repeatedly contrasted human institutions with divine power. The disciples were ordinary, flawed people — fishermen, doubters, former tax collectors — yet God used them to transform the world. The Church succeeded not because of human brilliance, programmes, or strategy, but because "God breathed on it."

3. Fire symbolised God's presence and transformation

The "tongues of fire" at Pentecost were linked to earlier biblical moments:

- Moses and the burning bush
- Mount Sinai
- The pillar of fire in the wilderness

At Pentecost, however, the fire no longer destroyed or terrified; it rested gently on ordinary people. Louise said this symbolised God coming to dwell within His people. Fire also represented purification — God burning away pride, bitterness, compromise, and spiritual coldness in order to make believers more like Jesus.

4. Wind and breath represented new creation

The rushing wind was connected to:

- God breathing life into creation in Genesis
- Ezekiel's valley of dry bones
- Jesus breathing on the disciples after the resurrection

Pentecost was described as God breathing life into a “new humanity” — the Church as the living body of Christ in the world.

5. The Church had to keep Jesus central

Louise warned that churches could become busy with activities, politics, comfort, or reputation while forgetting Jesus Himself. Pentecost gave the Church a voice proclaiming one message above all: “Jesus Christ is Lord.” Whenever the Church spoke more clearly about other things than about Jesus, it lost its way.

6. Unity without uniformity

A major section reflected on the miracle of many languages at Pentecost. Louise stressed that the Holy Spirit did not erase cultures, personalities, or backgrounds. Instead, God created unity amid diversity. The gospel belonged neither to East nor West, rich nor poor, but to Jesus. The Church therefore had to resist division and welcome all kinds of people.

7. Peter as an example of transformation

Peter, who had denied Jesus three times, was transformed by the Holy Spirit into a bold preacher. Louise highlighted this as evidence that the Spirit restored broken and fearful people and gave them courage.

8. The marks of the early Church

Acts 2 described believers devoted to:

- Apostolic teaching
- Fellowship
- Breaking bread (communion)
- Prayer

Louise expanded each point:

- **Teaching** shaped lives deeply, not superficially.

- **Fellowship** meant genuine shared life, not shallow politeness.
- **Communion** kept believers centred on Christ's sacrifice.
- **Prayer** functioned as the Church's spiritual breath and source of power.

9. Christians were called to carry the fire

Louise ended with a challenge: the Holy Spirit was not given merely for private spiritual experiences, but so believers could love and serve others. Christians were urged to notice lonely people, encourage the hurting, care for the lost, and carry Christ's presence into the world.

Conclusion

The overall message was that Pentecost was not merely a historical event but an ongoing reality. God still desired:

- a praying Church,
- a holy and compassionate people,
- unity across differences,
- courage to proclaim Jesus,
- and believers who were spiritually alive rather than merely religious.

Louise concluded by calling listeners to become "carriers of the fire" — people through whom the love, compassion, and presence of Jesus became visible in the world.