

PENTECOST

May 24, 2015

Acts 2:1-21 (portions): **“The Miracle of Pentecost”**

- I. *The Day of Pentecost*
- II. *Are You Filled?*
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Acts 2:1-21 (portions)

Dear Friends in Christ,

This is Pentecost Sunday, the fiftieth day after Easter. For the Jewish people it was the second great festival of the church year. For the beginning New Testament church it would become a defining moment empowering and moving once cowardly disciples to become bold witnesses.

Pentecost. What goes through your mind when you think of that word? Depending on your relationship with others, maybe a so-called separate Baptism in the Holy Spirit. Maybe tongues or great miracles. Or, how about everyday Christians versus super Christians?

What does it mean for us?

THE MIRACLE OF PENTECOST

I. The Day of Pentecost.

When the day of Pentecost arrived, they were all together in one place. And suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. And divided tongues as of fire appeared to them and rested on each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance. (vss. 1-4)

You do understand that this is a one time event, right? "Mighty rushing wind...divided tongues of fire...rested on each of them...filled with the Holy Spirit...tongues." Oh, wait a minute. Just a minute. It's that "filled with the Holy Spirit" that gets our attention, because that was not a one time event. That's what Jesus promised to the first disciples and, consequently, to all disciples: "But when the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth (that is, the Holy Spirit), who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness about me. And you also will bear witness . . ." (Jn. 15:26-27)

II. Are You Filled?

"...filled with the Holy Spirit...". Are you? Am I? Ever had anyone ask you that question? "Are you filled with the Holy Spirit?" How about this one: "Have you been baptized in or with the Holy Spirit?" Well, let's take a look at Scripture.

In his Pentecost sermon, Peter says, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off (that is, the generations to come from all over the world), everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself." (Acts 2:38,39) Got it? Repent **plus** be baptized for the forgiveness of sins **results** in "the gift of the Holy Spirit." It's "the promise"!

Let's try this out: Remember Paul's conversion? And then the visit from Ananias? We're told: "So Ananias departed and entered the house. And laying his hands on him he said, 'Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus who appeared to you on the road by which you came has sent me so that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit.'" (Acts 9:17) Got it? Two things are going to happen. **One**, Paul is to receive his sight. **Two**, he is to be filled with the Holy Spirit. Well, it happened. Listen: "And immediately something like scales fell from his eyes, and he regained his sight. Then (and this is part two, the filling with the Holy Spirit) he rose and was baptized..." (Acts 9:18) - **filled with the Holy Spirit!**

Without question, there are many seemingly strange incidents reported in the Book of Acts where people were baptized and then received the Holy Spirit some time later - where some received the Holy Spirit and then were baptized - where people spoke in tongues when filled with the Holy Spirit - where people didn't speak in tongues when filled with the Holy Spirit. The Point? This is the beginning of the

New Testament church at the time of the Apostles. These incidents dramatically underscored that the Holy Spirit had been poured out on all flesh; Jews and unclean Gentiles alike.

Dear friends, if you have been baptized with water in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit you have received the Holy Spirit. You are filled with the Holy Spirit. You have been baptized in and with the Holy Spirit.

III. Continues.

And that's what happens here: They are "filled with the Holy Spirit" and, consequently, these once fearful men who had locked themselves in the Upper Room would become bold witnesses to the Christ. Remember, again, Jesus' words? "The Spirit of truth...will bear witness about me. And you also will bear witness."

Luther wrote:

The Holy Spirit thus penetrated their hearts that in one moment they had the right understanding of God and of His Son Jesus Christ, and understood the whole Scripture, and had such courage that they do not keep this understanding for themselves, but dare to confess it freely and openly... He comes down and fills the hearts of the disciples, who formerly sat there in grief and fear...that they become courageous, and preach freely of Christ and fear nothing.

Listen. Jesus said, "When (the Holy Spirit) comes, he will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment: concerning sin, because they do not believe in me; concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father...concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged." (Jn. 16:8-11)

The point for us this morning is that it is the Holy Spirit's work to convict people of sin and bring people to faith. And He does that through specific Means; Means of Grace - Word (written and spoken) and the Sacraments (that is, the Word made visible). Paul writes, "So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ." (Rom 10:17) That's simple, isn't it? But now lost on the vast majority of what calls itself "church". And this: "the gospel (the Word) is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes..." (Rom 1:16)

IV. Through Us.

But remember this: It's the church's responsibility and privilege to take the Word into all the world. The Great Commission can never be lost on us, regardless of how this world sees the church! "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations..." has not been set aside. It is not to be softened! And it isn't entertainment, and fun and games. Remember how we are to make disciples? "Baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." And this: "teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you." (Matthew 28:19,20) Baptizing and teaching, says Jesus. The Word - everything centers around the Word; the Scriptures.

And this from our text:

"And I will show wonders in the heavens above and signs on the earth below, blood, and fire, vapor of smoke; the sun shall be turned to darkness and the moon to blood, before the day of the Lord comes, the great and magnificent day. And it shall come to pass that everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." (Acts 2:19-21 [Joel 2:28-32])

There it is: "...everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." This is the reason we are still on the earth. This is the emphasis of the Book of Acts. The salvation of souls. Empowered disciples, filled with the Word of Christ going after those without Him. Disciples who experienced the trials and pressures of this life and went after lost souls.

Recall these words of Peter: "And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved." (Acts 4:12) Do you know where Peter made that statement? In front of the very enemies of Christ - Annas and Caiaphas!

In the eighth chapter of Acts we have the account of the great persecution that broke out against the beginning New Testament church. We're told, "Now those who were scattered went about preaching the word." (Acts 8:4) Who was scattered? The people. People like us - everyday people with everyday concerns and problems; and with that, persecution.

They preached because they were empowered by the Word. They preached because eternal souls were at stake. They preached because they were blessed by the work of the Holy Spirit through the Word - blessed with forgiveness of every sin and the promise of eternal life through faith in Christ.

It's the same Word and Holy Spirit that works with us. And it's basically the same world. Just a whole lot messier. It's the Miracle of Pentecost. What will we do with it?

Amen.

Pastor Bill Abbott