

## Be a witness - the Spirit Speaks

Last week we examined what God's word says to us regarding our need to wait upon the Holy Spirit. We came to the conclusion that we MUST relate to the Holy Spirit in totality - as He comes alongside to convict, teach, and comfort; as He fills us, sanctifies us, seals us; as He moves upon us, overtakes us, to propel us by His holy momentum - or else we are quite unusable.

This is born out of an urging of the Holy Spirit upon my heart to re-orient us on the dynamo of our every work that we commit to the Lord.

What is the motor that drives our work? The Holy Spirit.

Oh, that we would collectively as a gathering of called out ones purpose in our hearts to shun dead orthodoxy in favor of a posture that is yielded and obedient to God's Word and God's Spirit.

Scary, yes - because of the unknown. Uncomfortable, perhaps - because we are called to stretch and grow. The Spirit calls us to do His work - a work that we seldom feel qualified for, and at the same time we feel responsible for the success of.

Nevertheless, we are called to this - to have intimate fellowship with the Father, Son, and Spirit.

But what happens when we receive the Spirit. If we have been obedient to wait for the Holy Spirit. To listen for His voice and His direction.

We can gain some understanding from God's Word. We turn again to Acts 2.

You will recall that in Acts chapter 1 and in Luke 24 Jesus Christ commanded His disciples "not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father - the Holy Spirit, for then they would receive power from on high when the Holy Spirit came upon them..." (Acts 1:4-8)

In our text this morning we see the result of their waiting and their interaction with the Spirit's holy momentum.

V.1 It is interesting that God chooses Pentecost to pour out His Holy Spirit on the disciples/Apostles.

Understand that Pentecost is not a Christian invention - while the name pentecostal has been turned into an adjective and a noun in our day.

Pentecost means "fiftieth."

By the Hebrews - called the feast of weeks, since it was seven full weeks (49 days) from the Passover. We see it also referred to as the "the feast of harvest," and "the day of the firstfruits" (Num 28:26). Its distinguishing

feature was the offering of "two leavened loaves" made from the new corn of the completed harvest, which, with two lambs, were waved before the Lord as a thank offering. Free-will offerings were to be made to the Lord (De 16:10), and it was to be marked by a liberal spirit toward the Levite, the stranger, and orphans and widows

So we find that our God is a God of intention. As he designed the Old Testament to serve as a shadow of those things that would come, New Testament Pentecost fulfills, demonstrates the actual eternal purpose of Old Testament feast of the harvest.

And in a grand gesture He is going to show them what the Harvest actually is.

V.2-4 The Holy Spirit begins to speak through these men with other tongues - other languages that were unfamiliar to them. What would be the purpose?

To serve as a witness, to bring in the harvest. This wasn't unintelligible rambling but a language that meant something to the hearer. And whether or not this was a speaking miracle, or a hearing miracle, God was communicating, speaking, to the unsaved through His chosen instruments of service, in order to bring them into the kingdom.

V.5-13 The crowd respond.

There was a tremendous and diverse crowd in Jerusalem for the special day, Pentecost, the feast of the Harvest. It was one of the three major Jewish holidays where men were required to present themselves before the Lord to offer their sacrifices.

God breaks through the tradition, He shows up in a big way to bless his beloved creation. He isn't doing this for the benefit of the disciples/Apostles (although certainly they are blessed) - He is doing it for the eternal salvation of the hearer -- and that is how our God moves and operates today.

He uses us to do this!

What is the result? Many hear in a language they understand even while they are from many different places.

Why didn't God just do Hebrew? They were after all Jews and proselytes. They could've just spoken in their traditional religious tongue - the language of their faith.

God was communicating that this message, this gospel, the great news of His wonderful works was spreading to all people.

I heard Sandy Adams recently say of Christians that we are ambassadors. Certainly we accept that fact.

Paul says the same to the Corinthians - [2Co 5:20 NKJV]

Ambassadors have to know more than one language. We have to know our mother tongue, and for us that is the language of our heavenly citizenship, and we have to know the language of the land we are appealing to.

God gave these men supernatural gifts to do this work and the first thing they did was communicate an understandable, powerful message, of God's wonderful works to all who would hear.

We also see that not all respond positively. They believed the Apostles are just rambling and carrying on. They mocked the whole ordeal saying that these holy spirit empowered witnesses were drunk.

This will happen too. Not everybody will hear what God has given you to say even if it is inspired by the Holy Spirit.

Christ said many times in his teaching - He who has ears to hear, let him hear. The implication is that not everybody will hear the message and many may go away angry, upset, or frustrated by the good news. That is no concern of ours. We must move as the Holy Spirit moves.

William Still writes in his book, the Work of the Pastor:

“We are not called to make a crowd of worldly folk happy - even worldly evangelistic folk happy - but so to labor amongst them that, through many tribulations, discouragements and misunderstandings, we form a faithful people of God, however small a remnant of the total congregation that may be. There will be many opposers, some very surprising ones! I could bring ministers of various denominations to testify that, although the unconverted in their congregations made their lives miserable, the most fiendish persecutions have come from the evangelistic people who wanted perpetual preaching of that part of the gospel which they thought (often wrongly) did not touch them, and who, when the Word of God in its fullness was unleashed upon them, went virtually mad with rage.”

So God’s Word comes down to them by the Holy Spirit, through the saints, and what is the saints response in the face of mocking?

Steadfastness.

V.14-15 Peter begins to preach his very first sermon, supported by the other eleven men that have been set apart to the Apostolic office.

He says, we are not drunk, it’s only 9 o’clock in the morning! Interesting response.

V.16-21 And what does He do? He teaches God's word to them.

Remember this is all inspired by the Holy Spirit. Peter, sensitive to the Spirit, collected in his delivery, explains God's word to them. He has become a witness as Christ promised by the Holy Spirit.

He is not in some trance like state, with no motor function, no will power, no control. He is an active participant in the work of the harvest that God is bringing about in the hearts of this crowd.

Time prohibits us from continuing in the examination of Peter's sermon, but he faithfully and clearly communicates God's Word and the good news of redemption through Jesus Christ to this massive crowd. He beautifully brings the Old Testament scripture to bear in his message of Jesus Christ.

AND, the effective preaching of the word inspired by the Holy Spirit found place in the hearts of many. This is what we pray for in our every Spirit inspired encounter! Father, bring them into your kingdom once and for all!

SKIP TO V.37-41 - The result? Well, remember some mocked, perhaps went on their way, went about their business celebrating their religion, celebrating the feast of harvest without fully participating in the harvest.

But some were cut to the heart, they were moved to engage with the Spirit - what shall we do?

They found repentance and baptism in the name of Jesus Christ and they became the first manifestation of what we call the church - the ekklesia - the gathering of called out ones.

All because God's Spirit moved as He promised it would. And He still promises. We must be ready for this, we must be yielded to the Spirit, prepared to open our mouths in moments of Holy Spirit inspired utterance.

Paul warns the Thessalonians - do not quench the spirit (1 Thess 5:19).

This is a call to wait upon the Spirit and also speak when he moves us.

This is scary territory because we are used to suppressing our witness for one reason or the other. But what beauty awaits, what harvest awaits when we are moved by the Holy Spirit to do the works of our Father.

One last place I want to look to convey the urgency and importance of a relationship with the Spirit.

[1Jo 5:6-8 NKJV] ...it is the Spirit who bears witness, because the Spirit is truth. 7 For there are three that bear witness in heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one. 8 And there are three that bear witness on earth: the Spirit, the water, and the blood; and these three agree as one.



Finally, John, a partaker in this Acts 2 event, tells us that there are three that bear witness to the Gospel, to the glorious person and work of Jesus Christ both in heaven and in earth respectively. And these things mirror each other.

In heaven the threefold union of God bears witness - the Father, the Word (Jesus) and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

On earth God has purposed that three bear witness. We as the church partake in these three unto God's glory. As a matter of fact one could say that we are baptized, immersed into them, and so participate in this three fold earthly witness.

1. The Spirit (let us receive the Spirit of God!) it is the Spirit that seals, it is the spirit that comforts and convicts and teaches, it is the Spirit that moves.
2. The water - by our baptism we declare that we ourselves are the free-will offering just like the saints who received Christ on Pentecost; we ourselves share in Christ's death and resurrection, bearing witness to His sufferings and His resurrection;
3. The blood. Jesus' blood on the cross bears witness to the mighty work He has done to reconcile mankind to Himself. It is only by the blood of Christ, His atonement, that we share in the baptism of the water and the Spirit.

And inasmuch as we participate fully in these we are a witness to the wonderful works of God.

Lord, help us to be a complete witness on this earth. Help us to receive your Spirit. Help us to understand this and to do it! Spirit move us.