

Pentecost Sermon

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The church and Pentecost can't be separated. While the Holy Spirit exists as part of the God Head without human aid, the church is totally dependant on the Holy Spirit to exist at all.

Every reference describing the work of the church in scripture is tied in some way to the working of the Holy Spirit. Jesus said to the Disciples and the others present, about 120, to go and wait until you are imbued with power from on high; with the promised, Helper Paraclete, Comforter, Councelor, Holy Spirit.

Luke 24:49 (New Living Translation) ⁴⁹ “And now I will send the Holy Spirit, just as my Father promised. But stay here in the city until the Holy Spirit comes and fills you with power from heaven.”

Acts 1:8 (New Living Translation)⁸ But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you will be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhere—in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

Consider the situation. The disciples have been with Jesus for 3 years - learned at his feet - participated in His ministry. They experience the joy of Palm Sunday followed by the pain and disillusionment of the Crucifixion. Then when all seems lost **Jesus appears among them and the beginning of a new day arrives**. All the prophecies of the Old Testament begin to come to life and the Church is born. Born in the coming of the Holy Spirit and the only way it remains of service to God is to abide in the Holy Spirit. You can no more separate Pentecost from the Church than you can separate your Heart and Mind from your physical body. You can have a physical body that appears normal in every way but if the mind or heart aren't functioning properly your ability to do simple normal things are compromised and you may not have life at all.

So today our challenge is, How do we put ourselves in the position (as the 120 were) to be IN and OF the Holy Spirit? What a sad situation for a church to deny or limit the working of the Holy Spirit. The required elements to have that life are laid out in Jesus' teaching and in the Letters and Epistles of the New Testament.

The First Requirement is Believing Committed Christians.

It's a matter of becoming familiar with Jesus' teaching especially areas like the Sermon on the Mount and making an informed decision to believe and live life accordingly.

Go through the Beatitudes and you see traits that define the kind of people God would call His own.

Humility.

Compassion .

Reliance on God.

Deep enthusiastic desire to do the right thing.

Purity at heart.

Peacemakers.

Dauntless in the face of persecution.

The kind of people who help the needy like the Good Samaritan

People who take in orphans and widows

People who seek to perform the kind of ministries that Jesus did.

Healing, Deliverance, Teaching, Preaching.

I could go on, the list of the kinds of things that the people of God do and are naturally drawn too is long.

To sum it up, People of Faith-Hope-Love

The reason that I am bringing up these things that we do, and should do, is that all too often we get so caught up in doing good that we are less effective doing the MAIN THING which is GO and make disciples of all the nations

Matthew 28:18-20 (New Living Translation) ¹⁸ Jesus came and told his disciples, “I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth. ¹⁹ Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, ^[a] baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. ²⁰ Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”

If we look at the events of Pentecost we see in a nutshell how it works. We see committed Christians drawn together seeking, in obedience, to follow what Jesus has told them to do (that is, wait for the power from on high) not knowing what that really means. The Holy Spirit comes upon them and they are transformed into a force that witnessed to the Risen Savior in such a powerful way that lives were changed and the world is changed even unto today.

And here it gets difficult for many Christians. You see, we can't possible do what we are commanded to do without all the tools we are supposed to receive from the Holy Spirit and there is confusion and fear concerning the gifts. So lets consider what the scripture says about the Gifts of the Holy Spirit.

Isaiah 35:4-6 Say to those with fearful hearts, “Be strong, and do not fear, for your God is coming to destroy your enemies. He is coming to save you.”⁵ And when he comes, he will open the eyes of the blind and unplug the ears of the deaf. The lame will leap like a deer, and those who cannot speak will sing for joy! Springs will gush forth in the wilderness, and streams will water the wasteland.”

Isaiah 44:3³ “For I will pour out water to quench your thirst and to irrigate your parched fields. And I will pour out my Spirit on your descendants, and my blessing on your children.”

Joel 2:28-29 ^[e]“Then, after doing all those things, I will pour out my Spirit upon all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy. Your old men will dream dreams, and your young men will see visions. In those days I will pour out my Spirit even on servants—men and women alike.

Matt 3:11 “I baptize with^[d] water those who repent of their sins and turn to God. But someone is coming soon who is greater than I am—so much greater that I’m not worthy even to be his slave and carry his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire.^[e]

John 4 Jesus^[a] knew the Pharisees had heard that he was baptizing and making more disciples than John² (though Jesus himself didn’t baptize them—his disciples did).³ So he left Judea and returned to Galilee.

The Baptism of Jesus

Matt¹³ Then Jesus went from Galilee to the Jordan River to be baptized by John.¹⁴ But John tried to talk him out of it. “I am the one who needs to be baptized by you,” he said, “so why are you coming to me?”

¹⁵ But Jesus said, “It should be done, for we must carry out all that God requires.^[f]” So John agreed to baptize him.”

¹⁶ After his baptism, as Jesus came up out of the water, the heavens were opened^[g] and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and settling on him.¹⁷ And a voice from heaven said, “This is my dearly loved Son, who brings me great joy.”

Jesus repeatedly told people about His Baptism

To Nicodemus

John 3:3-6 Jesus replied, “I tell you the truth, unless you are born again,^[a] you cannot see the Kingdom of God.”

⁴ “What do you mean?” exclaimed Nicodemus. “How can an old man go back into his mother’s womb and be born again?”

⁵ Jesus replied, “I assure you, no one can enter the Kingdom of God without being born of water and the Spirit.^[b] ⁶ Humans can reproduce only human life, but the Holy Spirit gives birth to spiritual life.

Woman at the well

John 4:10-14 Jesus replied, “If you only knew the gift God has for you and who you are speaking to, you would ask me, and I would give you living water. ¹¹ “But sir, you don’t have a rope or a bucket,” she said, “and this well is very deep. Where would you get this living water? ¹² And besides, do you think you’re greater than our ancestor Jacob, who gave us this well? How can you offer better water than he and his sons and his animals enjoyed?” ¹³ Jesus replied, “Anyone who drinks this water will soon become thirsty again. ¹⁴ But those who drink the water I give will never be thirsty again. It becomes a fresh, bubbling spring within them, giving them eternal life.”

John 7:37-39 On the last day, the climax of the festival, Jesus stood and shouted to the crowds, “Anyone who is thirsty may come to me!”³⁸ Anyone who believes in me may come and drink! For the Scriptures declare, ‘Rivers of living water will flow from his heart.’”^[e]³⁹ (When he said “living water,” he was speaking of the Spirit, who would be given to everyone believing in him. But the Spirit had not yet been given,^[f] because Jesus had not yet entered into his glory.)

These are just a few scriptures telling of the coming Holy Spirit. I hope we would all agree that as Christians we accept the Holy Spirit whole heartedly. That being the case, we need to look at what scripture says it means and it is my hope the we would all embrace the gifts and see they are nothing to fear.

Acts 2 A scripture we are probably all familiar with - The Holy Spirit came upon them with Fire - I pick it up in vs 14 as follows:

¹⁴ Then Peter stepped forward with the eleven other apostles and shouted to the crowd, “Listen carefully, all of you, fellow Jews and residents of Jerusalem! Make no mistake about this. ¹⁵ These people are not drunk, as some of you are assuming. Nine o’clock in the morning is much too early for that. ¹⁶ No, what you see was predicted long ago by the prophet Joel: ¹⁷ *‘In the last days,’ God says, ‘I will pour out my Spirit upon all people.*

The Spirit came and all of a sudden they weren't afraid any longer and on top of that they could TALK---Communicate--people not only listened but were transformed. WHO WOULDN'T WANT THAT? I can't imagine saying no to it.

As a result the church was born and that same power that birthed the church is still available today if we will only seek it. The Gifts that cause so much controversy are simply attributes we need to love and serve God and the people we are called to carry the Gospel too. Let's take a quick look so we can all see they are nothing to fear.

1 Corinthians 12

Spiritual Gifts

¹ “Now, dear brothers and sisters, ^[a] regarding your question about the special abilities the Spirit gives us. I don't want you to misunderstand this. ² You know that when you were still pagans, you were led astray and swept along in worshiping speechless idols. ³ So I want you to know that no one speaking by the Spirit of God will curse Jesus, and no one can say Jesus is Lord, except by the Holy Spirit.

⁴ There are different kinds of spiritual gifts, but the same Spirit is the source of them all. ⁵ There are different kinds of service, but we serve the same Lord. ⁶ God works in different ways, but it is the same God who does the work in all of us.

⁷ A spiritual gift is given to each of us so we can help each other. ⁸ To one person the Spirit gives the ability to give wise advice^[b]; to another the same Spirit gives a message of special knowledge.^[c] ⁹ The same Spirit gives great faith to another, and to someone else the one Spirit gives the gift of healing. ¹⁰ He gives one person the power to perform miracles, and another the ability to prophesy. He gives someone else the ability to discern whether a message is from the Spirit of God or from another spirit. Still another person is given the ability to speak in unknown languages,^[d] while another is given the ability to interpret what is being said. ¹¹ It is the one and only Spirit who distributes all these gifts. He alone decides which gift each person should have.

One Body with Many Parts

¹² The human body has many parts, but the many parts make up one whole body. So it is with the body of Christ. ¹³ Some of us are Jews, some are Gentiles,^[e] some are slaves, and some are free. But we have all been baptized into one body by one Spirit, and we all share the same Spirit.^[f]

¹⁴ Yes, the body has many different parts, not just one part. ¹⁵ If the foot says, “I am not a part of the body because I am not a hand,” that does not make it any less a part of the body. ¹⁶ And if the ear says, “I am not part of the body because I am not an eye,” would that make it any less a part

of the body? ¹⁷ If the whole body were an eye, how would you hear? Or if your whole body were an ear, how would you smell anything?

¹⁸ But our bodies have many parts, and God has put each part just where he wants it. ¹⁹ How strange a body would be if it had only one part! ²⁰ Yes, there are many parts, but only one body. ²¹ The eye can never say to the hand, “I don’t need you.” The head can’t say to the feet, “I don’t need you.”

²² In fact, some parts of the body that seem weakest and least important are actually the most necessary. ²³ And the parts we regard as less honorable are those we clothe with the greatest care. So we carefully protect those parts that should not be seen, ²⁴ while the more honorable parts do not require this special care. So God has put the body together such that extra honor and care are given to those parts that have less dignity. ²⁵ This makes for harmony among the members, so that all the members care for each other. ²⁶ If one part suffers, all the parts suffer with it, and if one part is honored, all the parts are glad.

²⁷ All of you together are Christ’s body, and each of you is a part of it. ²⁸ Here are some of the parts God has appointed for the church:

first are apostles,
second are prophets,
third are teachers,
then those who do miracles,

those who have the gift of healing,
 those who can help others,
 those who have the gift of leadership,
 those who speak in unknown languages.

²⁹ Are we all apostles? Are we all prophets? Are we all teachers? Do we all have the power to do miracles? ³⁰ Do we all have the gift of healing? Do we all have the ability to speak in unknown languages? Do we all have the ability to interpret unknown languages? Of course not! ³¹ So you should earnestly desire the most helpful gifts.

Activities we can do and/or get involved in that will make a difference.

Personal Bible Study—Personal Prayer—Journaling

Group Prayer and Praise

Be under sound teaching

Be fed through Praise, Prayer, Confession and the Eucharist of Sunday Morning

Most of all--**Expect miracles**--Be enthusiastic, giving Praise and Thanksgiving to Christ in all things