

Pentecost

Today is Pentecost Sunday! It's the day we reflect on the greatest day in church history!

Pentecost means 50th and it's celebrated on the 50th day after Passover. It's not a term the modern, charismatic church made up! This took place back in the OT as the Feast of Harvest, Pentecost is the Greek name for the Feast of Harvest (Feast of Weeks, Shavuot)

There were lots of festivals and celebrations that happened around this time. God's people liked to celebrate the things He had done! But to calculate the day of Pentecost you would count 50 days from the Feast of Firstfruits.

Today things don't necessarily line up with the Jewish calendar, but we can easily calculate when Pentecost will be by counting 50 days starting with Easter. Which I find fascinating because it may not always line up with the Jewish Feast of Firstfruits but it does line up with the day that Jesus became the firstfruits of those who would be born again and live forever in heaven!

So 50 days after Jesus rose from the dead...He was with the disciples for the first 40 of those days, then as we looked at last week, He ascended to heaven. We still have 10 more days...

Acts 1:4-8 (NKJV)

And being assembled together with them, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, "which," He said, "you have heard from Me; 5 for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now." 6 Therefore, when they had come together, they asked Him, saying, "Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" 7 And He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority. 8 But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

This is the message Jesus shared right before He ascended to heaven. He told them to wait...wait for the blessing...wait for the promise...you will receive POWER when the Holy Spirit has come upon you...then you will be witnesses.

There's something very critical here that is not directly stated but it is clearly implied. You NEED this power. You NEED the baptism of the Holy Spirit to do what Jesus is calling you to do.

I love the way Pat Shatzline says it - "Do you need to be baptized in the Holy Spirit to go to heaven? Absolutely not... but you need it to go to work."

The Holy Spirit not only gave the people of God power to do the work, but power to do the work TOGETHER!

Do you know that over 500 people heard this command to wait for the Holy Spirit? (1 Cor 15). Now how do you get 500 people to stay in the same place and wait for the same thing for 10 days? ...you don't.

The Holy Spirit is the One that unites us. Acts 2 tells us that only 120 remained when the Spirit fell upon them. 500 commanded, 120 obeyed. I said last week that blessing always follows obedience. 120 obeyed, 120 received the blessing at that moment.

What if I told you that some had been watching, and waiting on this blessing for more than 3.5 years? John the Baptist, before Jesus began His public ministry, said:

Luke 3:16 (NKJV)

John answered, saying to all, "I indeed baptize you with water; but One mightier than I is coming, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to loose. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.

John spoke of the coming Messiah, Jesus, who would spend 3.5 years ministering in the region, but he also spoke of the blessing to follow, the Holy Spirit. He reveals that Jesus is the baptizer in the Holy Spirit! It's not only something Jesus has for you, it's something Jesus actually does!

Before He ascended, He lifted His hands and blessed them. He spoke the blessing, and at the same time authorized the release of the blessing, the Holy Spirit!

Acts 2:1-4 (NKJV)

When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. 2 And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. 3 Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them. 4 And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

This is the fulfillment of the blessing that Jesus prayed and released from heaven. It's God's gift to the church. It's the ONLY way the church can operate in the power of God...

The issue is that people always turn this into a tongues issue. That's how people are right? Pick the one thing you don't like and focus or dwell on that. Or on the other side, pick the thing that you do like but others don't and then focus or dwell on that.

I believe in speaking in tongues. I believe it's for today, it is a gift that has not ceased. It is AN evidence of the baptism of the Holy Spirit but it's not THE evidence. All through the

book of Acts we see other times where people received this baptism and did speak in tongues but we also see some where they don't, but instead they prophesy (Acts 4)

- There is a gift of tongues, a word that requires interpretation (by another)
- There is a prayer language or heavenly language where you speak to God, no one understands, it edifies the believer
- There is Spirit intercession where you pray in the Spirit
- There is speaking clearly in another language

These are all the work of the Spirit, not the devil. They are all accessible today. And anyone CAN have any of these.

But can I tell you that Pentecost is not about tongues? It's about POWER.

you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.

This word witnesses in te Greek is martys (mar-toose)...it means martyr...those who after His example have proved the strength and genuineness of their faith in Christ by undergoing a violent death.

Everyone in that upper room died for Jesus. They were all killed for their faith. They literally gave their life for the gospel.

And Jesus told them up front. You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. Power to be a witness...power to be a martyr.

That is the blessing. The strength to stand for what you believe in. The power to have a genuine faith in Christ that is unshakable. You will be unmoved.

You need the power to get to work.

Again, you can be saved without it. At the moment you believe on the Lord Jesus, you are saved and the Holy Spirit dwells IN you. You are a temple of the Living God.

What happened on the day of Pentecost is different.

The apostles were already saved. Jesus had already risen, in John 20 He visited them, commissioned them and then:

John 20:22 (NKJV)

And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit.

They received the Holy Spirit, inside of them. Not much later, Jesus told them to go and wait for the Promise and they would receive the power to carry out the commission He gave them!

Acts 2:1 (NKJV)

When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.

Clearly the official sponsor of heaven is Honda since they were all with one Accord. No wonder 380 of them left!

These 120 had something special. They all had the same passion. Do you know that they didn't know what this power was going to look like?

Although they didn't know what it would look like, they knew Jesus said they needed it. He said it was a promise from the Father. He said it is better if I go away so this Promise can come. He said wait for it.

Do you know what it means to wait for something? I know many of us are impatient, we don't like to wait. But to wait is to remain in a state of stillness and peace until something expected happens.

If you rode the bus as a kid, you waited. You go outside, stand by the road and remain there. You stay still...you don't run around carelessly or you may get hit by a car. You don't just look and go do something else because you might miss it. You remain there, still. You also remain there with peace. You don't have to worry if it's coming or not, you know it will. You're on the route. You are on the path it is going.

So these 120 waited. Now, some would say they did nothing but pray for 10 days but I really don't believe that is true. How many times did Jesus ask them to pray for just a little while, an hour or two...and they couldn't. They got tired and fell asleep.

They may not have prayed for 10 days straight, but what they did do was wait...in one accord.

They remained in that upper room. They did not leave. They remained in the same mind, the same passion.

Are you willing to wait on the Lord? Are you willing to remain where He's called you until something expected happens?

Acts 2:2 (NKJV)

And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting.

Say “suddenly.” I want to show you how God works.

When you wait, you remain in a state of stillness and peace until something **expected** happens.

But God moves suddenly...without warning, **unexpectedly!**

When you wait for the bus, you know it’s coming, you expect it. And you may be able to see it coming. So you can anticipate it’s arrival.

But God, even when you expect something to happen because He said it will...He still shows up unexpectedly! Suddenly! There may not be any signs or hints. It may seem like He forgot. It may seem like He’s not coming. But He will...suddenly! WAIT!

He comes as a rushing mighty wind. I’ve seen wind toss things like they weighed nothing out here. We’ve lost every pillow we’ve tried to put on the front porch, some wreaths off the front door. Basketball poles snapped in half. My pool steps all the way across the deck and into the pool. What I know about the wind is it moves how it wants and it is more powerful than we think it is.

This is how Luke describes the Holy Spirit. He’s powerful. He is unpredictable. He can change directions instantly. He can blow from one end to the other all at the same time. While unseen, He is as real as you and I. He filled the whole house...

Acts 2:3 (NKJV)

Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them.

Remember what John the Baptist said? Jesus will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire!

We see God described as fire several times, such as the burning bush. Fire indicates the presence of God, burning in holiness. The presence of God, the Holy Spirit came from heaven, filled the room and sat upon each of them.

Fire is a symbol of transformation and purification. Fire changes whatever it touches!

Consider these disciples.....before Pentecost they were scared, they doubted, they lacked faith

But After Pentecost, they were on fire! Filled with a new boldness, confidence, faith, fearless

Just like fire changes what it touches, the Holy Spirit changes what He touches. You just can’t be touched by the Spirit of God and walk away the same.....The Spirit brings transformation and works purification! This was true for the disciples then and it’s true for you today! Believe that!

Baptism in the Holy Spirit is important because when you are saved, the Holy Spirit dwells in you. But when you are baptized (immersed) then you are plunged into the Holy Spirit!

Baptized in fire to catch a flame for Jesus, to live a life for Him. But to do that you have to lay down your life, and you can't do that on your own...when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, you receive power to be a witness, martyr.

Acts 2:4 (NKJV)

And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

This was supernatural. It was the work of God. It was then and it still is today.

Don't believe what you have been taught...believe what the scriptures say. Tongues are to edify, to build up, they are to be a sign to the unbeliever, they are AN evidence that you've received the power.

I love them, and wouldn't want to live without them. Paul says to pursue the gifts (especially prophecy), but pursue them. If you want that, how do you get it? Wait...while you wait, expect something to happen...then SUDDENLY it will.

Jesus said, "If you are thirsty, COME TO ME and drink." Jesus' emphasis is not upon what He will give you to drink; the focus is on Him as the one who provides you with what will satisfy your thirst. Jesus says "Come to me! Come to me and drink!" Jesus is the baptizer and He will fill you as you look to Him.

The Church was birthed in the power of the Holy Spirit,
Society won't be transformed until the Church is transformed by the power of the Holy Spirit.