Mount Bethel Missionary Baptist Church

Bible Study

Facilitator: Dr. Jacques Boyd, Pastor

January 22, 2020

**The Presence of The Spirit**

**Focal Passage:** Acts 2:1-13 (NKJV)

**Additional Scripture(s):** Joel 2:28-32

**Lesson Focus:** Learners will examine the arrival of the Holy Spirit as prophesied by the prophet Joel.

**Lesson Objective:** The learners will understand that God sent His Spirit into the world to empower believers to fulfill the Great Commission of being witnesses of Jesus to the end of earth.

**Cultural Connection:**

As a child the season I most looked forward to was the Christmas season. For me, this season meant food, family, and looking at all the Christmas lights on the big houses. All this was fantastic, but what I looked forward to the most was the gifts. In this lesson, we find the disciples in the Upper Room filled with excited expectation, waiting for the fulfillment of Jesus’ promise, “*for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now”* (Acts 1:5 NKJV)

**Let’s Get Ready Question(s):**

What does it mean to you that the same Spirit who empowered Jesus to perform His earthly ministry also abides in you?

**Scriptural Text:** Acts 2:1-13 (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. **5**And there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men, from every nation under heaven. **6**And when this sound occurred, the multitude came together, and were confused, because everyone heard them speak in his own language. **7**Then they were all amazed and marveled, saying to one another, “Look, are not all these who speak Galileans? **8**And how *is it that* we hear, each in our own language in which we were born? **9**Parthians and Medes and Elamites, those dwelling in Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, **10**Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya adjoining Cyrene, visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, **11**Cretans and Arabs—we hear them speaking in our own tongues the wonderful works of God.” **12**So they were all amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, “Whatever could this mean?” **13**Others mocking said, “They are full of new wine.”

**Pastor’s Observations:**

 Jesus is the one who *received* and *bore* the Spirit, and the one who *promised* and *sent* the Spirit. The presence of the Holy Spirit is not to isolated individuals but to the *church*; not just for its own sake but for the sake of its service of the kingdom of God in the world. The Spirit is by definition the Spirit who dwelt in Jesus, comes from Jesus, and continues the work Jesus began. Therefore, **we must recognize the presence and work of the Holy Spirit as much in ordinary as in extraordinary events. We must also recognize the presence and work of the Holy Spirit in bad as well as good times.**

**Background on the scriptural text:**

A number of events had taken place prior to this text. Jesus had fulfilled His earthly mission of paving the way for humanity to be restored to a right relationship with God by dying on the cross. He had been resurrected from death, and He had made several appearances to His disciples during a forty-day period following His resurrection (Acts 1:3). He had told His disciples they should remain in Jerusalem and “… wait for the Promise of the Father,” which, He said, “you have heard from me” (Acts1:4). Jesus had assured His disciples they would shortly receive power when the Holy Spirit came and they would be witnesses to Him in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and to the end of the earth (1:8). Finally, Jesus was taken up and a cloud received Him out of their sight (1:9).

**Scriptural Exposition:**

**Arrival of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:1-4)**

The second chapter of Acts commences by telling us that the Day of Pentecost had come, the disciples were all with one accord, and they were all in one place. It is significant that the Scriptures make note of the fact it was the Day of Pentecost. For the Jews, the Day of Pentecost was time of great celebration and national unity. The Feast of Pentecost is called ‘*Shovous’* in Hebrew, which means “weeks”. This is the festival which ends the weeks of the grain harvest. It is the second of the three great annual festivals, the others being Passover and Tabernacles. The festival was called the Feast of Weeks because it was celebrated for seven weeks, reaching its climax fifty days after Passover. Jews from all over the known world, if they were able, would make their way to Jerusalem for this festival.

In the midst of all this activity and mass of people, the disciples were all in one place, with one accord. They were not sure what to expect or when to expect it, but they knew Jesus had told them to wait in Jerusalem for the coming of the Holy Spirit before attempting to carry out the task of being witnesses for Him. Then, just as the right time (God’s time), with many men present in Jerusalem representing many nations, with the stage set just the way God wanted it, He began to act. The scripture says “suddenly,” without warning, there was a sound in the room “as of” a rushing, mighty wind. Often, that’s how God works: suddenly, without any prior notice. God may move so suddenly that one second you may be in this world and the next second you may be in another world. The Bible does not say that a rushing wind went through the room blowing everything. Nothing like that happened. It says there was a sound “as of” a rushing, mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they are sitting. While the disciples were probably wondering where this sound was coming from, just as suddenly there appeared in the midst of them divided tongues “as of fire,” and one of the tongues sat upon each of the disciples.

In A.W. Tozer’s book *Mystery of the Holy Spirit* he says, “This fire was the divine visible presence of God.” The fire described in verse 3 is marked by powerful symbolism. It can refer to the consuming power of God, the purification and consecration of God, and the miraculous presence of God. It may even represent the similarity between the flame and the tongue. When you light a candle, you will see the fire take the shape of a tiny tongue, broad at the bottom and tapering up. The scripture says the fire sat upon them. Then a remarkable thing happened, they began to speak in other languages as the Spirit gave them utterance. In other words, they began to speak fluently in languages other than their native tongue.

What an awesome God we serve, who can empower unlearned men to speak in languages of which they have had no previous instruction.

**Speaking with Other Tongues (Acts 2:5-13)**

 In verse 5, we are told there was dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men from every nation under the heaven. No doubt these men had come from their home nations to Jerusalem to participate in the festivities surrounding the Day of Pentecost. When these men heard the sound as of a mighty, rushing wind, they came to the place where the disciples were gathered. The Scripture says they were confused. The Jerusalem visitors noted that the disciples were all Galileans and yet each of them heard the disciples speak in their own native language. The writer used the words “amazed,” “marveled,” and “perplexed” to describe the state of mind of these out-of-towners. To demonstrate the magnitude of the event, the writer, Luke, lists seventeen different countries in verses 9-11, which represented the origin of these bewildered men.

 What happened next is typical of human nature. When we do not understand something, we tend to make something up. The only thing these men could come up with to explain this remarkable experience was to devise an outlandish story. They said, “They are full of new wine.”

 In an attempt to explain what was really taking place, Peter stands up staying these men are not drunk, as was supposed by the onlookers. Rather, he explains this happening as the fulfillment of prophesy in Joel 2:28-32:

**28**“And it shall come to pass afterward
That I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh;
Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,
Your old men shall dream dreams,
Your young men shall see visions.
**29**And also on *My* menservants and on *My* maidservants
I will pour out My Spirit in those days.

**30**“And I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth:
Blood and fire and pillars of smoke.
**31**The sun shall be turned into darkness,
And the moon into blood,
Before the coming of the great and awesome day of the Lord.
**32**And it shall come to pass
*That* whoever calls on the name of the Lord
Shall be saved.
For in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there shall be deliverance,
As the Lord has said,
Among the remnant whom the Lord calls.

 In other words, the eternal meaning of Acts 2 is this: The Comforter, who is the Holy Spirit, has come; deity is in our midst; God has given Himself to us; and the invisible essence of deity has been poured out. This is good news. Not only does God give believers a supernatural commission, He empowers us with His supernatural Spirit in order to fulfill the commission. Praise God!

**The Reason for the Miracle**

We must be careful not to focus simply on the miracle of tongues and not explore the reason why this miracle was done. As in all the miracles performed by Christ, the message was not simply about the miracle, but God’s purpose through the miracle. The reason the tongues were manifested were to demonstrate God’s power and then to facilitate evangelism. Through the miracle manifested on the day of Pentecost, the once cowardly and profane Peter became emboldened to preach a powerful message to all the visitors at Jerusalem. On that same day, three thousand souls were added to the kingdom (Acts 2:41).

God is still working miracles today. While some say that speaking in tongues is no longer needful today and others say that it is a manifestation of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, what is most important is not to simply desire the gift of tongues, but the gift of evangelism through sharing one’s experience with God and His Holy Spirit. (See Acts 1:8 and 1 Corinthians 14:18.)

**Reinforcement:**

Think of some task you believe God has called you to do but you have been reluctant to carry through. Explore why you were slow to respond to God’s will. Now read 2 Timothy 1:7. How does this verse relate to the task you have been reluctant to fulfill?

**Lesson Application:**

During the coming week seek to complete the task God has called you to do by trusting and relying on the Holy Spirit.

**Thoughts to Ponder**

If the Apostle Paul, acting under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, caused the men of Thessalonica to say, “… These who have *turned the world upside down* have come here, too,” what could happen in the life of our homes, churches, cities, and world if we surrendered ourselves to the leadership of the Holy Spirit?

**Study Questions**

1. The day of Pentecost was how many days from the Passover?
2. What were the indicators that Christ’s disciples were in unity on this day?
3. What were the miraculous manifestations of the coming of the Holy Spirit as seen in the second chapter of Acts?
4. Did the Disciples of Christ speak with unknown tongues? What did the onlookers at Jerusalem use as an explanation for the phenomena of men speaking with other tongues?
5. When the Holy Spirit was fully come, the Spirit fell upon on all those who believed. What were the two purposes of the miracle of other tongues on the day of Pentecost?

**Answers**

1. 50
2. They were all on one accord and in one place.
3. A sound of a mighty, rushing wind, and men speaking in other tongues.
4. No, they spoke in “other tongues” which were understandable by those who were learned in those languages. The onlookers claimed that the Disciples were drunken and filled with new wine.
5. To demonstrate the power of God and to facilitate evangelism.