

The Filling of the Holy Spirit

Acts 2:1-4

May 20 , 2018

Act 2:1-4 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.

Today is PENTECOST SUNDAY - It is the 50th day from the Passover - or the 1st Day after 7 weeks have passed from the Passover - In the passage we just read, we find that it was on this day that the followers of Jesus were all gathered together in one place.

Suddenly, just as Jesus had promised, the Holy Spirit filled each of them - The power of God through the person of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the church for the very first time.

It was a monumental day in the life of the church - From that point on, everything changed for the Christian - From that moment on, these weak and frightened believers were changed into bold and powerful disciples who would change the world for Jesus Christ.

When you think of DAYS AND EVENTS that changed the history of the World, several might immediately come to your mind - Let me give you a list of the TOP TEN EVENTS that many historians point to as **The Great WORLD CHANGING EVENTS:**

10. The Renaissance - This time MARKED THE END of an age ruled by SUPERSTITION AND FEAR - It was a time when men again began exploring their world - The Bible was back in the hands of the people and the DARK AGES ENDED.

9. Pax Romana - LATIN phrase meaning **Roman Peace** - A 200 year period from 27 BC to 180 AD when the Roman Empire was at peace - during this time there were great engineering advancements - Life changing things like City PLUMBING AND HIGHWAY SYSTEMS were invented and advanced.

8. The Life of Mohammad - With the rise of Islam around 600 AD, there was a unifying of the hundreds of small tribes of the Middle East into a somewhat COHESIVE PEOPLE under one religion - No one can doubt the effects WE FEEL EVEN TODAY because of the beliefs and influence of the Islamic world.

7. Gutenberg's Printing Press - Before the invention of the Printing Press, everything was COPIED BY HAND one document at the time! - It would often takes years to MAKE ONE COPY of a document before the Printing Press - Think of the effect this SINGLE INVENTION has had on the education of the world - And on the SPREAD OF THE GOSPEL with the duplication of the Bible!

6. World War I - Called the “**Great War**” - it would lay the groundwork for WWII - It was the first war in which WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION were used.

5. WWII - The first war in the history of man to involved ALMOST EVERY CONTINENT AND NATION of the face of the earth - AN ESTIMATED 60 Million people were killed (3% of the world's population) - it led to the United Nations, a Homeland for Israel, and atomic weapons!

4. Tearing Down of the Berlin Wall - The great divide between Freedom in the West and Communism in the East was brought down - Suddenly the World seemed a safer place - And the world became a SMALLER, MORE UNIFIED WORLD - at least for a short season of time.

3. The American Revolution - The American Revolution took many ideas from the EARLY CIVILIZATIONS of Greece and Rome and combined them with the Christian Thought to revolt against the unbending authority of England.

The UNDERLYING BELIEF was that every man (**though, at the time, even this statement was narrowly defined**) was equal and should be treated fairly - That IDEA & THAT NATION would bring great influence to our modern world.

2. The Reformation - The INTENT OF THE REFORMATION was to reform the Catholic Church and bring it back to ITS BIBLICAL ROOTS - The end result was a Catholics church that remained much the same and a Protestant Church built on 4 IMPORTANT PILLARS OF SALVATION: **Christ Alone, Faith Alone, Scripture alone and Grace alone.**

Most important, the Reformation brought the Bible back into the hands of the COMMON MAN - This would change History from that POINT FORWARD.

1. The Birth of Jesus - JESUS never traveled more than a FEW DAYS' JOURNEY from his hometown - It was only after HIS RESURRECTION that his teachings spread beyond his homeland and EVENTUALLY SPREAD to the entire World - Jesus' TEACHING & WAY OF SALVATION set off an atomic religious bomb that is still felt today.

These are 10 events that have certainly SHAPED THE WORLD we live in today - Yet, for the life of the Christian, there is ONE OTHER EVENT that changed the way we can live our lives LIKE NO OTHER IN HISTORY - It was the COMING OF THE Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost spoken of here in Acts 2.

For what took place that day CHANGED EVERYTHING for the followers of Jesus - This was the beginning of A NEW EXPERIENCE for the Christian - This was the UNLEASHING OF GOD'S POWER in a way the world had never known before - Every believer could PERSONALLY EXPERIENCE the power of Almighty God working in their life!

Yes, there had been individuals who had been "**filled with the Holy Spirit**" prior to Pentecost Sunday - Men like David, Moses and John the Baptist had all experienced the power of the Holy Spirit - but THIS POWER was limited to ONLY A FEW!

Beginning on THIS PENTECOST SUNDAY, the Power of the Holy Spirit became available to ALL BELIEVERS - This EVENT WAS MONUMENTAL for the Church - ALL BELIEVERS could now experience what had been reserved for ONLY A SPECIAL FEW.

Moses had LONGED FOR THIS DAY centuries earlier - In Numbers 11, God had INSTRUCTED MOSES to select 70 Elders to help him LEAD AND OVERSEE the Children of Israel - After he had selected the men, he gathered them at the Tabernacle - In verse 25 we read,

Num 11:25-29 Then the LORD came down in the cloud, and spoke to him, and took of the Spirit that was upon him (Moses), and placed the same upon the seventy elders; and it happened, when the Spirit rested upon them, that they prophesied, although they never did so again. 26 But two men had remained in the camp: the name of one was Eldad, and the name of the other Medad. And the Spirit rested upon them. Now they were among those listed, but who had not gone out to the tabernacle; yet they prophesied in the camp. 27 And a young man ran and told Moses, and said, "Eldad and Medad are prophesying in the camp." 28 So Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' assistant, one of his choice men, answered and said, "Moses my lord, forbid them!" 29 Then Moses said to him, "Are you zealous for my sake? Oh, that all the LORD's people were prophets and that the LORD would put His Spirit upon them!"

Moses could ONLY DREAM of a day when EVERY BELIEVER was full of the Holy Spirit - Now, here in Jerusalem, some 1500 years later, Moses prayer comes to pass - On this Pentecost Sunday, GOD POURS OUT HIS SPIRIT on His whole Church.

God made available to ALL WHO WOULD ASK, to ALL WHO WOULD SEEK - the power and filling of the Holy Spirit - What an incredible day in History! - Certainly NO OTHER DAY had a greater impact on the Church of Jesus Christ than this day!

But the question now becomes, **Can we experience this power of the Holy Spirit promised by Jesus?** - The answer is YES! - But, why do so few seem to EXPERIENCE THIS POWER TODAY? - We hope to answer this question in our time we have left.

People have sought to REPEAT THIS EXPERIENCE in Act Chapter 2 for 2,000 years - So often to ONLY BE FRUSTRATED by their inability to FORCE GOD to repeat this MOMENT of History in their lives.

Many Christian have MADE THE MISTAKE of looking for A FORMULA to unleash the Power of the Spirit - They study this passage trying to UNDERSTAND WHAT HAPPENED in the Church that day that CAUSED GOD to move in such a POWERFUL WAY.

This kind of thinking is ALWAYS DANGEROUS - for the WORK OF GOD can never be REDUCED TO A FORMULA - Certainly not when it comes to RECEIVING THE POWER of God's Holy Spirit.

People read verse 1 and respond by concluding that **“the church needs to gather in one place - that there needs to be a unity among those present - and we need to all be in one accord”** - The secret must be THIS ONENESS that was present in the Early Church.

The idea being that the key to having this Pentecost WORK OF THE HS is PROXIMITY & UNITY - We just need to get our people to a place where their is GREAT COMMUNITY & and LITTLE STRIFE - This MUST BE THE SECRET FORMULA that opened the door for God to UNLEASH His Spirit again upon the church.

Certainly UNITY & COMMUNITY are important factors when it comes to the WITNESS AND SUCCESS of the church - but their is NO FORMULA for God's work - GOD IS SOVEREIGN and HE CHOSSES the time and the place HE WILL SEND HIS SPIRIT upon the church - or upon ANY INDIVIDUAL MEMBER of His church.

In the Book of Acts, there are SEVERAL OCCASIONS when Luke records people experiencing the FILLING & POWER of the Holy Spirit - Sometimes it is MULTIPLE PEOPLE in a church setting - other times Luke tells us about INDIVIDUALS GOD FILLS all by themselves.

Each time, though, the EXPERIENCE IS UNIQUE - There are SOME SIMILARITIES, but there are also MANY DIFFERENCES - a different SETTING - a different NEED - a different MANIFESTATION - Yes, there are some similarities - but each are IN NO WAY COOKIE-CUTTER EXPERIENCES.

For Example: **Acts 4:31** - Peter & John had just BEEN THREATENED by the Temple Authorities to stop preaching & teaching about Jesus - They quickly MET WITH SOME OTHER BELIEVERS and had a prayer meeting - Suddenly they are FILLED with the HS and the PLACE SHAKES - There is a HOLY EARTHQUAKE.

But this time the RESULTING EVIDENCE IS NOT SPEAKING IN UNKNOWN TONGUES - but it is **BOLDNESS & COURAGE to continue preaching the Word!**

In **Acts 7:55** - Stephen is about to be MARTYRED by the Jewish LEADERS for his powerful preaching of Jesus - In that moment he is FILLED WITH THE HS - The EVIDENCE & EFFECT here on Stephen is **the COURAGE & POWER to stand strong in the FACE OF PERSECUTION & DEATH!**

Act 9:17-18 - Saul has just been CONVERTED TO JESUS on the road o Damascus - Ananias comes and prays for him to be FILLED with the HS - When he is filled there is a **PHYSICAL HEALING - the SCALES that had covered his eyes fall out and HIS SIGHT IS RESTORED!**

Acts 10:44-45 - Peter has just PREACHED THE GOSPEL to the Gentiles at the House of Cornelius - While he is still preaching, the HS FALLS on those that are gathered - **the result is THE MAGNIFYING & PRAISING OF GOD THROUGH THE GIFTS OF TONGUES** - A very similar experience that the JEWISH BELIEVERS HAD when the HS first fell there in Jerusalem.

Act 13:9 - Paul & Barnabas are on their FIRST MISSIONARY JOURNEY - Being FILLED with the HS, Paul experiences the BOLDNESS & POWER to confront ELYMAS THE SORCERER who was PLOTTING AGAINST God's work - **With the PROPHETIC WORDS of Paul Elymas is STRUCK WITH BLINDNESS!**

Acts 13:52 - Paul and Barnabas are STILL ON THEIR MISSIONARY JOURNEY - This time as they gather with OTHER DISCIPLES - they are filled with the HS and **the ONLY EVIDENCE & EFFECT seems to be that a GREAT JOY filled their hearts.**

It is interesting that Peter would later describe the filling of the HS as **“joy inexpressible and full of glory!” (1 Peter 1:8)**

This was ONE OF MY FIRST EXPERIENCES with the Power of the Holy Spirit - I grew up in a church where the Holy Spirit WAS RARELY SPOKEN OF - But one night when I was a Senior in High school, our YOUTH GROUP had just finished SINGING A CONCERT & sharing our TESTIMONIES - The Lord had done an INCREDIBLE WORK that night in the lives of many Students.

As my friend Barry & I sat there AFTER THE CONCERT, we just started SMILING AT EACH OTHER & SHAKING OUR HEADS - We almost came to tears because the JOY WE FELT in that moment was SO GREAT - It was **“joy inexpressible and full of glory”!**

It was SOME TIME LATER that I read this verse in 1 Peter - But I knew that evening that the Holy Spirit had FILLED US & EMPOWER US as we shared our testimonies! - The JOY WE FELT was beyond words.

In **Acts 16:6** - The the evidence of the Holy Spirit is that HE GIVES SUPERNATURAL GUIDANCE & DIRECTIONS to Paul - **The Holy Spirit FORBIDS Paul and HIS TEAM from going into ASIA TO PREACH the Gospel** - The Holy Spirit redirects Paul and his team into EUROPE INSTEAD.

Lastly, in **Acts 19:6** - The HS falls on 12 MEN in the Church in Ephesus - **There the evidence is the GIFT OF TONGUES AND THE GIFT OF PROPHECY - That is followed by them SPEAKING BOLDLY the Gospel in the Synagogue.**

I mention ALL OF THESE PASSAGES because I want to make a FEW OBSERVATIONS we learn from them about the FILLING & POWER of the Holy Spirit - Let me make 3 OBSERVATIONS that come from seeing the overall work of the Holy Spirit in the Book of Acts and the rest of the New Testament.

#1 We learn that GOD IS SOVEREIGN - He chooses WHEN & WHERE He will pour out His power and gifts on His people - You and I CAN NOT FORCE OR MANUFACTURE the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives - We might try TO FAKE IT - But, the reality is that it is totally up to God - It is His work - It is His decision on WHO, on WHEN and on HOW He will pour out His Spirit.

Yes, we are to PRAY & SEEK FOR the empowering of the Holy Spirit - We are to EXPECT & BELIEVE that God is going to work - But we can't make things happen - We can't MANUFACTURE THE GIFTS of His Spirit - We CAN'T PRACTICE CERTAIN BEHAVIORS hoping they will become real.

God works in such a VERY NATURAL, YET SUPERNATURAL WAY - He empowers and enables us to do things - and at times I don't think we even realize He was working until after the fact!

Suddenly, I looked back and God had GIVEN ME A WORD OF KNOWLEDGE to help a brother - or He has supplied a GIFT OF WISDOM in a situation that NEEDED HELP - maybe He has GIVEN ME a gift of DISCERNMENT in a volatile situation - and AT THE TIME I might not even realize it.

It was ONLY LATER THAT I FIND OUT I have GIVEN SOMEONE just the word they needed - Or that God was LEADING ME or PROTECTING ME - but AT THE TIME it wasn't obvious.

YES, I knew God was THERE WITH ME - But it all seemed so NORMAL - I was unaware of the GIFTS & POWER HE WAS WORKING THROUGH ME.

I have also been in VERY SIMILAR SITUATION when I prayed for WISDOM, INSIGHT OR BOLDNESS and nothing came - I left those situations feeling very INADEQUATE - Feeling helpless to really MINISTER TO SOMEONE.

At times, I have walked away from these opportunities WONDERING WHY GOD didn't work in the same way HE HAD PREVIOUSLY - Only then to conclude that GOD IS SOVEREIGN - He can choose WHEN TO WORK & WHERE to work - He can ALSO CHOOSE TO BE SILENT and remind me just how badly I need HIS POWER!

One story that has always struck me as interesting, is the story of Peter HEALING THE LAME MAN in Acts 3 - You remember the story - Peter and John are walking into the Temple and there is a lame man sitting by the entrance way BEGGING ALMS.

I am certain that Peter and John had PASSED THIS MAN BEFORE - Maybe many times - But for some reason that day, Peter stops and heals him - **Have you ever wondered what was different about this day? - this encounter? - Why did the Holy Spirit EMPOWER Peter this day to heal this beggar?**

Why didn't Peter heal more people that day? - Why didn't he just GO AROUND AND HEAL ALL of the sick and lame who were begging that day? - The only conclusion I can draw is that God is Sovereign.

In His ETERNAL WISDOM AND PLAN, God chose to heal that one man that day - He would DEMONSTRATE HIS POWER through healing just the one - To me, there is NO OTHER EXPLANATION - Peter and John were used by God to heal one man that day - Not everyone.

Yes, I can play a part in GOD NOT CHOOSING to work - I can LACK FAITH - I can have SIN IN MY LIFE that might hinder the work He might want to do through me - But many times I have come to realize that GOD CHOSE NOT TO WORK FOR SOME REASON I will never know.

God is THE GIVER of the gifts and power of the Holy Spirit - And as the GIVER OF THE GIFT, He can choose WHEN & WHERE they will be given!

Second, the filling of the Holy Spirit is a REPEATED EXPERIENCE in the life of the believer - When we are saved, we receive THE INDWELLING PRESENCE of the Holy Spirit in our lives - The Comforter that Jesus promised comes to LIVE INSIDE US.

As Paul says in **Romans 8:16, “The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God.”** - One of the ways you confidently know that you are a Christian is GOD’S SPIRIT CONFIRMING with your spirit that you are His child - There is a NEW SPIRITUAL CONNECTION that is made between you and your Heavenly Father.

But, on differing occasions, there is a SPECIAL POWER AND ANOINTING that comes upon the Christian - he is FILLED TO OVERFLOW with the presence and power of God - We are FILLED WITH THE Holy Spirit so that God can do A SPECIAL WORK through us.

In this moment, we might EXPERIENCE BOLDNESS in our witness - We exercise SOME SPIRITUAL GIFTS THAT ARE SUDDENLY PRESENT in our life for a specific purpose - We could find ourselves with CONFIDENCE & COURAGE to face persecution that has come our way at WORK OR SCHOOL - MAYBE we feel a JOY THAT BUBBLES UP in our life that we have never known before.

Then later, THAT EXPERIENCE PASSES - It is GONE - Life seems to go back to NORMAL - Yes, we still sense the PRESENCE OF GOD in our heart - We still CONFIDENTLY WALK as believers - but the SURGE OF POWER is no longer there - the GIFT IS NO LONGER present - Spiritually speaking, LIFE RETURNS TO NORMAL!

Then, sometime later, God WORKS AGAIN in this special way - This seems to be the PATTERN OF THE NEW TESTAMENT - though I hesitate to use the WORD PATTERN, because truthfully there seems to be NO PATTERN.

But we see the HOLY SPIRIT COME UPON the same people time and time again in the Book of Acts - And this has been MY EXPERIENCE in life as well.

I believe we should live our lives WITH THE EXPECTATION of God's filling - I believe we should be DAILY PRAYING & SEEKING God's power & gifting - We NEVER KNOW when God may choose to EMPOWER US AGAIN - Remember, He is a GOOD FATHER who loves to give GOOD GIFTS to His children - Always live with a heart to seek this FILLING FROM GOD afresh and anew!

Third, there is a difference between EMOTIONAL EXPERIENCES we have with the Lord, and THE FILLING OF THE Holy Spirit - I think many people in the church today CONFUSE THESE 2 EXPERIENCES.

Nowhere in the Book of Acts do we find the BAPTISM OR FILLING of the Holy Spirit DESCRIBE by using emotionally charged words - Yes, we can safely assume that when you HAVE A JOY THAT IS INEXPRESSIBLE & FULL OF GLORY, it will be an EMOTIONAL EXPERIENCE.

But, when Peter heals the lame man, remember it is the LAME MAN who went JUMPING AND LEAPING and praising God - It was not Peter and John - They appear to remain rather calm!

Yes, I am sure they were EXCITED & JOYFUL at the miracle they had just WITNESSED - but their emotions remained UNDER CONTROL!

I want to help us differentiate between EMOTIONS & POWER - between INWARD JOY & OUTWARD LAUGHTER - between the COURAGE TO FACE persecution and a TEARFUL MOMENT that follows pain and tragedy - Both are important, but they are TWO SEPARATE EXPERIENCES.

Understand, Our emotions are ALMOST ALWAYS RESPONSES - Whereas God's filling is AN ENABLING - Emotions are a REACTION - The FILLING OF THE HS is a PROACTIVE EXPERIENCE - God's empowering CREATES ACTION - Emotions respond to what HAS HAPPENED.

GOD'S EMPOWERING will sometimes create emotions - but EMOTIONS DON'T CREATE God's empowering! - Emotions can be POWERFUL THINGS - Yes, they can cause us to DO & SAY THINGS we might otherwise have NOT DONE OR SAID - Often we even REGRET LATER what we did or said!

But this is NEVER THE CASE with the power of the Holy Spirit - God's Spirit will NEVER LEAD US to do something that we LATER REGRET - I have NEVER SPOKEN BOLDLY to someone under the influence of the Holy Spirit and later regretted my words.

BUT, Many times I have gotten caught up in EMOTIONAL EXPERIENCES and said things that I WISH I HAD NEVER SAID! - or done things I wish I had NOT DONE!

Let me say it this way - I have many EMOTIONAL TIMES with God - especially during worship services - or during PRAYER MEETINGS - Sometimes when we are SINGING THE WORSHIP SONGS, I just get overwhelmed at the GOODNESS & LOVE of God - Tears well up in my eyes - God's presence seems SO CLOSE.

THESE ARE PRECIOUS TIMES - They are MEMORABLE & IMPORTANT - but they are NOT NECESSARILY times when God has EMPOWERED ME with His Holy Spirit - Yes, they are just TIMES OF REFRESHING - and they are SPECIAL - we NEED THEM.

BUT, the FILLING of the Holy Spirit is different - Many times this experience is TOTALLY VOID OF EMOTIONS - God's power BRINGS BOLDNESS - but not necessarily EXCITEMENT - it brings JOY - but not necessarily LAUGHTER - I can have an EMPOWERING SPIRITUAL GIFT - and it not BE ACCOMPANIED by EMOTIONS - ZEAL & passion - PROBABLY - Hysteria - NEVER.

ONE OF THE PROBLEMS in the Church in Corinth was THEIR TENDENCY to allowed their emotions to override their knowledge of Truth - They were allowing their excitement about their Spiritual Gifts to interfere with the proper use of them.

This is always the DANGER OF EMOTIONALLY CHARGED EXPERIENCES - We must maintain control of ourselves - We can't allow our emotions to control us and DICTATE HOW WE BEHAVE.

In Corinth, they were experiencing God's power, but they were SUBSERVIENT TO THEIR EMOTIONS - Paul spent 3 Chapters helping them UNDERSTAND how to ENJOY GOD'S POWER, and yet stay true to the WORK OF THE SPIRIT.

We need to be LED BY THE SPIRIT and enjoy our emotions - We don't need to be LED BY OUR EMOTIONS and enjoy the Spirit! - This can so easily be the case if we aren't careful.

Remember what Paul told the Corinthians in **Chapter 14:32, "The spirits (small "s") of the prophets are subject to the prophets."** - Here the word spirit is used for OUR EMOTIONS & OUR WILL - Paul is saying that even under the INFLUENCE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, we have to be in control of our own spirit - OUR WILL AND OUR EMOTIONS!

Spiritually speaking, we can't let the "tail wag the dog!" - As maturing believers, we need to DISCERN THE DIFFERENCE between being led by the Spirit of God, and being led by our own emotions.

So, on this PENTECOST SUNDAY, I hope you desire THE WORK & POWER of the Holy Spirit - I hope you leave here today SEEKING HIS POWER in even a greater way.

What the world needs today more than ever are BELIEVERS FULL of the Spirit of God - Men and women who are BOLD IN THEIR WITNESS - Men and women who are SPIRITUALLY GIFTED - and Christians who are STRONG & COURAGEOUS in the FACE OF PERSECUTION AND HATRED.

I want to leave you with this promise from our Lord Jesus - It is found in **Luke 11:13 "If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!"**

Let's Pray