

The Horror of Failure, the Beauty of Grace - Acts 1:12-26 **Notes, Family Worship, Bible Reading**

Notes from the Sermon

Our story in Acts takes us to one of the most significant moments in Scripture, and not only in Scripture, but in all of history and the story of God's redemption. Pentecost had arrived, exactly 50 days after Jesus was crucified. The Hebrew festival was a celebration of two things. First, it was a remembrance of the story of God's giving the Law (Exodus 19-20) to His people, meeting them at Mount Sinai. Second, it was a festival of Thanksgiving at the end of the barley harvest in late Spring. Next week we will look more at the significance of the day and events in the story of Acts 2. But key to the story was the pouring out of the Holy Spirit, baptizing and filling the 120 people waiting for this promise in the upper room. To get a grasp on the significance of this event we have to understand the person and work of the Holy Spirit. Furthermore, we need to see in this story both a one time event and an ongoing replication of it in the lives of people.

The story tells us that this band of people who are following Jesus and obeying Him are waiting for the promise. All of a sudden, on Pentecost Sunday the sound of a massive wind fills the room, a fireball that breaks into tongues of fire shows up and lands on each of them, they are filled with the Spirit and as a result they begin to speak in tongues. It is right here where our Baptist and Presbyterian friends get really nervous and Pentecostal and Charismatic brothers and sisters start jumping pews and pulling out the tambourines. Some will push away from experience in fear of being weird, others will lean into experience in ways that actually deny the presence of the Spirit. Without proper doctrine of the Holy Spirit, it is likely that our experiences can be wrong. But without true experience of the Holy Spirit then our doctrine can be meaningless. This story gives us an amazing experience with the Spirit of God that reveals deep doctrinal truths about this person.

One of the dangers is to believe that the Holy Spirit was waiting in the shadows and appears for the first time in this story. In reality, the Spirit is present and revealed from the second verse in the Bible, when upon creation of heaven and earth, we see the surface of the earth covered with water, chaotic and unusable. But the Spirit of God is hovering over the face of the water, and it won't be long until the voice of God begins speaking, bringing reality from nothing and order from chaos. And the first time the Spirit is mentioned we see something incredible about the way the word "Spirit" is used in both the Old and New Testaments. The Hebrew word for "Spirit" here and elsewhere is the word *ruach*, which can mean spirit, breath, or wind. The New Testament is written in Greek, and the word used for the Holy Spirit is *pneuma*, which actually can be used in the same three ways. So, the Spirit of God (or wind of God, breath of God) is present from the beginning, and shows up over and over again in the narrative of the Old Testament. He is present and active in creation of the world and universe, and in the giving of life to Adam. He is involved throughout the story of redemption, often being revealed in the presence of fire, a representation of the bright blazing hot glory of God either in illumination or judgment. We see that the Holy Spirit is God who is the manifest presence of God among His people. He fills the Temple, speaks to and through the prophets, and comes upon kings and other people at specific times to empower them for battle or for service. The Spirit removes His presence from individuals and people when they disobey. In the Gospels we see that Jesus does all of His ministry in the power and fullness of the Spirit.

The presence of the Spirit pushes us toward the mysterious and wonderful truth of the Triune God, one God in three distinct persons. The Spirit is God, but His work is the application of redemption by being present, manifest with and in His people. He is not the Force of Star Wars, some cosmic energy to be used for our purposes. Rather, He is personal, speaking, with personality, and His purpose is to make much of Jesus and empower the church to take this glorious Good News of Jesus to the nations. Both John the Baptist and Jesus promise the day when the followers of Jesus would be baptized in the Spirit, immersed in His presence just like John submerged people in water. Before this the Spirit had been with them, but the promise that there would be a day when the Spirit would take up residence as a permanent presence within.

So, on the Day of Pentecost the glorious presence of God in the person of the Holy Spirit

both baptizes them and fills them. The baptism of the Spirit is a one time event that happens when a person is converted to Jesus, yet being filled with the Spirit is something we see happening over and over again in Acts. In other words, we receive the fullness of the Spirit when we receive Jesus, yet, we should cry out for God to fill us with His Spirit over and over again, a prayer He is more than happy to answer (Luke 11:13). The promise made by the prophets in the Old Testament and by Jesus in the New came true on Pentecost. And the text is clear, it happened to all of them, the full group of 120 in the Upper Room, and they all began to speak in tongues (more on that next week). Furthermore, later in the chapter as Peter is preaching, he tells every hearer that if they believe in Jesus they will also receive the promise of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38-39), their own Pentecost moment.

What we see from here is that the Holy Spirit works in our lives in moments and through momentum. In other words, there are moments when the Spirit shows up in glorious, revealing, and even miraculous experiences that empower and excite His people. But the Spirit also works through the steady application of the Gospel of grace in the lives of His people as they follow Jesus, grow in the Word, dedicate themselves in prayer, and live in Gospel community. We need to seek both of these in our lives, not being afraid of experiences, but pursuing the steady momentum of the Spirit making us more like Jesus.

Bible Reading for the Week

Daily Bible Readings

Sun	Mon	Tues	Weds	Thurs	Fri	Sat
1 Samuel 9	1 Samuel 10	1 Samuel 11	1 Samuel 12	1 Samuel 13	1 Samuel 14	1 Samuel 15

Reading from this past week: Acts 2:1-4

Reading in preparation for this coming Sunday: Acts 2:1-12

Family Worship

Song - *This I Believe (The Creed)*

<https://youtu.be/A-aSmurqrzA>

Gospel Project

Unit: Back to the Land

Story: God stopped the Jordan River

Big Picture Question: What is the Bible?

Answer: The Bible is God’s Word that tells us what is true about God and ourselves.

Scripture: Joshua 3-4

New City Catechism

Question #10: What does God require in the sixth, seventh, and eighth commandments?

Answer: Sixth, that we do not hurt or hate our neighbor. Seventh, that we live purely and faithfully. Eighth, that we do not take without permission that which belongs to someone else.

Verse: Romans 13:9

Scripture

Acts 2:1-4

- Imagine yourself among those in the Upper Room. How do you think this experience might have made you feel?
- Who is the Holy Spirit, and why is He so important in our experience with God?
- What do the images of wind, fire, and speaking in tongues reveal about the person and work of the Spirit in our lives?

Prayer

*Ask your Heavenly Father to fill you with the Holy Spirit and power.

*Pray for our Youth Ministry Director, Travis Dierker.