

Hurst Green
20th May 2018

Acts 2:1-41

Pentecost and the Holy Spirit

Many of you like me have been through the era where the in question seemed to be “Have you been baptised in the Spirit”.

It was a trick question as what they actual meant to ask was “Do you speak in tongues”. And often they did not truly understand that question either but their basis was this famous passage which we need to look at since today is Pentecost.

So we are going to do a Holy Spirit 101 – the basics based on other sermons you have heard me preach but which I hope will leave you with a true biblical understanding of the Holy Spirit and what should be happening in your lives.

So let us start with the link many make between having the Holy Spirit and talking in tongues. Some say you must and yet many do not and in the wrong circles you get looked down on for that.

However the answer lies in 1 Corinthians 12

1 Corinthians 12:29-31 (ANIV)

²⁹ Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? ³⁰ Do all have gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret? ³¹ But eagerly desire the greater gifts. ~~And now I will show you the most excellent way.~~

From that not everyone is expected to talk in tongues but that does not let you off the hook – as well as the fruits of the spirits we should each be displaying at least one of the gifts of the Spirit for as that I Corinthians passage says “*eagerly desire the greater gifts*”

As I often mention that eager is a very active word which is not covered by sitting back and seeing what happens while hoping the status quo while suffice.

But we will come back to that.

The question I started with has an inbuilt assumption and that is that baptism in the Holy Spirit is a separate event in your life and, biblically, that is not true and so the whole demand that you have this event is based on a false premise.

In the Old Testament it was a rare thing for someone to have the spirit of God upon him and that is why in the New Testament we find the Holy Spirit descending on Jesus at his baptism.

And after that he was full of the Holy Spirit and so we also have the disciples gathered in one place. Note what the bible says here in verse 1

Acts 2:1 (ANIV)

¹ When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place.

It does not say the 12, or those who had certain qualifications – it says all of them. Bear in mind this was after Jesus had risen from the dead with all the earthquakes and holy men

rising from the dead; it was after Jesus had appeared time and again to them and I Corinthians 15 tells us that at one point he appeared to 500 at the same time.

So all of them were gathered in one place and were baptised in the Holy Spirit in a rather spectacular way.

So up until then baptism in the Spirit was a separate event and only happen to a select few. At Pentecost the limitation of the select few was removed and all received the Holy Spirit.

But Pentecost was a time of great change as the power to be Christians came on the whole church.

And one thing that changed was when the holy Spirit descends on you.

But things were changing and one of the answers about when we receive the Spirit is on the walls of the Church.

Who can see it?

That comes from Ephesians 1

Ephesians 1:13-14 (ANIV)

¹³ *And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, ¹⁴ who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession—to the praise of his glory.*

If the Spirit is to be the seal and deposit there is only one time you can receive him and that is at the moment that you believe and indeed our passage today gives us the same answer

Acts 2:38 (ANIV)

³⁸ *Peter replied, "Repent and be baptised, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.*

Although only having just received the Spirit the inspired words of Peter give us the answer to the question.

When you believe and accept that all-encompassing forgiveness from God at that moment you receive the Spirit to be the seal showing you are different from the world and the deposit of that sure hope of the eternal life which is held for you in heaven.

So like it or not you have the Holy Spirit if you believe in Christ and I believe that applies to all of us here.

So what happens when you receive the Spirit for becoming a believer changes everything for you and so having the Holy Spirit in your life cannot leave you the same – you now have God in your everyday life – that has to make a difference.

Like it or not you will receive **power**

Acts 1:8 (ANIV)

⁸ *But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."*

Power is one of those things that we spend more energy trying to get it back into the box than we would spend if we would let that power work in us.

But we don't like it because we just know it will take us out of our comfort zone but let me reassure you – it will take you out of your comfort zone.

In your zone you are quietly getting on with doing things in your own power and so you don't need the power of the Spirit – the power of God.

You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. We have already seen that the Spirit comes upon us when we accept Christ and so we all have the Spirit and we all have the power.

Is it in use or have we got it firmly taped up on a shelf in the furthest darkest room we could find and we are jolly well going to keep it there?

Release the power and see where God will take you be it spiritually or physically – wasn't it Elijah who was in the habit of being transported from one physical place to another so that when he was taken up to heaven his disciples insisted on searching for him in case this had happened again.

Who knows what the Spirit will lead you into but it will be out of your comfort zone and will be far better for you than where you are now for God has great plans for each of us.

The Spirit will also Teach and remind you

John 14:26 (ANIV)

²⁶ *But the Counsellor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.*

This is one that you cannot stop although you can ignore it to the point it is a very small voice.

The Spirit will act as your conscience nudging you when you get it wrong or when you are trying hard not to do something. People have described this as a hand on their back gently pushing them. Not forcing just pushing them.

How do you respond to the Holy Spirit? Do you listen to those nudges or do you stay in your chair hoping someone else will step up?

Because the Spirit is also there for the good of all

1 Corinthians 12:7 (ANIV)

⁷ *Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good.*

So if you are resisting the Spirit it is not only you who is missing out but it is all those around you! You are depriving them because you will not let the Spirit act in your life.

All this power, teaching and reminding is for the common good. Well if each of us is built up a little more then the body of Christ in this placed is stronger and the body of Christ in this nation is stronger. That has to be for the common good,

And this is done through the fruits and the gifts of the Spirit.

Firstly the fruits from Gal 5

Galatians 5:22-23 (ANIV)

²² *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,*
²³ *gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.*

The Holy Spirit will produce these fruits – a tree does not decide that it will have some fruit and not others.

The Holy Spirit will produce these fruits if we are allowing him to operate in our lives.

That's the crunch – is that power on that shelf or is it ready to be used?

But look at that list of fruits – why would you not want them? They are good things to have and to have in increasing measure.

And yet because we resist the power we miss out on the fruit or produce small and disfigured fruits rather than rich and luscious fruit.

Also we would rather like to pick and choose the fruit perhaps depending on how today is going or who we are meeting up with.

And then we hit the real fun ones – the gifts of the Spirit in 1 Cor 12

1 Corinthians 12:8-11 (ANIV)

⁸ *To one there is given through the Spirit the message of wisdom, to another the message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, ⁹ to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, ¹⁰ to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues. ¹¹ All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he gives them to each one, just as he determines.*

Now we know that not everyone has all of these – he gives them to each one just as he determines but what we would rather is that he gave us none of them.

These are super scary uncomfortable because these will take us out of the boat because that is how we see God at work.

But when Richard and Nia were here and praying with each one of us we liked it and it really touched us – they were just using these gifts.

And these gifts exist among us even if we do not acknowledge them. When you feel you ought to make contact with someone it is just a word of wisdom.

When you feel someone is having troubles that is just a word of knowledge.

And we are told to eagerly desire the greater gifts!

They are not something to be avoided but embraced because they are there for the common good and they have a strange way of blessing the giver as well as the receiver.

So that is a gallop through the Holy Spirit primer – there is nothing new in what I have said today; it has all been said before.

Are we going to embrace the Spirit and be a Church that is known for following the leading of the Spirit or are we going to stay in our trenches and hope this all passes over for another year?

Our choice – I have explained which one is better for you and better for those around you and as a final clue it is not the option with the trenches!!