

## The Heart of Pentecost

God always prepares His people for something new that He's going to do. He prepared His people for the flood through the preaching and work of Noah. He prepared the Israelites that they would be enslaved in Egypt for 400 years and then prepared for their release by raising up Moses. He prepared the Israelites, and the world, for the coming of Jesus. Jesus prepared His disciples for His death, but He also prepared them for what lay beyond His death and resurrection – He had promised the Holy Spirit, the Comforter who would be with them after He had ascended to heaven. Pentecost is the fulfilment of this promise.

Acts 1: 1 – 8; Acts 2: 1 – 13

### 1) A focus on the work of Christ

- Pentecost means fifty as it is fifty days after the festival of Passover, when Jesus was crucified and rose from the dead.
- Prior to this Pentecost was referred to as “The Feast of Weeks” and is the festival celebrating the harvest. Some rabbinic traditions referred to it as “The Feast of 50 days”.
- Although the Passover and The Feast of Weeks were unrelated festivals, one commemorating the Passover of judgement through the blood of a lamb, and the other celebrating the practical event of the harvest of wheat and barley.
- Pentecost now links the two by its very name. It's possible that the rabbinic traditions were being prophetic by calling it the Feast of 50 days.
- The linking of the two is significant as Jesus intended sending the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, not as an isolated event but as an integration to His crucifixion.
- Without the crucifixion Pentecost has no meaning.
  - There is a lot of hype in churches without substance due to the focus on the anointing and empowering of the Holy Spirit without the work of the cross.
  - Power without the solid foundation of the crucified Christ takes us off at tangents. It leads us into the feel good religion without the need for repentance, forgiveness and reconciliation with God that is found at the cross.
  - This is the type of Christianity where people are full of Christian jargon but live lives contrary to the Gospel.
  - Charismatic comes from charisma which means “gift”. However it is unfortunate that the term charismatic personality is equated to an exuberant personality as the gifts are given for the building up of the body of Christ through service, not loudness.
  - Some examples where the working of the Holy Spirit wouldn't be equated with noise and exuberance at all are the gifts of knowledge, wisdom, faith, healing, service, leadership.
  - Many men and women have been used by God in powerful ways although they don't have charismatic personalities at all.
- Without Pentecost the crucifixion has no power.
  - This is the other side of the coin.
  - After Jesus died and rose from the dead the disciples were a group of unsure scared people who didn't know what to do from there. Their leader was gone and they didn't know what was expected of them. They went into hiding and some of them went back to fishing – their old life.
  - As valid as the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus were they had no practical impact on the disciples until Pentecost, which made the work of Christ alive in them.
- Many people know about the work of Christ but remain dead to Him as it is the Holy Spirit who makes us alive to God.

## 2) Unity in the body of Christ

- They were all together in one place.
- They were a united body when the Holy Spirit came upon them.
- Being a Christian means belonging to Jesus and His church which is His body.
- Jesus intended his church to be a community of believers not a mass of individualistic Christians.
- It is in the unity of the body of Christ that God commands His blessing.
  - Psalm 133 How good and pleasant it is when God's people live together in unity! It is like precious oil poured on the head, running down on the beard, running down on Aaron's beard, down on the collar of his robe. It is as if the dew of Hermon were falling on Mount Zion. For there the LORD bestows his blessing, even life forevermore.
- Paul also highlights the unity of the body of Christ
  - Ephesians 4: 1 – 6 As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called ; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.
- If we want to experience the fullness of the blessings of the Lord we need to be united in the body of Christ irrespective of our differences.
  - Make every effort means that it takes work to do this.

## 3) The enabling power of the Holy Spirit.

- While they were together they were all filled with the Holy Spirit.
- This was the promise of Jesus fulfilled.
- The Holy Spirit took this group of uneducated weak men and transformed them to be the men that Jesus intended them to be.
- The infilling of the Holy Spirit wasn't something that was mustered up by will power, and it wasn't hidden that they had to ask each other if they've received the Holy Spirit. It was obvious to everyone.
- Is it obvious to others that you're full of the Holy Spirit?
- He enabled them to speak in tongues in such a way that they fearlessly declared the wonders of God
  - Being full of the Holy Spirit removes our fears and inhibitions and gives us a boldness that we never had before.
- They didn't stay inside and have a nice Pentecostal church service but declared the wonders of God in public where people who had gathered from all over the world for Pentecost heard them in amazement.
  - This was another promise being fulfilled – the Gospel will be declared to all nations.
  - You will be my witness in Jerusalem.... (Acts 1: 8)
- The Holy Spirit enables us:
  - To know God in truth.
  - To understand and experience the work of Jesus Christ.
  - To live according to what He has done
  - To declare Him with boldness and truth.