

## **PENTECOST FIRE – 1**

### **“UNLEASHING THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT... AGAIN!”**

*When the Feast of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Without warning there was a sound like a strong wind, gale force—no one could tell where it came from. It filled the whole building. Then, like a wildfire, the Holy Spirit spread through their ranks, and they started speaking in a number of different languages as the Spirit prompted them. Acts 2:1-4*

This morning I'm beginning a 6-part series on the Person, Purpose and Power of the Holy Spirit; by considering the 6 things the Holy Spirit came to do. I, in no way, claim to be an expert on any of these subjects, but have been convinced that there is a great need for people in our world, today; to understand who the Holy Spirit IS, what the Holy Spirit came to do, how our lives might benefit by including the influence of the Spirit ... and most important of all; how desperately the world, today needs what the Holy Spirit has promised to do.

The Christian individual and Christian Churches today are functionally impotent for a variety of reasons; self-centeredness, selfishness, materialism and consumerist leanings; theological inattention; immature discipline; oppressive and out of touch administrative structures; wayward and unhealthy life styles; shoddy stewardship; to name just a few of our “issues”. But the greatest need we have as a church and as an individual trying to follow Jesus; is the need to unleash the power of the Holy Spirit into our midst and into our lives. Why would we not want to avail ourselves of every available resource to successfully navigate the pitfalls of this present age? Why would we think we can live a Holy Spiritual life...without the Holy Spirit?

I know many people are dazed and confused when it comes to answering this question or considering this proposition. We don't understand the Holy Spirit, and frankly, anything that occasionally bears the name “Holy Ghost”...scares most of us to death.

Factor in the schisms and church splits caused by abusers of the spiritual gifts, the sensationalism surrounding televised healings, deliverances, words of knowledge and the like, and its no wonder us mild-mannered-middle of the road-mundane-Midwestern Methodists want nothing to do with this strangely unknown third person of the Trinity. We'll just focus on the love of God...thank you very much. Well, we have done so to our detriment for too long. It's time to unleash...AGAIN the power of the Holy Spirit; it's time to reignite the original FIRE of Pentecost...AGAIN. It's time to open ourselves to ALL that God has for us. It's time to surrender to the Holy Spirit world that surrounds us, and open ourselves to the unending resources available to us.

A.W. Tozer remarked that if the Holy Spirit was removed entirely from the modern church, 95% of her ministries would continue unaffected. But, he continues, if the Holy Spirit was removed from the NT, 1<sup>st</sup> Century church...95% of her ministries would not exist! That's what we need again. Our church has a rich history of doing many good things in the life of this community, in the lives of our members and guests, in the life of the Dakotas, in lives around the world through our missional generosity. But we will need more than a rich tradition to assure our faithful success in the future. We will need much more than visionary leadership, and strategic planning for faithful success in our future. We will need much more than a new facility and new ministries it will enhance; to be faithfully successful in the future. We are going to need to be captured again by the person, the purpose and the power of the unleashed Holy Spirit of God; promised by Jesus, and delivered in full at his death, resurrection and ascension.

This Holy Spirit was promised to the disciples, then breathed into them just days after Jesus died. This Holy Spirit was active and alive from the very beginning, hovering over the yet uncreated vastness that existed in the mind of God and the heart of the Trinity.

This Holy Spirit has been working throughout history, but came most fully alive on the Day of Pentecost. It is time for the Holy Spirit to come alive again, in you, in me, in our church, in our community, in our country, yes, even in our world!

The first thing the Holy Spirit will do for us may be the most essential, not the most flamboyant, not the most sensational, not going to generate the best TV ratings; but the most necessary! The first purpose of the Holy Spirit is found in John 16:8

*And when He (The Holy Spirit) comes, He will convict the world of its sin, and of God's righteousness, and of the coming judgment. John 16:8*

## **1. THE HOLY SPIRIT CONVICTS US OF SIN**

We may not understand the Holy Spirit, but we know a few things about sin, don't we? We don't like to think about or discuss our sin, but we must. There is planted deep within the human psyche of human beings everywhere, a basic knowledge of right and wrong. Each of us has been personally fashioned by the hand of God to include within us a 'conscience'; an inner compass that reveals when we have done wrong, and when we have done right.

For some, conviction feels like a gnawing in the pit of their stomach, for others, an uneasiness in their minds, for some, a heaviness in their hearts, for some a general sense of dis-ease in their spirit. However you might describe what you feel when you have done wrong; some call this guilt, some call it conviction; it is the result of doing something we know to be wrong, or not doing something we are told would be right. It is the Holy Spirit that prompts that feeling or impression in your inner being. Whether you have given your life to Christ or not, doesn't make any difference, the Holy Spirit works within each human spirit to remind us when we sin.

However, this conviction doesn't last forever, just until we confess our sin, and honestly repent of our wrong doing. You'll not find on my list of Holy Spirit tasks; to make humans feel guilty. Yes, the Spirit convicts us when we mess up, but that same Holy Spirit ushers in the floodwaters of forgiveness when once we have appropriately admitted our wrongdoing, and committed to making things right. Conviction is like the lights dimming before a concert begins; it gets our attention, and demands that we prepare ourselves for what is about to happen. In terms of our sin, we must admit it, confess it, repent from repeating it, and let the concert begin.

John 16:8 also reminds us that any consideration of sin must not be divorced from an understanding of God's righteousness, and the prospect of God's judgment. When we sin, we must remember that we don't just sin against a neighbor or stranger, but we sin against God. The standard used to measure the character and quality of our lives is the Righteousness of God. That's a bit tough to swallow huh? Who of us can reach that goal? Who of us when measuring our righteousness against God's own stands a chance of meeting the standard? None of us, that's the point! The Holy Spirit wants us to know of our helplessness, so as to increase our dependency. When we can come to see that we are helpless, and all our good works, and vain attempts to be good, are useless in making us equal to God; then we'll have to look to other sources to make it! That primary source is none other than the Holy Spirit.

We fail miserably when measuring our mettle against God's, but we shudder when we consider God's judgment...or we should! We don't talk much about this anymore. We have sugar-coated the gospel, to make it more palatable, and along the way we've just sort of side-stepped this other important truth: that there will be a judgment, and all of us will be held accountable.

I don't know if the Great White Throne is metaphorical or not, or if the judgment will include a video version of all the sins we have committed. Man I hope not. I don't know if the judgment seat trial will come at the moment we die, or when Christ comes back to earth, after the 3 year tribulation, or after the 1000 year millennium, or just before Satan is cast into the lake of fire. There is much about this judgment that I don't know. That doesn't bother me near as much as what I do know!

One of The Holy Spirit's jobs will be to convict humans of their sins, remind us of God's righteousness, and warn us of God's judgment. I don't know this Judgment's form; but I know its function; to separate those who have humbly repented of their sins from those who have rebelliously ignored theirs. I don't know the details of the consequences of that judgment, but I do know that I want to be with Jesus, and I don't want to spend even one second in the hell of eternity separated from Jesus.

So, whatever this judgment ends up being; there is only one thing you really need to know. Your defense attorney is the same as your prosecutor! The One who brings the charges against you by rendering your conviction, is the same one who stands beside you representing Jesus who died for you. When on the witness stand you are called to make your defense, there will be only one question; there will be only one answer. What did you do with Jesus? What did you do with my son? The Holy Spirit will help you answer; "I confess that I am a sinner; saved by the grace, mercy and blood of Jesus. That is my entire defense, there is nothing more."

My friends, I'm not trying to use this threat of judgment to scare you into making some decision for or against Jesus. I'm just trying to be faithful to the Word of God as I understand it.

We need the Holy Spirit to convict and convince us of our human sinfulness. We've kind of got self-righteous blinders on most of the time. We need the Holy Spirit to help us realistically measure ourselves against the unreachable standard of God's righteousness. We tend to think more highly of our ability to save ourselves...than God does. And we need the Holy Spirit to represent us as we stand on the judgment seat before God, because in and of ourselves...we are defenseless. See now, why this Holy Spirit stuff is so important?

And that leaves us today with a decision, maybe more than one. Have we come to see that our sin is no secret to God? It may be a secret from our husband or wife or parents, or church or community; but God knows and God sees and the Holy Spirit, if He is true to His character has touched you in your sensitive place today. So what shall we do with that...guilt? Well, we can just hang on a few minutes, and wait out the final prayer and song, and try and sneak out the back door. But you're not sneaking away from God! I'm not the one making you feel guilty. It's not my voice that is compelling you to choose, it's not this church that is getting to you, it's God, it's the Holy Spirit, and no matter where you go, you'll not be able to shake HIM!

Better would we be to decide today, to honestly admit; I'm a sinner, I need forgiveness, I'm tired of living the lie my sinful life has become, I need help, I need a Savior, I need the Holy Spirit, I need God in my life...today! If this is your heart desire then repeat this prayer after me:

Lord Jesus I've been made fully aware of my sinfulness today...  
I readily admit that I have fallen short of Your righteousness...  
I know in my present condition I face Your judgment; defenseless...  
So, I beg of you now, please forgive my sins...wash away my guilt...  
reignite my love for you...  
Help me to begin living for you instead of against you...  
Help me be a better husband....wife...parent...child...  
Help me be a better follower of Jesus...  
Help me to live faithfully and not fearfully this week...  
Help me allow the Holy Spirit to confirm within me the decisions I'm making now..  
Save me...renew me...use me...AMEN

**PENTECOST FIRE – 1**  
**“UNLEASHING THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT... AGAIN!”**

*When the Feast of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Without warning there was a sound like a strong wind, gale force—no one could tell where it came from. It filled the whole building. Then, like a wildfire, the Holy Spirit spread through their ranks, and they started speaking in a number of different languages as the Spirit prompted them. Acts 2:1-4*

*And when He (The Holy Spirit) comes, He will convict the world of its sin, and of God's righteousness, and of the coming judgment. John 16:8*

**1. THE HOLY SPIRIT \_\_\_\_\_**