

What Does The Outpouring Of The Holy Spirit Mean?

Act 2:1-8, 12-21

Archibald Wallace

This week I brought a jar of Ketchup home from Kroger. I opened the flip cap and squeezed and nothing happened, nothing came out. The jar was full, but nothing came out. Then, I remembered. There was a little paper cover that had to be peeled away. Then, the Ketchup would flow, if There's always an "IF" isn't there.

Today, is the birthday of the church. It's called Pentecost. In AD 33 on this many days after Easter, something happened and the church began. On that day a ragtag bunch of folks, about 120 in all, with no distinctions or accomplishments that the world knew, were waiting. Jesus had told them to wait, and they were waiting, Thank goodness they weren't Americans, who can't wait for anything, and want everything instant this or fast that. These folks, men and women, had listened to Jesus, and they were waiting but who knew for what.

They could tell you the words, a promised Helper, someone or something that was going to come along side of them, an Advocate, whatever that meant. They heard its name--a Spirit-- but how would they know. I mean they had had Jesus for three years and his signs and miracles and his resurrection. These were big deals, you couldn't miss them, but now they were waiting and wondering, will we know it when we see it? They were like my Ketchup jar. Full of good stuff, but sealed up, not yet able, not yet ready, to do what they had been or. Waiting. And then it happened. As Footballer John Madden would have said, if he had been covering the event, BOOM, BIF, BAM! . But, let's let God tell the story through the writer Luke in Acts 2:1-8 and 12-21. Listen for the Boom!

Acts 2

- 1 When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place.
- 2 Suddenly, a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting.
- 3 They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them.
- 4 All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.
- 5 Now they were staying in Jerusalem God fearing Jews from every nation under heaven.
- 6 When they heard the sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard their own language being spoken.
- 7 Utterly amazed they asked, "Aren't these men who are speaking Galileans?"
- 8 Then how is it that each of us heard them in our native language?"
- 12 Amazed and perplexed, they asked one another, "What does this mean?"
- 13 Some however made fun of them and said, "They have had too much to drink."
- 14 Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd
- 15 "Fellow Jews and all of you who live in Jerusalem, let me explain this to you; listen carefully to what I say.
These people are not drunk, as you suppose. It is only nine in the morning.
- 16 No. This (what you are seeing), was spoken by the prophet Joel.

- 17 In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy. Your young men will see visions. Your old men will dream dreams
18 Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy.”
21 And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.

The Word Of The Lord!

Pentecost is a big deal. It was the day 120 people stuck their fingers into the proverbial electrical socket. They buzzed, they jumped, they talked, they preached, and everyone around them noticed the difference in them. They were **charged**, electrified. The Holy Spirit had come, and in a whoosh, they were no longer just disciples; following and listening and helping ---they were apostles. They got up and preached, and then they went---to the corners of the world. And everywhere they went, they left their mark-- Christians. They went to India, to Pakistan, to Afghanistan, to Africa and to Europe. Rome was in touch with the world. And, they used the great empire of Rome and the Roman peace to go. They couldn't just sit there anymore. The charge within them was overwhelming. It was the Holy Spirit.

And, they were **changed**. They were through being the wimps of the upper room, hiding, fearful. They stepped out, they spoke up, they took the risks of talking about a new kingdom, God's kingdom, the one and only God's kingdom, and they took the good news to any who would listen.

In her poem, *Reaching For Rainbows*, Ann Weems wrote of Pentecost and this change. She wrote of the change that occurred in Jesus. He was no longer Jesus, now he was/is the Christ, and she argues that now, finally, they got it, they knew his name, his new name Messiah, and they knew what the coming of Messiah meant: She wrote:

Christ's name is no longer tradition; it is **Newness**.

Christ's name is **Tear The Walls Down**, not build new ones.

Christ name means: **Out In The Market Place**, not hidden and kept as a secret.

Christ's name is **Feed My Sheep**, not it's all relevant,

Christ's name is **Changed Lives**, not keep the Status Quo.

Christ's name is **New Creation**, not more of the same.

Pentecost says the coming of the Holy Spirit means **change**, big change, a new way of thinking change. The disciples changed, and so must we.

One other thought about Pentecost. It is **continual**. It happened in AD 33, and it hasn't stopped. The Holy Spirit has been sent. It changed disciples into Apostles, and it armed them with Resurrection Power, to go to the world and tell it of Jesus and all that God has done, and then to get out of the way and let the Spirit work. For it is the Spirit that **convicts**. Our job isn't to **convert**; our job is to go and share the good news, communicate --and let the Spirit do the rest.

And when the Spirit acts, our old folks will dream dreams and our young folks will see visions. The world will be upside down, changed, different, and the Holy Spirit will empower, and lead, and walk along side, and open us to see what can be done, and help us to understand what Christ said and what Christ meant. Jesus told his disciples at the Last Supper that he was sending a helper, that they would not be alone. God with us as Son, God with us as Spirit. Never to be taken away, never to come and go,

as in the past, but to be there, here, for every Christian in every age, engaged in the Great Commission of being God's priestly kingdom, God's Holy nation.

The Holy Spirit is here, it lives within us, it leads us to the doors that mark the changes of our lives, it calls us to open new doors, it shows us why our old ways are not enough for today.

Pentecost is the story of the church, of the change the church is supposed to bring, to be filled with, to share with others. Pentecost tells us the people of the church are supposed to be charged, electric, full of energy, unable to just sit there. And Pentecost tells us the gift of the Spirit is permanent. AD 33, AD 378, AD 1955, AD today. And if the Spirit lives within us, we can dream and we can see visions.

Martin Luther King stood before the Lincoln Memorial and shared with the world his dream that one day his four little children might live in a nation where they would not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character. We are moving that way, and we have miles to go before we sleep.

And, one last thing. Pentecost tells us what church ought to be. We are not a political wing of a government. We are not a third political party. The church was commissioned in AD 33 to tell the world about Christ, to take the good news to all and to live the good news so folks could look and see and know. I don't preach red or blue politics. It's not my job. My job is to tell you about what God has done, to tell you about Christ, and to tell you, there might not be another coming to you after me, this might be the day, a last day, so choose. But, if you choose, prepare to be changed beyond anything you can imagine. Prepare to be charged, so that even shy, quiet folks can tell you and show you about Jesus. Today's the day. You can be free, and you can live as God wants you to live, dreaming dreams, haaving vision.