

# “The Promise of Pentecost”

The Rev. S. Shane Nanney – June 5, 2022

Acts 2:1-21 – John 14:8-17

The word “Pentecost” designates the 50<sup>th</sup> day after Passover, which was a feast day. Also known as the *Feast of Weeks*, or *Feast of Harvest*.

It was on this day, in the book of Acts, that the Holy Spirit was poured out on the followers of Christ who were gathered in an upper room in Jerusalem. It was on this day that the church was born in a blaze of glory.

Sometime ago I read a statement from Dr. Jerry Vines, and I have never forgotten it. It said that the average Christian and the average church are bogged down somewhere between Calvary and Pentecost. They have been to Calvary for pardon, but they have not been to Pentecost for power. Bethlehem means God **with** us. Calvary means God **for** us. But Pentecost means God **in** us. Dr. Vines said, “those statements transformed my understanding of the person and work of the Holy Spirit. I believe that the average Christian is much like the Ephesians believers when the apostle Paul came to them in Acts 19:2 and said to them ‘DID YOU RECEIVE THE HOLY SPIRIT WHEN YOU BELIEVED? THEY REPLIED THAT THEY DIDN’T EVEN KNOW THAT THERE WAS A HOLY SPIRIT.’ Many Christians do not understand the role of the Holy Spirit and they have not appropriated the power of the Holy Spirit in their own personal life.”

J.B. Phillips, who gave us the familiar paraphrase of the New Testament, wrote something like this a few years ago. He said that churches today are fat and out of breath through prosperity. They are muscle-bound through over-organization. What we need today is again, the wind and the flame of Pentecost.

I think all of us would agree that this is somewhat true. We need to recapture the power, which was experienced in such a mighty way when the church met together in the upper room and the day of Pentecost occurred.

Someone else said, this is the day of Pentecost substitutes. Lacking the real power and fire from God, we try to produce our own fireworks. We are like auxiliary power supplies; batteries, so when the real power goes out, we can switch on our own power supply. We are living in the day of program, propaganda, pep and promotions, and all of these things trying to duplicate what God, the Holy Spirit, did on the day of Pentecost when the fire fell, and the wind blew. These are the days of Pentecostal substitutes. We create a storm; we whip our own flames; but we lack the reality and the warmth of the real thing. This is an indictment against modern day church-ianity.

My heart is hungry to experience the power of Pentecost. I want all God has for the church and Christians today!

So, I want to talk for a little while about Pentecost, not a denomination. Not Pentecostalism, not a holiness church or a belief . . . but the special promise of the Father.

One Baptist preacher said, “Pentecost is not a denomination, but is an experience every child of God should receive.”

We are privileged to live in a generation when God is again pouring out His Spirit in a mighty way.

In Peter’s sermon in Acts 2:38-39, Peter replied, “*REPENT AND BE BAPTIZED, EVERYONE OF YOU, IN THE NAME OF JESUS CHRIST FOR THE FORGIVENESS OF YOUR SINS. AND YOU WILL RECEIVE THE GIFT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. THE PROMISE IS FOR YOU AND YOUR CHILDREN AND FOR ALL WHO ARE FAR OFF, FOR ALL WHOM THE LORD OUR GOD WILL CALL.*”

In effect he said this outpouring of the Spirit is not a special blessing for a special few in a special age. It is for all who have truly repented

and believed the gospel. It is for all who have found remission of sins in the blood of the Lamb.

The real question is not whether as a Christian you have a right to the gift of the Holy Spirit, but whether you have claimed that right and availed yourself of the promise. Have you been filled with the Holy Spirit?

Many of us have allowed religious tradition to rob us of the power of God. Religious tradition says the gift of the Holy Spirit was for the apostles, just to get the church started, or, just for the early church, to help them win pagans and heathens to Christ.

Look, there are more lost people in the world today than there ever were. We need the power of God today as much as ever!

Peter said *“THE PROMISE IS FOR YOU – TO ALL WHO WERE HEARING HIS VOICE, AND TO YOUR CHILDREN, THE NEXT GENERATION, AND TO ALL THAT ARE FAR OFF”* – that is through the ages, even up to us today. Even for all whom the Lord shall call – that means for all who follow Christ. The promise of the Holy Spirit is for all people.

So, what is the promise? It is the pouring out of the Holy Spirit upon all flesh, both men and women. All will be able to prophesy, see visions, and dream dreams. We will receive the power of God to minister to the world. Yes, we will get what we need to change the world for the better.

Ten days after Jesus ascended into heaven, he sent the Holy Spirit, and it filled the upper room. Peter’s sermon declared, “This is it!” This is the fulfillment of the promise!

The biblical record in the book of Acts indicates that Mary, the mother of Jesus, the disciples, and the other women and brethren received the promise.

In Acts 8 it talks about the revival in Samaria where a deacon preached, and many believed and were baptized. Later the apostles laid hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit.

In Acts 9, Saul of Tarsus got saved, three days later Ananias laid hands on him and prayed for him to be filled with the Holy Spirit.

In Acts 10, the whole household of Cornelius sat and listened as Peter preached the gospel unto them. While he was preaching, “THE HOLY SPIRIT FELL ON ALL WHO HEARD THE WORD.” In Verse 45, “...AND ON THE GENTILES ALSO WAS Poured OUT THE GIFT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.”

In Acts 19, Paul found certain disciples in Ephesus who didn’t know anything about the Holy Spirit. Paul laid hands on them, and they were filled with the Holy Spirit.

Today, it is Pentecost and God is about to do something new! God is going to change us and how we look at worship for at least the next eight weeks, with hopes that it is going to set in and change how we look at everything.

What about you? Have you accepted the promise?

Have you experienced Pentecost?

Have you received the gift of the Holy Spirit?

As Peter said, “*THE PROMISE IS FOR YOU.*”

Let us not be satisfied until we have moved from Calvary to Pentecost. Let us reach out with arms open wide in faith, and say, “Lord, I take what you give. Fill me with your Spirit! Amen.”