

Pentecost's Promise, Power and Purpose

This morning's message is titled, "Pentecost's Promise, Power and Purpose." By my calculations it was 1981 years ago the church was born. That morning, when the Jewish Day of Pentecost was being celebrated, all the believing Jews were gathered for hundreds of miles around to observe the sealing of the Old Covenant. The word "Pentecost" means "the 50th day." It was the Jewish name Shavuot (meaning weeks or sevens), the observance of 7 times seven days or seven weeks, plus one. The "plus one" was the feast of the Passover that, in God's purposeful way, was also the day Jesus, the final sacrificial lamb, was in the tomb after sacrificing His life on what we now call "Good Friday." See how marvelously it all works together though the span of some 1,534 years separated them. But Jesus completed what God had started back their in Egypt.

This segment of the calendar of God had be set in motion when Moses was used to bring the ten plagues upon the nation of Egypt the last of which was The Plague of Death to the first born. God gave specific instructions to the Jews on the preparation of a special meal of lamb, bitter herbs and unleavened bread to be eaten in haste, with belts tied and sandals strapped to signify that they were people about to go on a journey.

That journey, that began the very next day, would take the children of Israel forty years to go the distance that traders of that era spent three weeks traveling. The beginning was Passover and some 1534 years later Jesus was crucified on that same day and time line God had laid out.

Pentecost was to be 50 days after Passover to celebrate the early harvest of first fruits. Many scholars believe it was also to signify the implementation of the Old Covenant beginning with God's promise to Noah to never flood the earth again and when God gave the children of Israel the Ten Commandments on Mt. Sinai. The stated reason in the Old Testament was the celebration of the first fruits. That perfectly lines up with Christ's fulfillment centuries later.

God chose that day to begin something new and show the manifestation of His New Covenant.

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The promise, the power and the purpose of Pentecost are what we consider today.

The promise came from Jesus Christ, who is the promised one where in Acts 1:8 He says:

“But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”

This crucial “fueling” component of the Great Commission is this promise from Jesus Christ, who had just proved He was God in the flesh by His submitting to crucifixion as the pure Lamb of God, thus fulfilling the God ordained requirement of blood to cover sin and then resurrecting from the dead, as He had prophesied. This was the necessary equipping, enabling, and empowering infilling from God on high to be witnesses to the known and unknown world. He promised His disciples (that would be us now) that we would receive this power when the Holy Spirit comes upon us. This is the same power God used to raise Jesus from the dead, the same power that inspired the writers of the Old and New Testaments. This same power is available to every true believer who trusts completely in the Lord Jesus Christ as their Savior and submits to Him as Lord of their life. This promised power is here today in us.

His promised power has a purpose. The stated purpose in Acts 1:8 is to be witnesses. Peter steps into that purpose as soon as he has this power. He didn't say, “I've never preached before! I have to study and get prepared. I've got some other priority that makes this not a good time for me. I'm going on a trip. I can't do that right now. This isn't a good time for me. I'm having a bad day. I have issues with my family I have to deal with. I was abused, neglected, hurt by the church and I'm ruined for ministry!” He didn't give an excuse, reason why or back out in any way shape or form. He stepped into his calling and trusted the Lord that the fullness of His Spirit was for a purpose and Peter was willing to be used by God for God's purpose. He was truly no longer his own man but God's man available for God's purpose any time, any where no matter what, and his own selfish desires had control on him, only the Holy Spirit.

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When Peter stood up with the eleven he spoke to the crowd of doubters and mockers boldly and without hesitation. We know there was nothing timid about Peter but he had not taken the lead until this moment. "This moment," was when the Holy Spirit had come upon him. He was ready. He was equipped. He was empowered with supernatural power from God Himself. No X-Man has been created by Stan Lee at Marvel Comics that can boast of the Power of God being in him! This was and is REAL power that allows ordinary people to do extraordinary things. That day the extraordinary thing Peter did was to **be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem**, just like Jesus said they would be. Peter's purpose was realized once he was filled with the power that Jesus promised.

This Jesus who according to Hebrews 13:8 is the same yesterday, today, and forever, is able to do the same thing in every one of us today. That first impromptu message that Peter delivered was so anointed by the Holy Spirit that three thousand people accepted Jesus as their Savior right there on the spot and from that day on day after day people were being added to the church daily. That was Peter's purpose and it is our purpose.

The purpose we are to walk in today and every day for the rest of our lives is the fulfillment of the Great Commission. We are to have no excuses or reasons that we say we can't do it. To say we can't is to refuse the God of the universe His command for our life.

When He commands that we are to love Him with ALL our hearts, ALL our souls, ALL our minds and ALL our strength it leaves us no other way to be. If we are His we must, like Peter, walk into our purpose whenever the opportunity presents it's self.

Peter was way down the road of his purpose. He had already given everything else up. He left his business, his village, his old life and he had put his trust completely on his Lord, who he knew to be the Son of God. He had seen enough to say to himself, "There is no turning back. I must do all that Jesus calls me to do by the guidance of His Holy Spirit."

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We need to be in that same place in our lives. Sold out! No question about who sets your priorities.

There is a great freedom that the Lord wants us to experience when we are sold out to Him and Him alone. There is no question about what you are to do in the big picture. You do what you know He wants you to; no excuses, no hesitation, no limitations. You give 100%, 100% of the time and He will prosper you in all that you do FOR HIM.

This is the message through out the word of God. From Genesis to Revelation the repeating drone of “trust and obey, trust and obey” sings from the Holy Spirit into our hearts to keep us moving forward and never looking back. But do we go blindly forward with no direction or goal? No. We have purpose within the purpose. Gifts of talents and treasures are ours to steward and invest our lives into.

The birth of the church, this Pentecost Sunday long ago, is much like the birth of our Lord. We observe the birth of Jesus Christ at Christmas as a gift that came from God, the gift of eternal life that comes through Him. Well, the Holy Spirit sent by this same Jesus, has gifts for us as well; gifts that were prepared not just for us but were wired into our very makeup, into our very being and personalities. These gifts were put in our innermost being to be revealed by the Holy Spirit to become a necessary part of the body of Christ called His church.

While obeying Great Commandments and fulfilling the Great Commission is what we all share in the responsibility of, the unique gifts of the Father to His children need to be discovered and nurtured in our lives so that we blossom into the complete and mature person He wants us to be.

There are seven gifts from our Father that are explained in the Bible: Romans 12:3-8; Prophecy, Ministry, Teaching, Exhortation, Giving, Leadership and Mercy. Over the next few weeks this summer we will dig into each one so that you can explore your heart to see what God gave you.

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For now, we are approaching our first outreach of the summer of 2011, Friday Night @ The Movies! We will start by simply serving the community hot dogs and popcorn and the love of Jesus Christ. I want to have every one of us put a priority on these Friday nights so that we will show our dedication to the community in our service and the dedication to the Lord by practicing our gifts with these people the Lord will send us.

So on this Pentecost Sunday, The Church's Birthday, I ask you to trust the promise of God that if we give generously it will be given generously back to us. Delight yourself in the Lord and He will give you the desires of your heart.

In this laboratory of the Springvale Park we will test our character, our commitment and our Christ to fulfill His promise that He will never leave us or forsake us; that He will give us the power to be witnesses here in our Jerusalem, the Village of Springvale.

We will discover our purpose as we step into it as Peter did, without hesitation, without fear, trusting that He who began this good work in us will be faithful to complete it. I ask you all to commit to taking part in this park outreach by being there ready to see what God will do.

He will do amazing things with those that make themselves completely available to Him. It's not about our capability; it's about our availability to be filled with His Spirit that we might walk in the fulfillment of His good works that He has prepared beforehand for us.

I am asking everyone to set up, sign up, show up and speak up that we might lift up the name of Jesus in our community so that our world would know that He is God!

Let us pray.