

**The Call to the Great Community!**  
**Lesson #5: “The Church was Born on Pentecost!”**  
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**May 19, 2024**

It's Pentecost Sunday and today we are going to learn about the importance of not only the historical event of Pentecost as read in Acts 2:1-13 earlier in the service, but also of the ongoing promise of the Holy Spirit that Jesus Christ gave us. Before I share this teaching with you, I want to share a personal word that God admonished me with in 2015, based on Galatians 3:1-3, “You foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified? This is the only thing I want to find out from you: did you receive the Spirit by the works of the Law, or by hearing with faith? Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh?” Let us learn from today's teaching how to be wise when it comes to the things of the Spirit and why learning about the Spirit is important. Do you see how Paul connected the receiving of the Spirit and salvation through faith, as well as the ongoing sanctification of your life unto the glory of God? Just as the church was born by the Spirit, so it grows in its maturity and unity as witnesses of the gospel by the power of the Spirit.

Listen to Jesus' clear teaching on the Holy Spirit so that you can hear this promise in the fullness of Jesus' teaching. From John 14:16-31 Jesus taught, “I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever; that is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see Him or know Him, but you know Him because He abides with you and will be in you. I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. After a little while the world will no longer see Me, but you will see Me; because I live, you will live also. In that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you. He who has My commandments and keeps them is the one who loves Me; and he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will disclose Myself to him.” Judas (not Iscariot) said to Him, “Lord, what then has happened that You are going to disclose Yourself to us and not to the world?” Jesus answered and said to him, “If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our abode with him. He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine, but the Father's who sent Me. These things I have spoken to you while abiding with you. But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you. Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Do not let your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful. You heard that I said to you, ‘I go away, and I will come to you.’ If you loved Me, you would have rejoiced because I go to the Father, for the Father is greater than I. Now I have told you before it happens, so that when it happens, you may believe. I will not speak much more with you, for the ruler of the world is coming, and he has nothing in Me; but so that the world may know that I love the Father, I do exactly as the Father commanded Me. Get up, let us go from here.”

Jesus gave us this clear teaching, along with other teachings, on the Holy Spirit. From Acts 1:4-5, immediately before His ascension to the right hand of the Father (please listen to last week's sermon if you have not yet listened to that important teaching on the Ascension of Jesus Christ), Jesus promised that His followers would be baptized in the Spirit: “Gathering them together, [Jesus] commanded them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait for what the Father had

promised, ‘Which,’ He said, ‘you heard of from Me; for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.’”

This is not the first time the followers of Jesus heard this invitation to be baptized in the Spirit because the baptism of the Spirit is not a secondary event to salvation itself, it is the very nature of salvation itself – the Spirit of God is our inheritance – the presence and power of God dwelling in us, the Giver of new life transforming us into a Temple of the Holy Spirit and inviting us into the eternal fellowship of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit by allowing us to participate in His divine nature, as Peter taught in 2 Peter 1:2-4, “Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord; seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence. For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, so that by them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust.” This is what it means to have salvation and being baptized in the Spirit should never be reduced to some secondary work of sanctification in our lives. The Son removed our sins from us through His sacrificial death on the Cross so that God could live in us through His Spirit!

From the beginning of the New Testament, the baptism of the Holy Spirit was distinguished apart from the baptism of John. John the Baptist’s baptism was a means of preparation for the coming of the Lord, a purification of oneself in preparation for the coming of the Lord in Christ Jesus. Listen to John the Baptist make this distinction in Matthew 3:11, “As for me, I baptize you with water for repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, and I am not fit to remove His sandals; He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire” (cf. Mark 1:7-8 & Luke 3:16).

The baptism of the Holy Spirit is the baptism of Jesus, which is the only form of New Covenant baptism that Jesus commanded His disciples to conduct immediately before His ascension to the right hand of the Father when He gave us the Great Commission of Matthew 28:18-20, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” This is how we are born again; at the moment of our salvation we participate in the event that birthed the church in the first place.

This issue is often confused by people misapplying the early church history book of Acts. The early church leaders dealt with this confusion, making a distinction between the baptism of John and the baptism in Jesus’ name. Acts 11:15-18 is a powerful illustration of the importance of understanding how yoked our justification in Christ is with the baptism of the Spirit. Listen to Peter give a first-hand witness of the work of the Spirit after Pentecost and in the early church among non-Jewish people, called Gentiles, “And as I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell upon them just as He did upon us at the beginning. And I remembered the word of the Lord, how He used to say, ‘John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.’ Therefore if God gave to them the same gift as He gave to us also after believing in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could stand in God’s way?” When they heard this, they quieted down and

glorified God, saying, “Well then, God has granted to the Gentiles also the repentance that leads to life.”

Why am I talk about all this? Because Pentecost is both a one-time historical event recorded in Acts 2 and the birth of the church – the promised fulfillment of Jesus Christ who ushered in the New Covenant. For which the baptism of the Spirit is a fulfillment of God’s promise to His people from Joel 2:28-32, “It will come about after this That I will pour out My Spirit on all mankind; and your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions. Even on the male and female servants I will pour out My Spirit in those days. I will display wonders in the sky and on the earth, Blood, fire and columns of smoke. The sun will be turned into darkness and the moon into blood before the great and awesome day of the LORD comes. And it will come about that whoever calls on the name of the LORD will be delivered; for on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there will be those who escape, as the LORD has said, even among the survivors whom the LORD calls.”

We will be in the age of Pentecost until we experience the fulfillment of God’s Word and the return of Jesus. Until that Day, we are to walk by the Spirit. As we learned last week, the ministry of the ascended Lord Jesus Christ, right now, is to intercede for us at the right hand of the Father until He returns. Simultaneously, the Father and Son have baptized us with the Spirit so that our eternity would be secure in His covenant faithfulness, and we would carry in our very person the same anointing that the Messiah Himself had: the Spirit of the Living God! The same power that rose Jesus from the grave lives in you and me – the resurrection power of God is in us!

Paul teaches us in Galatians 5:16-26 what it means to live our lives in the Spirit, “But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh. For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the Law. Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit. Let us not become boastful, challenging one another, envying one another.”

When the power of the risen Christ comes upon the members of His body through the promised coming of the Holy Spirit, Jesus is keeping His promise to His followers that He will always be with us and that we will become like Him. Jesus’ ascension did not leave us alone in this world. He promised to not leave us as orphans, and He kept His word! God came upon His church at Pentecost in a new and different way than Jesus’ incarnation at Christmas. We don’t live in the age of Christmas where Jesus’ uniquely incarnated God’s presence on earth; rather, we live in the age of Pentecost where God now *incarnates* (I’m using this word figuratively) in each of us through His Spirit living in us. Jesus has ascended and will come again, but until that time, the Spirit of the Living God indwells the Church of Jesus Christ in fulfillment of the words

of John the Baptist and Jesus Christ and the earliest church teachings. Just as Acts 2:32-33 taught us, “This Jesus God raised up again, to which we are all witnesses. Therefore having been exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He has poured forth this which you both see and hear.”

God is with us through His presence and power living in us. May God be exalted in and through His church. Let us never forget that this only can happen through the Spirit. I close with the same admonishment to you that God has given me, from Galatians 3:1-3, “You foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified? This is the only thing I want to find out from you: did you receive the Spirit by the works of the Law, or by hearing with faith? Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh?”