

Living In Expectation The Acts 1 Church Part 5

This is Pentecost Sunday and we continue our Living In Expectation series but first we are receiving members into the church. It seems an appropriate thing to do on Pentecost Sunday since the bible says on that day the Lord added to their number 3,000 who were saved. We are thankful to be adding to our number. As I call your name, I'll ask you to come and stand here at the front.

This is a great church and you are part of it. This is your church family. As we put our gifts and talents and resources together as the body of Christ, we can do more for the Lord and reach more people with the gospel and help more people than we ever could alone. Thanks for joining us and for being a part of what God is doing through this expression of his body.

For more than thirty-five years I've read this pledge to every person that's joined our church. Taken from Jerry Cook's book *Love, Acceptance and Forgiveness*, this is our pledge to you as members. "We are committed to you. You'll never knowingly suffer at our hands. We will never say or do anything, knowingly, to hurt you. We will always, in every circumstance seek to help you and support you. If you're down and we can lift you up, we'll do that. Anything we have that you need, we'll share with you and if need be we'll give it to you. No matter what we find out about you and no matter what happens in the future, either good or bad, our commitment to you will never change. And there's nothing you can do about it. You don't have to respond. We just love you, and that's what it means." Welcome! Let's pray.

Let's show our love and appreciation and welcome these into our church fellowship with a round of applause. I hope you can meet these newest members today and in the days ahead.

We've been talking about the Acts 1 church, as a church living in expectation. Part of what they were expecting was what happened on the day of Pentecost, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Jesus spoke of this in several ways. **Jesus referred to this experience as a gift. "Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised which you have heard me speak about." Acts 1:4**

Think about that for a moment. Jesus said the Father has a gift for you! We should desire any and every gift God has for us! "But I was raised (fill in the blank with any non-Pentecostal denomination) and we don't believe in this." This isn't about a denomination or doctrine, this is about a gift your Heavenly Father is offering. I encourage you to open your heart and mind to

the idea that God has more for you than you imagined, that this spiritual experience is a gift he has for you! Don't worry about speaking in tongues, focus on the gift of the Holy Spirit!

Jesus spoke about this experience as a baptism with or in the Holy Spirit. In water baptism, the preacher baptizes the believer in or with water. In this spiritual baptism, Jesus is the one doing the baptizing and He baptizes the believer in or with the Holy Spirit. **“For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.” Acts 1:5** What happens when you are baptized in water? You are immersed in the water. Drenched, every part of you covered and wet, every part of you outwardly and physically touched by the water. Think of the baptism in the Holy Spirit as being immersed in the Holy Spirit, drenched in, covered with the Holy Spirit. Every part of your life, inwardly and spiritually touched by the Holy Spirit, fully surrendered to Him and His purpose.

Jesus spoke about this experience as spiritual empowerment. “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you...” This was spiritual enablement, spiritual power to boldly proclaim the gospel to the whole world. They were going to need the Holy Spirit's power and anointing, the wisdom and guidance the Holy Spirit would provide for them as they began to preach the gospel to the whole world, to different cultures and nations. It meant power and wisdom to contextualize the gospel in those different cultures, to make Jesus known everywhere. Pentecost was originally a harvest festival and for the New Testament church it was still about the harvest, but this time a spiritual harvest of people brought to salvation and faith in Jesus. Pentecostal power is power to proclaim and bring in the harvest. That spiritual power also meant the Holy Spirit would confirm the word of God with miraculous signs following. It meant spiritual gifts and giftings given to believers to evangelize and to build up the church.

Jesus spoke about this experience as not only power to proclaim, but power to live as a witness, to be a witness. “...and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” Acts 1:8 This experience was not just power to witness, this was power to be a witness. It wasn't just about power to say the right words to win others to Christ, it was about power to live a holy life as Spirit empowered followers of Jesus. It meant the Holy Spirit's help in living a faithful and obedient life!

The baptism in the Holy Spirit, this wonderful experience, is offered to all followers of Jesus. The Acts 1 church expected it and we should too. The experience opens a door to greater awareness of God's presence, greater awareness of and participation in the work and operation of

the Holy Spirit, greater understanding of God's word. It opens the door to new ministry, to a new heavenly language of prayer and worship and intercession, to a new means of building up one's faith, to spiritual power and anointing to live, work, and witness for the Lord and so much more. It is the doorway to a richer spiritual life and deeper relationship with Jesus. Look at Acts 2.

“When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.” Acts 2:1-4

Jesus told them to wait and this is who and what they had been waiting for. I want to share a couple of observations from Acts 2 but I want to stress again that the Acts 1 church was living in expectation of a visitation, an outpouring of the Holy Spirit. They knew this was important, it was essential, because Jesus said so. If it was important for them in the first century, in the Acts 1 church, then this experience is important for us as well.

Obedience is the key. When the day of Pentecost came, they were exactly where Jesus told them to be, doing exactly what he told them to do. They were waiting for and expecting to receive the promised gift of the Father, the Holy Spirit. They were not resistant nor reluctant. For the past 10 days they had been gathering in this same room, praying, waiting, reading Scripture, talking, wondering “what will happen and when will it happen? How will we know the Spirit is poured out? What did he mean about us receiving power? What kind of change will this experience bring to us?”

They didn't know what they were praying for, they didn't know what the physical sign would be, that they would speak, pray and proclaim the glory of God in languages they had never learned, known languages and a language of the Spirit, but what they did know was the importance of obeying the Lord. “Jesus said wait so we're waiting. Jesus said we would receive power, so we are expecting to receive.” I told you last week **Obedience intersects with God's provision.** Let me add, **Obedience precedes the blessing of God in our lives.** They were expecting this gift of the Holy Spirit because they were obeying Jesus!

They were all together. The 120, Jesus' mother and brothers. His siblings had become believers in Jesus after the resurrection and now they are praying, expecting to receive whatever

Jesus had for them. Don't miss what God has for you. Don't let doubt or fear keep you from what the Lord has promised you. Obey the Lord and expect that he has more for you!

Look at this passage again. **“When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.” Acts 2:1-4**

Suddenly! They had been waiting for ten days, praying, fasting, but it happened suddenly! Sometimes God does a sudden work. He may have been preparing you for days or weeks or even years, maybe preparing you in ways you didn't even understand, you had to wait longer than you wanted, but the preparation has been laid and then – suddenly – it happens. Trust God during the preparation time, whether it's ten days or ten years. Trust God and the value of preparation, then when things happen suddenly, you are prepared and God can quickly use you and place you where he needs you.

Suddenly they heard a sound like a violent, rushing mighty wind that came from heaven. Suddenly they saw what seemed to be like tongues of fire that separated and came to rest upon each of them. Both wind and fire are signs of the Holy Spirit and his presence in the Old Testament. They were all filled with the Holy Spirit and they all began to speak in languages they had never learned as the Spirit enabled them. Spirit empowered speech was and is a sign of the baptism in the Holy Spirit.

Think about this outpouring for a moment. Talk about overwhelming your senses – hearing the wind, seeing the fire, feeling the presence of God the Holy Spirit, hearing yourself begin to speak in a language you didn't learn. It sounds strange and mystical I know. Maybe even a little frightening. Once again, they didn't know what to expect, but even though they didn't really understand everything that was happening, you know what I think? I think it felt like Jesus had come into the room! “We've felt this before!” Remember after the resurrection when the disciples were all together and at least twice Jesus suddenly was standing in the room with them, appearing behind their locked doors. I think the doors were locked again and this time Jesus baptized them in the Holy Spirit and it felt just like he was with them again, his presence with them in a spiritual sense. He told them, **“If you love me, you will obey what I command. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever –**

the Spirit of truth...you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you. I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.” John 14:15-18

They loved him and they obeyed his command – they stayed in Jerusalem and waited and prayed. Jesus asked and the Father sent the Holy Spirit and by the Holy Spirit’s presence, as they are baptized in the Holy Spirit, it’s as if Jesus is with them again. Jesus said the Holy Spirit would testify of Him, would point to him, would bring to their remembrance everything he had said. Jesus said when two or three gather in his name he would be in their midst (Mt. 18:20). How? By the Holy Spirit! This is not some strange thing, this is Jesus and the abiding, empowering presence of His Holy Spirit filling and infusing us.

The Acts 1 church was living in expectation of this gift, this promise and here it is: Pentecost. The Holy Spirit’s power and anointing given to believers to truly make them the body of Christ, the church, unified, empowered for service, empowered to be witnesses and to take the good news of Jesus and forgiveness of sins and a new life in Christ to the whole world. This wasn’t for just a few. It wasn’t just for the twelve. Luke said “All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.” It’s for all! At the end of his sermon in Acts 2 Peter tells the crowd this same gift and promise is for them and their children and all the Lord will call. This experience is for us today! God is looking for yielded, obedient vessels.

This was the beginning of a new era where the Holy Spirit would guide and direct the details and direction and growth of the church. Interesting to note the Acts 1 church cast lots to decide who the new apostle would be, but that was the last time (Acts 1:24-26). From Acts 2 on the Holy Spirit gave them direction with regard to the decisions for the church. How we need the Holy Spirit’s wisdom, direction, discernment, and power today!

Pentecost impacted the entire city. This wasn’t done in secret. You can’t hide what the Holy Spirit is doing in your life or in a church. Without advertisement, social media, radio or television, just the powerful presence of the Holy Spirit and yielded and obedient followers of Jesus, the city was impacted. That day alone 3,000 people came to faith in Jesus and their sins were forgiven. Don’t you think our city needs to be impacted by the good news of Jesus and by the power of the Holy Spirit?

One last thing to notice. Luke points out that some in the crowd that gathered made fun of them and said, “They have had too much wine.” Peter stood up to explain that this was the

promise of the Father, pouring out His Spirit in the last days. He told them, “These men are not drunk as you suppose.” Dr. Howard Ervin suggested that a better translation might be “these are drunken, but not as you suppose.” **Are you under the influence?** Too much wine can negatively affect how you walk and talk, it can negatively affect your decisions and your judgment because you are under its influence when you are drunk. When you live under the influence of the Holy Spirit, He should affect how you walk and talk, the Holy Spirit should affect your decisions and your judgment. I want to live under the influence of the Holy Spirit. I want others to look at my life and ask, “What does this mean? What is going on with you? What’s happened to you?” And I want to be able to tell them about Jesus and about the Holy Spirit making the difference in how I live and where I go and what I do. I live under the influence of Jesus and the Holy Spirit!

It's Pentecost. If we are the Acts 1 church, living in expectation, and if the Father has a gift for us, aren't you hungry and eager to receive it? I need a fresh Pentecost. I need his power, his anointing, his help, his wisdom, his direction. Who is hungry for more? Who needs more of what Jesus and the Father offer as a gift and a promise today?

What do we do? Ask. Jesus said if we ask our Heavenly Father he will give us this gift of the Holy Spirit. Let's ask! Let's expect and let's receive!