

"...about all that Jesus began to do and teach" (Acts 1:3).

The Church Alive – Something Radical Has Begun (Part 2)

Acts 2:1-13

1 When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. 2 And suddenly there came from heaven a noise like a violent rushing wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. 3 And there appeared to them tongues as of fire distributing themselves, and they rested on each one of them. 4 And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit was giving them utterance. 5 Now there were Jews living in Jerusalem, devout men from every nation under heaven. 6 And when this sound occurred, the crowd came together, and were bewildered because each one of them was hearing them speak in his own language. 7 They were amazed and astonished, saying, "Why, are not all these who are speaking Galileans? 8 And how is it that we each hear them in our own language to which we were born? 9 Parthians and Medes and Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, 10 Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the districts of Libya around Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, 11 Cretans and Arabs — we hear them in our own tongues speaking of the mighty deeds of God." 12 And they all continued in amazement and great perplexity, saying to one another, "What does this mean?" 13 But others were mocking and saying, "They are full of sweet wine."

This morning we are going to finish our look at Acts 2:1-13 and seeing what it means to be filled with the Spirit of God. Last week we looked at three of five "results" concerning what it means to be filled with the Spirit. Let me quickly remind you of the first three "results" before we look at the last two. To begin with, we noted that...

I. The filling of the Spirit is the result of Promise (Acts 2:1a)

When the day of Pentecost had come...

This specific day was chosen in the purpose of God to fulfill His promise concerning the coming and indwelling of His Holy Spirit within His people. This promise was made both by God the Father in the Old Testament as well as by Jesus, God the Son in the Gospel accounts. By this then we are reminded that God is always faithful to keep His promises.

II. The filling of the Spirit is the result of Personal and Corporate Obedience (Acts 2:1b)

...they were all together in one place.

The second "result" in our text is that the filling of the Spirit flows from both personal and corporate obedience; from both private and public keeping of the Word of God. These disciples were obedient to the commands of Christ and thus experienced the blessing of being filled with the Spirit. In like manner, if we would be continually filled with the Spirit, it is the result of our personal and congregational adherence to the Word of God.

And then, the last point we considered last week was...

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III. The filling of the Spirit results in Power for ministry (Acts 2:1c-4)

And suddenly there came from heaven a noise like a violent rushing wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. 3 And there appeared to them tongues as of fire distributing themselves, and they rested on each one of them. 4 And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit was giving them utterance.

If ministry is to be accomplished in a fashion that brings glory to God and points people to the wonder of Christ, it must be done in the promised power of the Spirit of God. The power for ministry enables a person to do that which he or she might not otherwise have been able in themselves to do. And while a lot of people do things in the power of the flesh, the power of the Spirit produces God-honoring effects, drawing attention not to the persons who are but the tools, but to the God using those tools to accomplish His purposes.

So these are the three "results" or evidence of the filling of the Spirit we have so far gleaned from Acts 2:1-13. Let us move on to consider the final two results from this text, the fourth being...

IV. The filling of the Spirit results in Proclamation of gospel truths (Acts 2:5-11)

5 Now there were Jews living in Jerusalem, devout men from every nation under heaven. 6 And when this sound occurred, the crowd came together, and were bewildered because each one of them was hearing them speak in his own language. 7 They were amazed and astonished, saying, "Why, are not all these who are speaking Galileans? 8 And how is it that we each hear them in our own language to which we were born? 9 Parthians and Medes and Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, 10 Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the districts of Libya around Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, 11 Cretans and Arabs — we hear them in our own tongues speaking of the mighty deeds of God."

Let us read again verses 5-11. Connecting this with our previous point, that being filled with the Spirit results in power for ministry, here we see the tangible outworking of that power in the first moments of the church. We are offered here the first visible manifestation of the working of the Spirit through the church; something then that I believe sets a precedence for the churches of all generations – a manifestation of the Spirit that is to be experienced today, here in our church. And contrary to what some other groups have taught, the point here is not ecstatic speak or some so-called heavenly babbling, for we have none of that in our text. There is not one unintelligible word, for every word uttered was of a known, discernable, human language. And so again, the point is not on the experience of "tongues" or "speaking in tongues" but rather is wrapped up precisely in the statement found in verse 11, **"we hear them in our own tongues speaking of the mighty deeds of God."** How did the early church as well as the surrounding peoples there in Jerusalem know that the believers were filled with the Holy Spirit? Because they were speaking of the mighty deeds of God and were doing so in a way that all could understand. Therefore, I submit to you that the filling of the Spirit of God results in the proclamation of gospel truths – the mighty deeds of God as revealed in the person and work of Jesus Christ, God's Son.

So then, let us look a little more closely at what is taking place here in our text and then seek some application to our lives. A question that might come up in our minds as we read this miraculous and strange account of unlearned men being heard in languages they have never studied, speaking of the wondrous deeds of God is - - - why? Why did God, in His wisdom and

The Church Alive

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purposes choose such means of starting the church. I would offer you that here we learn of two purposes for this particular manifestation of the power of the Spirit at work in the disciples.

The first one is related specifically to the people of our text. For the filling of the Spirit and the speaking of other languages by the Spirit was to reveal to all these Jews that the Messianic age had come, that the Promised One had come, and that the promises of the Old Testament related to Messiah (that is Jesus Christ) were fulfilled. These tongues then were given a sign to the Jews.

But additionally, and the second reason why we have this event; as these uneducated Galileans were speaking in these other languages, they were, as we have noted, communicating the **"mighty deeds of God"** in the native languages of this cosmopolitan gathering at Pentecost. This was not some rambling gibberish but each one was hearing these men and women giving testimony of God's saving power in their own language. No one was in the dark or misunderstood what was said. The point is that the filling of the Spirit was not without purpose; a purpose that is true for us as well! *The Holy Spirit fills believers so that we might speak "of the mighty deeds of God" to a lost world!* In fact, I would offer to you that one of the key evidence by which a person knows that he or she is filled with the Spirit, is simply this, is he or she speaking of the great saving power of God that has been realized in Jesus Christ?

If you would indulge me in just a little bit of trivia, in my preparations for this study in Acts, in my reading through the book of Acts, I have noted that this is a book of proclamation. The book of Acts tells a story of people who could not help but proclaim that Jesus is Lord and Savior. Consider that twenty-one (21) times the words preach, preaching, preaches or preached is used. There are twenty-two (22) references to some form of "proclaiming". And with reference to the Word, or Word of God being spoken or communicated, there are some 97 instances; with 35 specific statement of "spoke the Word of God (or the Lord)". The point is that the book of Acts is a primer on proclaiming the truth of God as realized in Jesus Christ. It is truly the experiential **"how to"** book on sharing Christ.

And repeated we find throughout this book, that when the believers were most apt and most effective in sharing the Word of the Lord, was when they had been filled with the Spirit. Let us trace this through the book briefly.

In Acts 2:14 we are told, **"But, Peter, taking his stand with the eleven, raise his voice and declared to them [the men of Judea]..."** And just before Peter made this declaration, what had happened to him? He had been filled with the Holy Spirit. The filling of the Spirit results in proclamation of gospel truth and in Acts 2, Peter delivers the first sermon preach to the church declaring the glories of Christ.

Look with me next at Acts 4. Peter and John had created quite a stir in Jerusalem, having healed the lame beggar and preaching yet another sermon calling people to trust in the name of Jesus Christ alone for salvation. This was to the disdain and dismay of the religious rulers, who had Peter and John arrested. And at a trial before the rulers, they were asked the question as recorded in verse 7, **"When they had placed them in the center, they began to inquire, 'By what power, or in what name, have you done this thing?'"** Can you imagine how intimidating this would be? To have a well-educated, hostile group of men surround you and "inquire" – right – more like provocatively accuse you. What would you do? How would you feel? What would you say? Well, what do we find Peter doing? I would suggest, even though the text does not say

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this explicitly, that Peter shot up a prayer to God, “Lord, give me words to speak...” and we read in verse 8, ***“Then Peter, filled (or as the NASB marginal reading says, ‘having just been filled’ – perhaps as a result of his prayer for the Spirit’s power) with the Holy Spirit - - [and how is this filling manifested?] - - -said to them...”*** Peter then unfolded gospel truth that ended with that great statement of verse 12, ***“And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men, by which we must be saved.”*** Again, the evidence of being filled with the Spirit is the proclamation of gospel truth.

But many this is just a Peter thing? Even though we already read back in Acts 2 that all the apostles were speaking the mighty deeds of God; maybe it only stuck with Peter. Look with me at Acts 4:31, as the church is gathered together praying, that is being obedient to gather together and to pray together, which was the second point we made from this Acts 2:1-13 text, that being filled with the Spirit is the result of both person and corporate obedience; so here is the church, being obedient. And when they had been obedient, what happened. We read,

“And when they had prayed, the place where they had gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak the word of God with boldness.”

If we would spend more time in prayer, and prayer together, there is a promise of the power of the Spirit to embolden us to speak the word of God. How is your prayer life? How is your corporate prayer life? When was the last time you prayed for yourself and with others in the church the prayer of Acts 4:29, ***“And now, Lord, take note of their threats [those who would have us be silent] and grant [give, bestow] that Your bond-servants [slaves] may speak Your word with all confidence.”*** If you truly want to speak more confidently to others about Christ, would you resolve to pray for such and even more inconveniently, to pray with others for such boldness. For then the result is the power of the Spirit emboldening you to proclaim gospel truths.

Time does not permit us to look at every reference to the filling of the Spirit resulting in proclamation of gospel truths, but let us look at few more. In Acts 6:4-7, we see men who were selected to be servers of the tables; yet the one key prerequisite, one necessary evidence for this position was that the men must be “full of the Spirit and of wisdom” (6:3). Notice the progression of this text beginning in verse 4:

4 “But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word.” 5 The statement found approval with the whole congregation; and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, and Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas and Nicolas, a proselyte from Antioch. 6 And these they brought before the apostles; and after praying, they laid their hands on them. 7 The word of God kept on spreading; and the number of the disciples continued to increase greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were becoming obedient to the faith.

Again, as the church was being obedient and prayer was being offered up to God, we find the church being filled with the Spirit and the result was what according to verse 7? That the

The Church Alive

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"word of God kept spreading" – or another way of saying that gospel truth was being proclaimed.

And let us not overlook Stephen, this man full of the Spirit and of wisdom, for in verses 8-10, as there were some trying to argue with him concerning gospel truth, what do we read is the result of Stephen's being filled with the Spirit in verse 10, ***"But they were unable to cope with the wisdom and the Spirit with which he was speaking."*** Being filled with the Spirit results in proclamation of gospel truth.

And for Stephen, this carried him all the way to proclaim the truth even to the point of death. For in Act 7:55-56, as the men of Israel stone Stephen for continued to speak boldly, not in his own power but by the Spirit. Look at the account with me:

55 But being full of the Holy Spirit, he gazed intently into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God; 56 and he said, "Behold, I see the heavens opened up and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God."

Again, the result of Stephen's being filled was his vision and then proclamation of the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God. We see the same thing in the life of Saul, who becomes Paul in Acts 9:17-20; 27. Read with me verses 17, 27-28:

17 So Ananias departed and entered the house, and after laying his hands on him said, "Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road by which you were coming, has sent me so that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit."...27 But Barnabas took hold of him and brought him to the apostles and described to them how he had seen the Lord on the road, and that He had talked to him, and how at Damascus he had spoken out boldly in the name of Jesus. 28 And he was with them, moving about freely in Jerusalem, speaking out boldly in the name of the Lord.

I could go on, but the point is that we see this pattern of the fact that being filled with the Spirit results in proclamation of gospel truth. This is certainly true of the early church, but is to be true for us? Obviously I would argue that we read it in the book of Act because it is an example for the church to follow, but lets look outside the book of Acts and see if this pattern can be found. Turn with me to Ephesians 5:18-19 and notice the same thing is communicated. We read...

18 And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit, 19 speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord...

And turn a chapter over to Ephesians 6 and read with me Paul request of the church in verses 18-21:

18 With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints, 19 and pray on my behalf, that utterance may be given to me in the opening of my mouth, to make known with boldness

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the mystery of the gospel, 20 for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in proclaiming it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.

Let me have you consider one final reference, one given by our Lord Jesus in Luke 12:11-12; the context being a potential concern over what to say in the face of persecution for faith. Notice the connection Jesus makes between the Holy Spirit and the words believers will utter:

11 When they bring you before the synagogues and the rulers and the authorities, do not worry about how or what you are to speak in your defense, or what you are to say; 12 for the Holy Spirit will teach you in that very hour what you ought to say.

Beloved, how can you know if you are filled with the Spirit? Are you speaking of the mighty deeds of God to others? Are you speaking with increasing confidence and boldness? Are you speaking in reliance on the Spirit? It is that simple. So we have seen that being filled with Spirit results from the promise of God and from both personal and corporate obedience. It also results in power for service and proclamation of the truths of God to others. Let us quickly note the last result of being filled with the Spirit of God as seen in verses 12-13

V. The filling of the Spirit results in a perplexity for people (Acts 2:12-13)

12 And they all continued in amazement and great perplexity, saying to one another, "What does this mean?" 13 But others were mocking and saying, "They are full of sweet wine."

As we read our text, we are presented with two responses from unbelievers. The first response is that of wanting to know more as they ask the question, ***"What does this mean?"*** To these we can give our answers and share the Scriptures concerning Jesus. To these we must always, in the words of 1 Peter 3:15, be "ready to make a defense to everyone who asks [us] to give an account for the hope that is in [us]." Be looking for people who have questions, who need to be guided in the Scriptures.

There is a second group mentioned here as well, those who scoff and mock and try to give excuses for not believing the testimony given concerning Jesus, saying things like, ***"They are full of sweet wine."*** In other words, "They must be drunk and therefore dim-witted, ignorant and irrational." You know people like this, who have every excuse for not believing what you share with them from the word of God concerning Jesus.

But the point is this, that disciples who are full of the Spirit speak the mighty things of God. The evidence that they are full of the Spirit is found not only in their speaking of such things, but also in the amazement and perplexity of the people who hear the testimony. In other words, if we are full of the Spirit, we will speak of what the Scriptures teach concerning Jesus, and when we do, it will push people to either want more information, asking "What does it mean" or push them away as they mock saying, "They must be full of sweet wine."

The point is that to be filled with the Spirit cause people to either question for more or to search for excuses as to why what we are doing must be wrong. The world looks upon following Christ as foolishness but the question is, do people know you are following Christ, not simply because you say so, but also because they can see something extraordinary at work in you. Have you believed the promise of God? Are you seeking to be personally and corporately

The Church Alive

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obedient to God? These are the first steps to being filled with the Spirit. Then as you are being filled, it will result in power for service to the church – are you ministering to the body. It will result in power for proclamation of the gospel to others – are you speaking to others about Christ? These are all indications you are filled with the Spirit. And the last one – are people perplexed seeking for answers as to the difference in you. May these be what we pray for and seek that we might be as radical as these early believers to the glory of God.

Soli Deo Gloria

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