

The Church and the Holy Spirit Acts 1:4-11

Introduction:

The Apostle Paul said in Ephesians 3:17-19

“May your (spiritual) roots go down deep into the soil of God’s marvelous love. And may you have the power to understand, as all God’s people should, how wide, how long, how high, and how deep His love really is. May you experience the love of Christ, though it is so great you will never fully understand it. Then you will be filled with the fullness of life and power that comes from God.”

According to the surveys of George Gallup, the number one need people have today is “the need to believe that life is meaningful and has a purpose.”

People want their lives to count.

Someone said, “The great purpose of life is to spend it on something that will outlast it.”

When you really think about, that’s exactly what all of us would want to be remembered for, something we did that would outlast us.

Illustration:

In attempting to recruit John Sculley, the 38 year old President of Pepsi-Cola, Steve Jobs, founder of Apple Computer, issued a tremendous challenge to Scully.

He asked John Sculley, “Do you want to spend the rest of your life selling sugared water or do you want a chance to change the world.”

Spiritual Application:

Would you agree with me that this is what Jesus is asking you and me to do, to change the world?

But if we’re going to change the world, what do we have to do to see it changed?

Is there some kind of process that we have to go through to get there?

These are questions all of us have to ask ourselves.

You see if we don’t address these question we won’t know what we’ve done – we won’t know what we’re doing and whether we are doing anything that is worth while.

Illustration:

In a Peanuts comic strip, there was a conversation between Lucy and Charlie Brown. Lucy said that life is like a deck chair.

3

Some place it so they can see where they are going.

Some place it so they can see where they've been.

Some place it so they can see where they are at the present.

Charlie Brown's reply was: "I can't even get mine unfolded."

Many people in our societies today are afraid that their lives will be lived without any real sense of fulfilling the real purpose God has for them.

I don't know this morning what that statement does to you, but I'm sure that I'm not alone when I say It's vitally important to me that I fulfill the plan and the purpose God has for my life.

People everywhere feel this uneasiness about the way in which their lives are unfolding, or not unfolding.

Today many young people feel it.

Somehow they know that there is more to life than merely going to school, getting an education, finding a job, marrying the right person, raising a family, gathering the usual security for their retirement.

And I am convinced this morning that the majority of all of us here this morning would feel that same way.

4

The thought of working all your life only to retire with nothing to do but sit the rocking chair all alone on the back porch just somehow doesn't seem to be enough.

Just sitting waiting for Grim Reaper to come to get us.

Shouldn't there be some overriding purpose and significance to our pilgrimage on this earth?

Surely God is up to more than this.

Well, let me give you some good news – God is up to more than this.

But tragically, too many believers in too many churches are not into what God is "up to."

One Christian thinker said, "The problem is that faith has been domesticated to suit our culturally conditioned lives, rather than dramatized as the ultimate purpose which gives meaning and direction to all other secondary loyalties.

He goes on to say, "I am convinced that we are living in an unprecedented time of potential blessings and power and this is God's appointed hour to liberate the Church being a memorial society to become a society of movers."

5

All my ministerial life I have longed for a Church who would be this very thing.

I believe with every thing in me that God has given to PCN their appointed time to receive the blessings and the power coming from God to move our communities for Jesus.

What do you think? What do you believe?

You see if this is not the time, then when is the time?

If we are not the people, then who is the people?

If this is not the place, then where is the place?

In our text today we find the foundation upon which we can build our lives of purpose because they will be energized by the Dynamic of the Spirit's Power.

Last week I preached the sermon Plugging into the Power of Prayer. Today connecting to the Spirit's Power.

I. The Promise of Jesus

As the Book of Acts unfolds, there are several things that have happened.

The Lord has been crucified.

He has risen from the dead.

He has appeared to many of His disciples.

6

He has spoken to them about the Kingdom of God.

And He is about to be taken away from them into heaven.

Now – I'm not sure what you would have been thinking had you been there, but I feel certain that these disciples were wondering just what was going to happen next.

How would they live without Jesus being with them?

How had this encounter with Jesus changed their lives?

Jesus had had told them to share this Gospel of the Kingdom with every person.

How would they do it?

What resources did they have to use?

Who would organize this thing now?

Who would be their leader?

Who's going to carry it out?

They had all these questions, I'm sure, just as we do here today.

You see – coming to Jesus Christ is only the beginning.

As we enter into this Christian life, there are still many questions that are unanswered.

Don't we have all these fears to be conquered – issues to be resolved?

What is really important?
What is the next step?

Let me direct your attention to verses 4-5
“On one occasion, while He was eating with them, He gave them this command: ‘Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift My Father promised, which you have heard Me speak about. For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.’”

Isn't just like Jesus to anticipate our needs and it says, ***“He gave them the promise ...”***

What Jesus promised them here was to be the most important ingredient for their future ministry.

It was for them, and friends, it is for us.

What they needed and what we need is power from on High, a ***mighty baptism of the Holy Spirit.***

This, Jesus said, is ***“The gift My Father promised.”***

Spiritual Application:

I find it interesting that Jesus told them that they must wait in Jerusalem for this promise.

I'm sure there several of the disciples who were impulsive like some of us.

Remember, they had witnessed the resurrection of Jesus and they were ready to tell everyone about that grand experience.

But what Jesus said was, ***“Wait in Jerusalem.”***

Why? Because they needed to wait for the power which the Holy Spirit would give them.

Have you ever been told to wait?

Sometimes that's the hardest thing in the world for me to do. Wait!

Dru and I went to the viewing of one of my lifelong minister friends who died on the operating table at the age of 58.

At the viewing Dru and I stood in line for over 2 hours to see his widowed wife.

The thought went through my mind – well, we could just leave – maybe Mary saw us – she wouldn't remember any way. Our name was on the book.

Waiting – the line was moving oh so very slow.

Waiting is one of the hardest things to do.

Even when we are waiting for something good, it is still difficult.

I've had this cold virus since the day after Christmas – I thought I was better – and I got worse.

I needed the doctor's help, but I didn't want to wait.

Chris and Shellie told me about the Minute Clinic at CVS in Pickerington.

I said, "Minute Clinic! Wow! You mean, I can go there and they'll diagnosis me and I'll be out of there pretty quick. Let's go!"

Well, I sat down filled out the required information and waited my turn.

One person was ahead of me.

I thought to myself, "This is a breeze! I can do this!"

I sat there for 20 minutes and thought to myself – I thought this was a Minute Clinic.

I finally got my appointment and I had to sit and give my medical history and the nurse typed into her computer.

Finally after another one hour later I had my antibiotics.

Now was this worth the wait? Yes, I feel a lot better, but I probably would call my doctor the next time and go there and wait.

Waiting for a loved one in surgery can be like turning minutes into hours.

Waiting for help to come when someone is sick can seem terribly long.

But waiting on God can be the most difficult waiting of all.

No matter – Jesus said, "***Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait ...***"

What are we waiting for?

We're waiting for Him.

We're waiting for His Power.

We're waiting for guidance and instructions.

We're waiting for enablement.

The disciples were called to wait.

Only be waiting and seeking God would they find the promise of God to be real.

But if they were to wait, they would be met by God.

Do we see it? Do we get this?

Have we been guilty of not waiting?

There is always a promise.

Who better knows our needs and who better knows the promise of provisions for those needs than Jesus?

11

Friends, among this crowd this morning there might be someone or several who is facing a difficult situation.

You might have come with problems and circumstances in your life which you don't see a way out.

You possibly could be questioning God, finding it impossible to understand how even He could bring something good into your life.

Have you been confused?

Everything seems to be going well, but there is that nagging discontent.

There is that desire for something more and you wonder just how to find it.

Let me say that there is a Promise for you and me and it is the same promise that these early Christians received.

It's the promise of the empowerment of the Holy Spirit in your life.

Jesus told us in John's Gospel that He would have to go away, but that when He did go away He would send us "**Another Comforter.**"

He was talking about the Holy Spirit.

12

The Holy Spirit of God is the Father's special gift to every believer in Christ.

It's through His indwelling presence in our lives, that we are connected to God.

We have the very life of God living in us.

He has been given to us to be our resource and our guide, to help us through every problem, to make the Word of God alive to us, and to make Jesus real to us.

So – Believer friend, the gift of the Holy Spirit is given to every believer who will accept Him to live an exciting, dynamic, abundant life in the Spirit.

In Acts 2:39 we read, "***The Promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off – for all whom the Lord our God will call.***"

II. The Priority of God

How wonderful the promise was to those early disciples.

These disciples needed to focus on His Priority, not their own, but they were distracted by this life.

That's why we find them saying to Jesus in verse 6, "***So when they met together, they asked Him,***

13

‘Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom of Israel?’

Now mind you – Jesus was talking to them about a spiritual reality which would change their lives.

But they were thinking of a earthly kingdom right then and there.

They were stuck in their past tradition wanting to see Israel restored to its previous glory.

Did you know that reverence for the past/holding on to the past can sometimes block what God wants to do in the present?

So often churches try to go back to something wonderful that happened years ago, when God is attempting to do something new in their midst.

Many times the Holy Spirit is grieved and quenched by well meaning believers who are unwilling to move forward into the future because they will not let go of the past.

Jesus said to them in verse 7 “It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by His own authority.”

In other words, Jesus is telling them that they are not thinking in the right way.

14

They shouldn’t be worried about timetables, instead they should be concerned about what God was trying to say to them.

Jesus was trying to introduce to them a new dimension of living and they weren’t listening to Him.

Spiritual Application:

You know – isn’t it hard for us to change the way we view things?

The older I get – you know – I’ve done it a certain way and thought about things a certain way.

It’s just hard to change.

You know – our preferences don’t go away very easily.

But folks, listen to me, all of us need to be careful that we don’t get in the way of something new that God wants to use especially when it is born of God.

The message never changes, but sometimes the methods do.

And if we as a church are to be on cutting edge of what God is doing in trying to reach this world, we must be willing to be open and sensitive to the Holy Spirit’s guidance.

III. The Power of the Holy Spirit

We have seen there is The Promise to us of the Gift of the Holy Spirit.

We have seen that we need to focus on God's priority to do a new thing in us.

NOW LET'S LOOK AT THE KIND OF POWER HE WANTS TO GIVE TO US.

Look at verse 8 with me, ***“But you will receive POWER when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”***

The Promise of the Holy Spirit was the Promise of Power.

As I mentioned last week the Greek word for Power is dunamis. From that we get our English word – dynamite or dynamic.

The Power of God is the dynamic and explosive force of the Holy Spirit in the lives of believers.

I am talking about incredible power here.

But Power to do what?

The Power we receive is the Power to be Witnesses.

How many of you have witnessed to any one about Christ recently?

If you haven't, I want you to listen carefully.

What does it mean to be a Witness?

To be a witness for Jesus means that there is not only an inflow to our lives, but there is also an outflow.

And without an outflow, we become stagnant.

Our lives will become dull and dreary and devoid of vibrancy, no matter how much we take in through Bible study and teaching.

Every one of us must be flowing channels, not holding tanks.

A river that flows is alive and full of life.

A stagnant pool of water is dead and full of water that is bitter.

In the beginning of this sermon I mentioned to you the face that people “need to believe that life is meaningful and has a purpose.”

The Christian Believer who becomes involved with others in sharing the Gospel Message discovers the reason for their existence on planet earth.

I don't want you to miss this point.

Becoming involved in this kind of ministry is vitally essential to finding the purpose of our lives.

The Holy Spirit's Power and gifts are not given to us to spend on ourselves.

We are called as Spirit filled Christian believers to share our faith with those who are lost without Jesus.

Look at the last part of verse 8 again, *"...and you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."*

Where were they to start? Jerusalem

That was in their own community.

In other words, missions begins at home.

The church that is not doing missions at home is not supporting missions, even if they send all kinds of money to foreign lands.

Hell is no less hot for the lost of Pataskala and South West Licking county.

Believers, we have this place as our mission field.

Getting Back to the Basics is understanding our responsibility to those who are lost in our community. Our neighbors, our friends, our loved ones and people we work with.

Then they were to go to Judea. That was their state.

Then on to Samaria. That extended itself to their country.

And finally, they were to go into the remotest parts of the earth.

In other words, beginning at home they were to be witnesses in ever widening circles to the entire planet earth.

That was their call!

But it is our call also!

The Great Commission is given to every Christian believer.

Church – Listen – as we process this in our minds and accept this fact that Jesus commanded us and

still commands us to do this, do we find purpose and meaning in our lives.

Now, if you're anything like me – if you've had time to think about it – you realize how utterly awesome a responsibility this is.

We ask – How can we do this?

The answer is – It will take the Power of the Holy Spirit to do it.

And that is what we get when the Gift of the Holy Spirit comes to us. Power to accomplish what Jesus commanded us to do.

For us to live for Jesus and to share His love with others we have to have the Power.

For us to be The Church – We must have His Holy Spirit.

I'm not talking about doctrine here. I'm talking about what the Bible says we have to have.

I'm not here arguing terminology too the point we miss it.

All I know is there is more of God that we all need to experience.

The Bible calls it ***“the infilling of the Holy Spirit”***

“The anointing of the Holy Spirit”

“There are fillings of the Spirit.”

The Real question should be, “How do we become filled and stay filled?”

We do so by an initial and ongoing acts of surrender to Jesus.

We do so by prayer, inviting Jesus to take control of our lives.

As we seek Him with our whole heart, the Lord will fill us with His Spirit and the power will come.

The dynamic of the Holy Spirit will become the energizing dynamic of our lives.

The reason why you are here – your purpose in life – is to be filled with God.

Illustration:

Jim Cymbala says in his book, **Fresh Power:**

“All of us who say we want to build the kingdom of God must stop and admit our need of divine leading. There must be a living interaction between us and the Holy Spirit or else we will not get far. He must show us how to carry out the Great Commission of the church effectively, both in evangelism and in discipleship.”

