

Week One - Holy Spirit Freedom and Unity for Ministry

Christians are born in the life of Christ by the influence of the Holy Spirit. Christians without the Holy Spirit is a contradiction of terms. There are many expressions of the Holy Spirit among Christians. Some Christians point to signs of the present Spirit while some may emphasize the nature of Spirit transformation at Baptism. A fresh movement and prayer of the spirit can unleash a new yearning for life that become in sync with the life with Christ with healing and hope.

The Spirit activity is described throughout the Bible and it is not unique to the New Testament. The same Spirit was at creation in Genesis Chapter 1. The Spirit inspired judges such as Gideon (Judges 6:34). David was chosen by the Spirit when anointed by Samuel the prophet (1 Samuel 16:13). Isaiah recognizes the work of the Spirit at the reconstruction of Israel after reunification of exiles (Isaiah 61). In the second book of Luke, ACTS, the Spirit was poured on Jesus's disciples rather than on individuals as anticipated from the Prophet Joel. The significance of this moment is around the Jewish season of Pentecost. Two significant aspects are connected with this time of Pentecost and the commissioning of the Spirit.

- (i) Pentecost is the festival remembering Israel receiving the law of Moses from mount Sinai. God is brought into the reality of people to guide life. Jesus ascended to heaven allowing God's dimension of heaven and earth to be bridged to human present realities.
- (ii) Pentecost mirrors Exodus chapter 40. God constantly dwells with Israel that is dramatized in God occupying the first portable Tabernacle/Temple of Israel with the Shekinah (divine presence). The Early Christians understood themselves to be that portable temple - a community as a moveable temple movement. This was the source of the conflict with the Jerusalem Temple authorities.

The Spirit, according to Professor N.T. Wright, does three things.

- (1) The Spirit makes Jesus real and present. This is reflected in the New Testament for example in Revelation 22:6 and in the prayer of John 14.
- (2) The Spirit remakes broken and sinful humanity forming them into image makers. In Ephesians there is contrast of the works of the flesh with fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:19-23). Ephesians 2 (see Ephesians 5:30-32) suggest need taking responsibility of the gift of grace to be demonstrated by the guiding Spirit. Responsibility of humanity to think through and to enact practical moral choices via the prompting Spirit (Romans 8:16).
- (3) The Spirit gives new direction and new energy for Christian ministry in the world and producing the many vocations necessary to enact the directive of God.

Questions:

1. How does one know that they are born of the Holy Spirit?
2. What are some examples of the activity of the Holy Spirit in the First Testament? Do we see any similarities with the activity of the Spirit today?
3. When does human and Spirit activity come together in the First Testament?
4. How is Pentecost important to the life of church communities today?

Methodist Hymn the power of the Spirit.

Lord we believe to us and ours Luke 24: 49, Acts 1:4-5; 2:39

The apostolic promise given;

We wait to taste the heavenly powers, Luke 24:49, Hebrews 6:5

The Holy Ghost sent down from heaven John 14: 26; 1 Peter 1:12

Behold, to thee our souls aspire 2 Cor. 1:22

And languish thy descent to meet: Romans 8:23

Kindle in each the living fire Luke 12:49

And fix in every heart thy seat Psalm 57:7

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