

Sermon: The Presence of the Holy Spirit in the Church / Part 1

Our previous messages have addressed the significance of the Holy Spirit's arrival on the day of Pentecost; the day recognized as the birthday of the church.

Jesus Christ was slain during the Passover, on the evening when the Passover lambs were being sacrificed. The lamb of God was hanging on a cross just outside the city.

John 1:29 John said, "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!"

He was raised to life on the day of firstfruits. The day for the waving of the omer in celebration of the beginning of the barley harvest.

1 Corinthians 15:20,23 But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who are asleep...after that those who are Christ's at His coming.

Then on the day of Pentecost, the promise of the Holy Spirit was given. The day when the two leavened loaves of bread were raised together as an offering unto the Lord in celebration of the beginning of the wheat harvest.

Acts 2:1-4 When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly there came from heaven a noise like a violent rushing wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. And there appeared to them tongues as of fire distributing themselves, and they rested on each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit was giving them utterance.

Men from every nation (as Luke would write) were gathered and heard in their own language the mighty deeds of God.

Peter recognized this day, this experience, to be the fulfillment of prophecy concerning the last days when God would restore His presence among His people through His Spirit.

Today's Message: The Presence of the Holy Spirit in the Church

Many New Testament scriptures point to the Old Testament's expectations for the restoration of God's presence among His people.

In the beginning, God had been with His people. He was with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

Genesis 28 records a time when Jacob found Himself in God's very presence.

In this place He had a dream. A ladder was set on the earth with its top reaching to heaven and the angels of God were going up to Heaven and coming down to the earth.

At the top of the ladder stood the Lord. And the Lord spoke to him saying, "I am the LORD, the God of your father Abraham and the God of Isaac."

And after the Lord assured him of the same promises made to his father, Isaac, and his grandfather, Abraham, God went on to assure him saying, "I am with you and will keep you wherever you go. I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you."

When Jacob woke up, he said, "Surely the LORD is in this place. This place is awesome!"

This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven." Jacob named that place Bethel which means the "House of God."

Moses found himself in the presence of God at "The mountain of God" or Mt. Sinai. There God called Moses to lead His people out of the bondage and slavery of Egypt. God assured Him that He would go with Him.

Moses would lead the people out of Egypt and bring them to the same place where they would find themselves in the presence of God.

Exodus 19:17-19

Moses brought the people out of the camp to meet God, and they stood at the foot of the mountain. Now Mount Sinai was all in smoke because the LORD descended upon it in fire; and its smoke ascended like the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mountain quaked violently.

When the sound of the trumpet grew louder and louder, Moses spoke and God answered him with thunder.

NOTE: According to rabbinical calculations, this event coincides with Pentecost: 47 days to get to Sinai; 3 days of preparation to come before God; God speaks in all (70) languages of the world.

Here, after the people committed idolatry, God told Moses that He would not personally go with them any farther, but that He would send an angel with them instead. (**Exodus 32:34**)

Exodus 33:12-16 Moses said to the LORD, "You have been telling me, 'Lead these people,' but you have not let me know whom you will send with me.

...The LORD replied, "My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest."

Then Moses said to him, "If your Presence does not go with us, do not send us up from here.

...What else will distinguish me and your people from all the other people on the face of the earth?"

God's presence with His people is what distinguishes them from the rest of the world.

God's presence in the Tabernacle

Exodus 40:34

Then the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle.

God's presence could be seen with His people through the cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night.

Solomon's Temple

1 Kings 8:10-11

The priests withdrew from the Holy Place and the cloud and the glory of the LORD filled the temple.

Israel and Judea forsook God and were destroyed (along with the temple) and led captive. Israel to the Assyrians; Judea to the Babylonians.

Israel was no longer a people distinguished by the presence of God.

Isaiah 63:9-18

In all their affliction He was afflicted, And the angel of His presence saved them; In His love and in His mercy He redeemed them, And He lifted them and carried them all the days of old.

They rebelled and grieved His Holy Spirit. So, He (God) turned and became their enemy and He Himself fought against them. Then His people recalled the days of old, the days of Moses and His people— where is He who brought them through the sea, with the shepherd of his flock? Where is He who set his Holy Spirit among them?

Who sent His glorious arm of power to be at Moses' right hand, who divided the waters before them, to gain for Himself everlasting renown;

Who led them through the depths? Like a horse in open country, they did not stumble.

Like cattle that go down to the plain, they were given rest by the Spirit of the LORD. This is how You guided your people to make for Yourself a glorious name.

Look down from heaven and see, from Your lofty throne, holy and glorious. Where is Your zeal and might? Your tenderness and compassion are withheld from us.

But you are our Father, though Abraham does not know us or Israel acknowledge us; You, LORD, are our Father, our Redeemer from of old is Your name.

Why, LORD, do you make us wander from Your ways and harden our hearts, so we do not revere You? Return for the sake of Your servants, the tribes that are Your inheritance.

For a little while Your people possessed Your holy place, but now our enemies have trampled down Your sanctuary.

However, the God had spoken words of hope through the prophets, such as, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Joel.

Jeremiah 31:31-34

“The days are coming when I will make a new covenant with the people of Israel and with the people of Judah.

I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people.

I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more.”

Ezekiel 36:26-27

I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws.

Acts 2:16-18

This is what was spoken by the prophet Joel:

“In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams.

Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy.

This began on the Day of Pentecost, God restored His presence among His people – the church. Symbolized in the offering of the two loaves, Jew and Gentile, consecrated unto the Lord.

(The imagery of the Tabernacle and the Temple = God's presence) Ezekiel prophesied of the rebuilding of the Temple – Ezek. 40-44)

Ezekiel 37:27 “My dwelling place also will be with them; and I will be their God, and they will be My people.”

The Apostles understood their ministry and the church in these terms.

Ephesians 2:18-22

For through Him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit.
Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God's people and also members of His household,
built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus Himself as the chief cornerstone.

In Him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord.
And in Him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.

This is but a taste; a down payment of what is promised to come.

Revelation 21:3; 5

And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Look! God's dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God."

Then he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true."