



Peninsula City Church

Engaging the Gifts of the Holy Spirit

Doing the Stuff with the Gifts of the Holy Spirit

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The Holy Gifts

An Introduction

Q. Do you know that the Church of Jesus Christ continues to grow today and that we have been equipped to preach the gospel and make disciples?

Yes, that is true. It has continued to expand ever since Jesus Christ came and established His Kingdom. It is happening all over the earth. However, do you know some hindrances to engaging the gifts of the Holy Spirit as we share the gospel of Jesus Christ? Three that will be briefly looked at today are fear, the church, and persecution via the enemy Satan. We will look at these three briefly in the context of engaging the gifts of the Holy Spirit in the book of Acts.

1. The disciples before the gift of the Holy Spirit

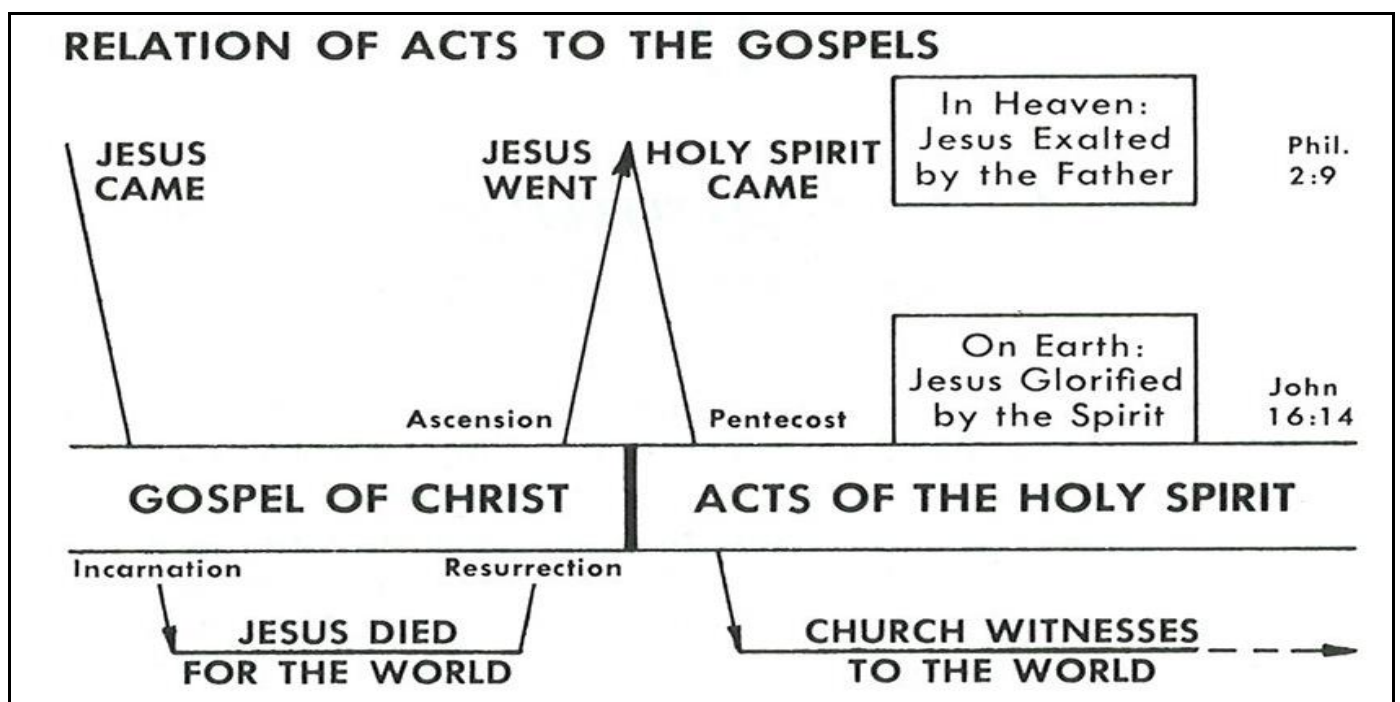
Q. Have you ever been crippled by fear and unable to do what needs to be done?

Imagine this, you have been chosen as one of the people who can shape the world where you have been planted by God. But, you are now locked away with your fiends because you are in fear of the authorities. This was the case with the first Christ-followers,

“On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being locked where the disciples were for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, ‘Peace be with you’” (Jn 20:19 ESV)

This is obviously before the baptism of the Holy Spirit and fear has hindered the sharing of the gospel. They are not living in faith, but fear.

But then comes the Book of Acts, Luke tells his readers that, he wrote the Book to tell someone named Theophilus about things that happened after Jesus’ ascension, and about the baptism of the Holy Spirit see Acts 1:1-5,8. Luke wrote a two-volume work, i.e. Luke-Acts to give him this historical instruction. These two-volumes are the record of God’s redemption story of salvation within history (see chart below).¹



¹ Jensen, I.L. *Jensen's Survey of the New Testament*. (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1981), 202, 206.

The Gospel of Luke deals with the coming of Jesus the solution for salvation, while Acts the coming of the Holy Spirit for the continuation of God's salvation work through His empowered and gift endowed church. It was also written to demonstrate how the gospel message and church spread from Jerusalem to the capital of the then known world, i.e. Rome. It was also written to show that the Christian church has a claim to divine origin.

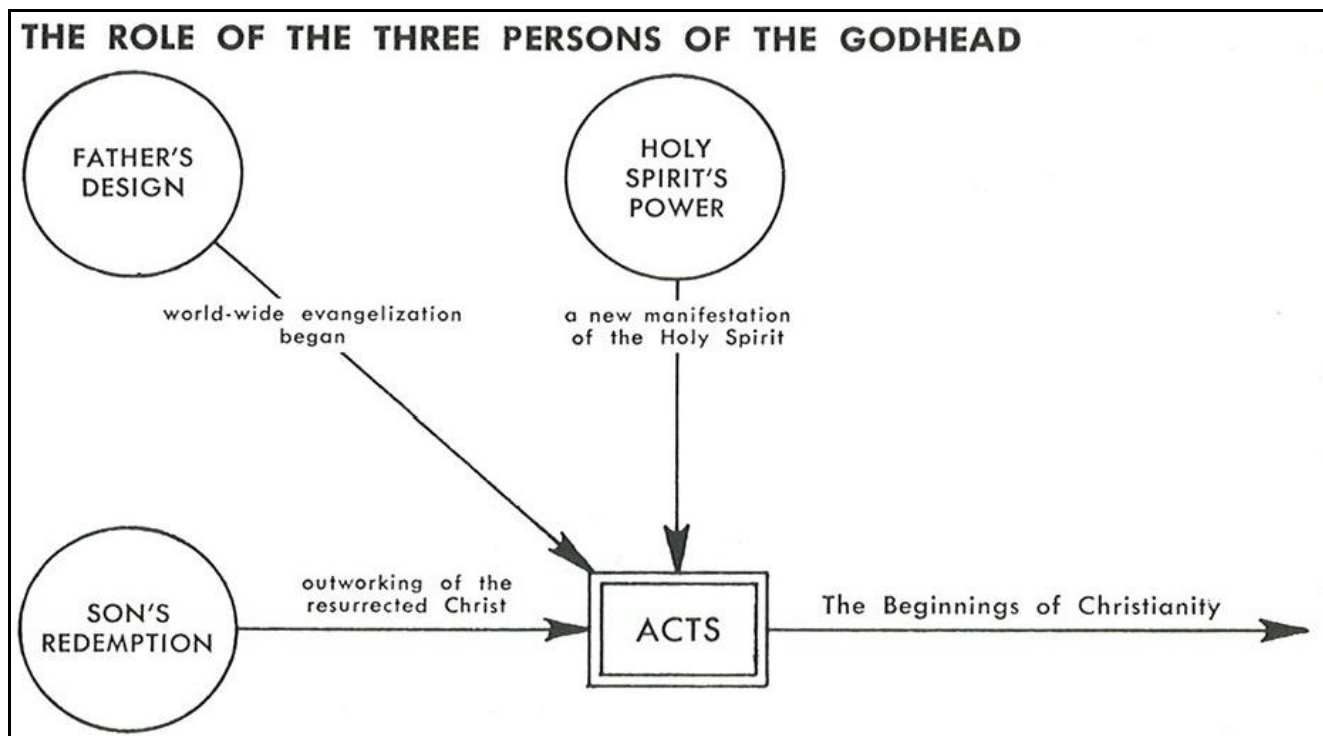
2. The disciples after the gift of the Holy Spirit

Q. Can imagine the local church or Satan trying to stop you engaging the gifts of the Holy Spirit?

The disciples were going to be empowered to be witnesses to the Father through Jesus Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit. This had been promised by Jesus Christ before He left for heaven.

“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth” (Acts 1:8 ESV).

See the following chart showing the role of the Holy Spirit, together with the Father and the Son²



We have the record of this work of the Trinity beginning in Acts chapter two,

¹ “When the day of Pentecost arrived, they were all together in one place. ² And suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. ³ And divided tongues as of fire appeared to them and rested on each one of them. ⁴ And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance... ¹⁴ But Peter, standing with the eleven, lifted up his voice and addressed them: ‘Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and give ear to my words...’” (Acts 2:1-4,14 ESV).

² Jensen, *Jensen's Survey of the New Testament*, 217.

The local religious authorities hindered the preaching of the gospel with the accompanying evidence of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. They would not have that in Jerusalem as it was a respectable religious community. So, they attempted to put a stop to things, especially in light of the lame man being healed and Peter's message, Acts 3.

¹ "And as they were speaking to the people, the priests and the captain of the temple and the Sadducees came upon them, ² greatly annoyed because they were teaching the people and proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection from the dead. ³ And they arrested them and put them in custody until the next day, for it was already evening... ²¹ And when they had further threatened them, they let them go, finding no way to punish them, because of the people, for all were praising God for what had happened" (Acts 4:1-3,21 ESV).

¹⁷ "But the high priest rose up, and all who were with him (that is, the party of the Sadducees), and filled with jealousy ¹⁸ they arrested the apostles and put them in the public prison... ⁴⁰ and when they had called in the apostles, they beat them and charged them not to speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go (Acts 5:17-18,40 ESV)

However, the Christ-followers were still in Jerusalem and Samaria; they hadn't gone out to the ends of the world as yet. Obviously some would have travelled and taken the gospel with them, but the apostles with still in Jerusalem as is seen in Acts 1:4-7:60. This can be seen from these sample passages.

"Now Peter and John were going up to the temple at the hour of prayer, the ninth hour" (Acts 3:1 ESV).

"And the word of God continued to increase, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests became obedient to the faith" (Acts 6:7 ESV).

"And Saul approved of his execution. And there arose on that day a great persecution against the church in Jerusalem, and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles" (Acts 8:1 ESV).

For many a Christ-follower the focus was on them, their local church or organisation in Jerusalem. However, all of this was about to change due to Satan persecuting the local church. Jesus had said to go to the ends of the earth and they were about to be given a push.

⁵⁴ "Now when they heard these things they were enraged, and they ground their teeth at him... ⁵⁷ But they cried out with a loud voice and stopped their ears and rushed together at him. ⁵⁸ Then they cast him out of the city and stoned him. And the witnesses laid down their garments at the feet of a young man named Saul... ⁶⁰ And falling to his knees he cried out with a loud voice, 'Lord, do not hold this sin against them.' And when he had said this, he fell asleep" (Acts 7:54,57-58,60 ESV)

¹ "And Saul approved of his execution. And there arose on that day a great persecution against the church in Jerusalem, and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, **except the apostles**... ³ But Saul was ravaging the church, and entering house after house, he dragged off men and women and committed them to prison. ⁴ Now those who were scattered went about preaching the word... ^{9:1} But Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest ² and asked him for letters to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any belonging to the Way, men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem" (Acts 8:1.,3-4; 9:1-2 ESV).

This drove the Christ-followers into Judea: 8:4-12:25 and then the Roman world: 13:4-28:31.

3. Christ-followers carry the Holy Spirit's gifts to others

As the Christ-followers went to the ends of the world they carried the Holy Spirit's gifts to others. For example,

³¹ “So the church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria had peace and was being built up. And walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, it multiplied. ³² Now as Peter went here and there among them all, he came down also to the saints who lived at Lydda. ³⁶ Now there was in Joppa a disciple named Tabitha, which, translated, means Dorcas. She was full of good works and acts of charity” (Acts 9:31-32,36 ESV).

“And on the following day they (Peter and his team) entered Caesarea. Cornelius was expecting them and had called together his relatives and close friends” (Acts 10:24 ESV).

¹ “Now there were in the church at Antioch prophets and teachers, Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen a lifelong friend of Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. ² While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, ‘Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.’ ³ Then after fasting and praying they laid their hands on them and sent them off. ⁴ So, being sent out by the Holy Spirit, they went down to Seleucia, and from there they sailed to Cyprus... ¹³ Now Paul and his companions set sail from Paphos and came to Perga in Pamphylia...” (Acts 13:1-4,13 etc. ESV).

So, in the end these three areas of hindrance i.e. fear, the church, and persecution via the enemy Satan, actually became tools in the Lord's hands to grow His church. These three pushed the church outward toward the ends of the world and as the Christ-followers went out they were able to engage with the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

This is still the same today wherever we go we can share the gospel and engage with the gifts of the Holy Spirit to affect the lives of those around us. A present example of this is the local church in Vietnam. Now I need to be careful what I say here for their safety if these notes ever got back into the wrong hands, but let me say that I have seen that the church in Vietnam is alive and well. They have experienced all of these three hindrances and more.

The following is not the real name of the group that we have been working with but here they called ABC. The training so far has now seen almost 40 complete the training over two years. Those who have received the training went back to their own regions and begun training other trainers. Up to the present time they have trained about 2500 additional trainers and started two other training centres. They have now begun discipling the local church back in the local southern regions. These Christ-followers have been engaging with the gift of the Holy Spirit and have seen signs and wonders. They are already moving into other nations on their border and preparing to send others into other nations. We have received a request to do the same training for those from the north, to replicate the training next year. They are simply doing the stuff with the gifts of the Holy Spirit, despite areas of hindrance i.e. fear, the church, and persecution via the enemy Satan.

Some concluding thoughts

So, coming back to the opening question,

Q. Do you know that the Church of Jesus Christ continues to grow today and that we have been equipped to preach the gospel and make disciples?

If the aim for us as Christ-followers is to preach the gospel and make disciples through the power and gifts of the Holy Spirit. What are we prepared to do about it? Are we being hindered by fear (maybe), the church (not by PenCC, we are encouraging all of us to go to the ends of the world), or persecution by the enemy Satan (possibly). Jesus sent the Holy Spirit of God to empower the

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church to be His witnesses in our Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth. We see the church of Vietnam doing this and they have far less resource (finance) than we do, but the people are willing. So, what can we learn from all of this?

So, when push comes to shove, in light of what has been discussed here, where to from here? Here are a few questions that may help to try to get some direction.

- What do we know now regarding the Church of Jesus Christ continues to grow today and that we have been equipped to preach the gospel and make disciples that we did not know before?
- What new biblical are we going to share with our family, friends, & those in your social circle?
- What action are we going to take RIGHT NOW regarding being equipped to preach the gospel and make disciples?
- That is, what are you prepared to do 'STARTING RIGHT NOW,' or change to put this new knowledge into practice in real-life situations?

It is time to develop real-life solutions & processes from what you have heard today & apply them to your real-world problems, issues & relationships, etc.

This promise of Jesus Christ is still relevant today, to you and me and are to grab it with both hands.

“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth” (Acts 1:8 ESV).