

9-12-2021, COTR Texarkana

Title: Return to God America, pt. 5

Purp.: Provoke people to be empowered and controlled by the Holy Spirit to bring about revival.

Truth for the day: Ordinary people, empowered and controlled by the Spirit, can start a revival.

Text: Acts 1:8

Topic: Return to God, Holy Spirit, Revival, America

Series purpose: Call America to return to God and provoke Christians to follow the Biblical prescription for revival.

Series spiritual truth: When people return to God, a spiritual awakening can change a nation.

## Return to God America, pt. 5

### I. Introduction

- A. Review Series: 'Return to God America'. When people return to God, it's called a revival or a spiritual awakening. It's what America desperately needs today. Last week we saw how Jonah's obedience brought about a spiritual awakening in Ninevah. We learned not to let excuses stand in the way of calling people to return to God.
- B. Today in part 5, we'll see how ordinary people, empowered and controlled by the Holy Spirit, can bring about revival. Context: Jesus' last words before His ascension. [Acts 1:8 (NLT) **But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you.** And you will be my witnesses, **telling people about me everywhere...**] Jesus said, the Holy Spirit will anoint/ empower us to be a witness for Christ that can bring revival in families, communities, and perhaps even the nation.
- C. Truth for the day: Ordinary people, empowered and controlled by the Holy Spirit, can start a revival.

### II. God can use ordinary people, empowered by His Spirit to start a revival.

- A. [Acts 8:4–25 (NLT) But the believers who were scattered preached the Good News about Jesus wherever they went. 5 **Philip**...went to **the city of Samaria** and told the people there about the Messiah, (*Jesus the Savior*).] Context: Philip was a deacon who left Jerusalem after Stephen was martyred and Christians were persecuted. He was a man on a mission to bring a spiritual awakening to Samaria.
  1. Jews were prejudiced against Samaritans. The Samaritans were Jews who married non-Jews after the exile. Philip's venture into Samaria was a statement that the gospel is inclusive of all people, regardless of nationality or skin color.<sup>1</sup> The gospel is the solution to racism then and now.
- B. Vs. 6 Crowds listened intently to Philip because **they were eager to hear his message and see the miraculous signs he did.** 7 Many evil spirits were cast out... many who had been paralyzed or lame were healed.
  1. Philip's message was Jesus is the Savior and God empowered him with the Spirit to perform signs and wonders. [Hebrews 2:3–4 (ESV) ...such a great salvation? It was declared at first by the Lord, and it was attested to us by those who heard, 4 while **God also bore witness by signs and wonders and various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit...**] This is what Christians were like in the 1<sup>st</sup> century and it brought revival. May God do the same thing in our day.
  2. How was Philip, a church deacon, able to do such supernatural acts? Acts 1:8 holds the answer. [Acts 1:8 (ESV) **you will receive power when the Holy Spirit**

**has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses...**] The Holy Spirit was doing through Philip what Jesus promised in Acts 1:8. Imagine what would happen today if God did the same thing when we pray or minister to people.

3. The early church wanted the HS to help bring revival. Context: God used PJ to heal a cripple man; revival and opposition. [Acts 4:23–31 (NLT) ...Peter and John returned to the other believers and told them what the leading priests and elders had said. 24...all the believers **lifted their voices together in prayer...**29 ...Lord, hear their threats, and **give us, your servants, great boldness in preaching your word. 30 Stretch out your hand with healing power; may miraculous signs and wonders be done through the name of your holy servant Jesus.**” 31...the meeting place shook, and **they were all filled with the Holy Spirit. Then they preached the word of God with boldness.**
    - a. Their prayer wasn’t about the threats to their safety. It was for (1) boldness to tell people about Jesus in hopes of revival, (2) asking the HS to perform signs and wonders. Opposition can’t stop revival; It becomes fuel for a revival.
  - C. Vs. 12...the people **believed** Philip’s message of Good News...As a result, **many** men and women were **baptized...**
    1. The Samaritans experienced a spiritual awakening. Revival happened because (1) Philip was willing to be used by God, (2) He was unafraid to speak the truth, (3) He was anointed/ empowered/ controlled by the Holy Spirit.
    2. PRAY God uses us in the same way.
  - D. Vs. 14 When the apostles in Jerusalem heard that the people of Samaria had accepted God’s message, they sent Peter and John there. 15 As soon as they arrived, **they prayed for these new believers to receive the Holy Spirit. 16 The Holy Spirit had not yet come upon any of them, for they had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. 17 Then Peter and John laid their hands upon these believers, and they received the Holy Spirit...**
    1. The New American Commentary... notes that Acts has no set pattern as to how people received the HS.<sup>1</sup> Scripture teaches the Spirit indwells people at salvation. A second experience with the Spirit called, the baptism of the Spirit, sometimes fell supernaturally from heaven, and sometimes came with the laying on of hands. Sometimes it was before water baptism and sometimes after. The important thing is that we should look to the HS as the source of spiritual power for revival.
    2. E.g. of believers having an encounter with the HS after salvation. [Acts 19:1–6 (NLT)...Paul traveled...reached Ephesus... where he found several **believers.** 2 **“Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?”**...“No,” they replied, “we haven’t even heard that there is a Holy Spirit.” 3 **“Then what baptism did you experience?”** he asked. And they replied, **“The baptism of John.”** 4 Paul said, **“John’s baptism called for repentance from sin. But John himself told the people to believe in the one who would come later, meaning Jesus.”** 5 As soon as they heard this, they were **baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.** 6 Then when **Paul laid his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them...**]
    3. In the early church, believers were empowered by the Holy Spirit and brought a spiritual awakening to the world. Let’s pray it happens again today.
- III. Conclusion: Our relationship with the Holy Spirit can grow deeper each day.

- A. [Eph. 5:18 (NLT) Don't be drunk with wine, because that will ruin your life. Instead, **be filled with the Holy Spirit...**] Paul isn't referring to a 1 time experience. *Be filled with the Spirit* is a present imperative in Gk. meaning to be continually filled. *Filled* means "to fill up, to cause to abound, to supply liberally, to flood, to diffuse throughout." The fullness of the Spirit means the Spirit has control over the believer yielded to Him.<sup>4</sup> It can be translated, "be controlled by the Spirit" or "let the Spirit rule you" or "let the Spirit live within you"<sup>3</sup> A drunken man acts abnormally. Rather than controlling himself, the wine controls him. Conversely, the positive command is, *Be filled with the Spirit*. A believer, rather than controlling himself, is yielded to the Lord and is controlled by the Holy Spirit. Each Christian has the Spirit, but the command is that the Spirit have all of him.<sup>2</sup>
- B. Our part to see revival is to allow the HS to control our life. It starts when we get out of bed, get on our knees, and offer ourselves to do God's will. Then we do what He says in hopes we can be a spark of revival.

#### IV. Response

- A. Communion: Reflect on:
  1. Grateful for our salvation
  2. Willing to be a spark for revival to fulfill the Great Commission
  3. Desire for the HS: (1) Desire to have an encounter with the HS like the Book of Acts so we can be empowered by the Holy Spirit (2) Desire to be filled daily by yielding to the HS and letting Him control us.
- B. Prayer
- C. Souls

#### V. Bibliography/ Resources: Logos Bible Software and Library, Platinum Edition, was used to prepare this message.

1. Polhill, J. B. (1992). *Acts* (Vol. 26, pp. 214–215). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.
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4. Wuest, K. S. (1997). *Wuest's word studies from the Greek New Testament: for the English reader* (Vol. 4, pp. 127–128). Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.