

*“Repent and be baptised every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”*

Acts 2:38

Today is Pentecost Sunday and I want us to go to Acts 2 and reflect on a couple of key things that we find on the day of Pentecost. The first is the fulfilment of this wonderful promise, the promise of the Holy Spirit. Jesus had told his disciples, in Luke 24:49, that he will send the promise of the Father upon them, they are to stay in the city until they are clothed with power from on high. And the other equally important fact we learn here is the wonderful response of the crowd in Jerusalem. The response of faith and repentance and the receiving of the precious gift of the promised Holy Spirit.

On Pentecost Day, fifty days after the day Jesus rose from the dead, something astonishing happened. In the city of Jerusalem, 120 followers of Jesus had gathered to pray when suddenly—the sounds of a strong wind were heard. All who witnessed it from the outside were bewildered. They were even more bewildered when the 120 people began to speak in so many different languages. So, the crowds asked what it all meant.

And Peter says this is not drunkenness. This is actually the fulfilment of a long-awaited promise. This is the fulfilment of the promise God made through Joel, quoting Joel 2:28-32. In these last days, an amazing thing would occur. God would “pour out his Spirit.” It was the promise that God would send His Holy Spirit to earth. On all mankind, on your sons and daughters. On the young and the old and on your bond slaves. The emphasis here was not that all would preach, but rather that all would understand. God says, when I pour out my Spirit indiscriminately, all those who receive him will have full understanding. They will all know me, from the least to the greatest. Peter emphasising, this is God’s promise being fulfilled before their very eyes.

As we read down Acts 2, we find Peter proving that Jesus is the Messiah and that they killed him. This reality startles the people in Jerusalem. Peter explains that they were guilty of the greatest sin of all — rejecting the Son of God and giving him up to be crucified. Yet, God loved his Son and raised him from the dead, and exalted him above all in the heavens. And now as a sign of his Son’s exaltation, and as he had promised long ago, the Holy Spirit was now given to everyone who calls on the name of the Lord. They only needed to call on the name of the Lord to be saved from their sins.

When they heard this, they were pierced to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, “Brothers, what should we do?” They were afraid of the judgment of God and didn’t know what to do. And I want us to consider Peter’s answer deeply. In verses 38-39, Peter said to them, “Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you, for your children and for all who are far away, every one whom the Lord our God calls to him.” They need to turn from sin.

They need to trust in Jesus Christ. And not only will they be forgiven, but receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. Peter was saying, this is the day you have been waiting for.

The children of Israel never got to know God and they never found true forgiveness. But the New Covenant would make this possible. They will not teach again, each man his neighbour and each man his brother, saying, know the Lord, for they will all know God, from the least of them to the greatest. For the Lord, declares, "for I will forgive your iniquity, and your sin I will remember no more." So, Jeremiah introduces a new covenant that will cause Israel to succeed whereas the old covenant let them fail. Jeremiah doesn't tell us the agent of this covenant, but Ezekiel does. "I will put my Spirit within you and cause you to walk in my statutes, and you will be careful to observe my ordinances." So, this new covenant with all these wonderful promises all hinged upon the Holy Spirit coming to dwell within them. So, the Spirit was the promise. They waited for the Spirit. They anticipated the Spirit and they received the Spirit as promised.

Even when Jesus came, he reiterated that promise. John 16:7, tells us, "I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Advocate or Helper will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you." Something more advantageous than having Jesus in the flesh. What is better than having Jesus in the flesh? According to Jesus, it is having God dwelling in us. I emphasise this because I want us to understand the coming of the Holy Spirit is of great significance for our lives. We don't realize how badly we need the Holy Spirit. If we trust Christ, we'll receive the Holy Spirit. This promise is also for us, those who are far way. This promise is also for our children. This promise is for everyone the Lord calls to Himself.

The Holy Spirit is God himself, the third person of the Trinity who's the teacher, advocate, truth bearer and sanctifier of our hearts. When the Holy Spirit comes into the heart of a repentant person, he makes his dwelling in that heart. He gives victory over sin and empowers to live a new life with the Risen Christ. We must always give thanks to the Holy Spirit who dwells within and who blesses us to live the Christian life we are called to live, and to do the work we are called to serve. And we must always give thanks to the Lord who keeps his word and fulfils his promises. And that's what the young church in Jerusalem began to do. As soon as they received the Holy Spirit they began to witness to Christ and live his gospel, to the praise of God the Father.

May God's grace and peace be with you all,

Bobby