

Acts 2 "Come Holy Spirit Come"

Pentecost was already a feast. It was the beginning of the grain harvest. The feast of first fruits, as the first taste of the harvest was offered to God in thanksgiving. We have to then see what happened that day through the lens of what they were celebrating. Pentecost the first taste of an actual future – Pentecost the promise that there was more to come.

Read Acts 2

(All of it – or - the selection read in service – Acts 2:1-12; 14; 32-38; 41-47)

1. Read Exodus 19:16-20. This is but one of the examples where God's presence is signified in fire. God comes down in fire upon a bush, a mountain, the temple etc... What is the significance that God comes down in fire here upon a people, a community?

That God has come to dwell with us, by the work of the Spirit to dwell with-in us. We are the temple of the Living God.

That the Spirit has come upon us that we would be 'partakers of the divine nature', that we would reflect the attributes of the living God.

Together these truths invite us to consider that God's character and purposes are known in and through Spirit-filled community. The place of encounter with the Living God is community. As John puts it in 1 John – "no one has seen the invisible God but He is known in the love that we have for one another".

The Spirit enables the disciples to proclaim the good news of Jesus in the languages of the people from the nations gathered in Jerusalem – this created a beautifully diverse community centered around Jesus. This has ultimately led to the Christian Church being the most ethnically diverse community on the face of the planet. While each individual church may not be able to reflect the fulness of racial diversity it should be asked does it reflect the diversity of the community around it and if not, why not?

2. In the midst of the cultural movement toward racial justice what should be the response of the church in light of that work of the Spirit?

As Christians we have often spent our time critiquing the philosophical underpinnings of the movement. Critiquing the Marxist ideas, critiquing critical race theory.

While we may disagree with the ideas that underpin the cultural movement toward racial justice we see in the story of Pentecost that the future that Jesus is bringing is one where every tongue and tribe and nation is worshipping around the throne of the living God. By the Spirit we yearn for such a future.

Do we need to agree with the motivations of others to work with them toward common ends?

3. (vs. 42-47) The Spirit comes to make this community a foretaste of Jesus' future, a promise that there is more to come. What are the marks of this renewed human community? What do they look like practically?

Devoted to the Apostles Teaching – they receive King Jesus – pattern their lives after the patterns of the Kingdom – the patterns of love, justice, forgiveness and peace.

Devoted to Fellowship – to deep care of the other – this is a community that loved, cared, listened

Devoted to sharing the good news of Jesus – and the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.

Devoted to generous compassionate service – they sold what they had – and gave to whomever had need.

Devoted to Joy filled worship – informal and formal.

They were together – they prioritized community.

The disciples were enabled to point to the future with signs and wonders. The rest of the book of Acts fills that in – words of knowledge – healing – exorcisms – visions etc...

As Luke moves into these verses he uses a Greek Particle that can mean “and they” or “so they”. The whole force of the story of Pentecost invites us to translate it “so they”. This community comes about as the result of, the fruit of, in dependence upon the work of the Spirit.

4. John Stott wrote: “Without the Holy Spirit Christian discipleship would be inconceivable, even impossible. There can be no life without the lawgiver, no understanding without the Spirit of truth, no fellowship without the unity of the Spirit, no Christlikeness of character apart from his fruit, and no effective witness without his power. As a body without breath is a corpse, so the church without the Spirit is dead. Discuss.
5. What are some of the ways we can foster dependence upon the Spirit as a people, a church?

If there would be a place to linger on this story it would I believe be here.

We don't have the ability to control where the Spirit shows up but there a few common commands of scripture that should guide us.

1. *Be filled with the Spirit (Ephesians 5:18) – when the disciples use this language it points to an ongoing filling, that throughout our lives we are invited to receive the work, presence, and gifts of the Spirit more and more.*
2. *Don't quench the work of the Spirit (1 Thessalonians 5:19)– we can't control the Spirit but we can certainly quench His work, not allowing Him freedom to work in and through us.*
3. *The Spirit glorifies Jesus (John 16:14) – the Spirit is bringing us to see the fullness of who Jesus is – so we are in keeping with the work of the Spirit when we focus our attention on Jesus.*
4. *Come Holy Spirit – one of the early prayers of the church – in a posture of reception we wait on the Spirit to do His work in and through us. As a people let us yearn for more of the Spirit.*