

Mount Pisgah AME Church

Rev. Jay B. Broadnax, Pastor

Bible Study, Wednesday, May 27, 2020

God In Us: The Person and Work of The Holy Spirit

Preparation to Receive The Pentecost Promise

Introduction

- Jesus' Promise
 - Before Jesus departed He promised that he would not leave believers "comfortless", but that he would send them "another Counselor" to be with disciples in His place. (John 14:15-17, John 16:7).
 - This "other Counselor", sent from the Father and The Son, fulfills Jesus' promise when he said "I will be with you always." (Matthew 28:20)
 - The Spirits equivalency with God The Father and God The Son can be supported by the fact that The Spirit came as ANOTHER counselor in Jesus' place.
 - Jesus promised that the Spirit would give us POWER to do works of service for God. Acts 1:1-8
- The Holy Spirit Is God With Us NOW (John 16:7)
- For Christians, PENTECOST is the Annual Celebration of the fulfillment of Jesus' promise.

The Background of Pentecost

In the Old Testament, Pentecost is the Greek name for a harvest festival known as *Shavuot*, or "The Feast of Weeks," (also known as the Feast of First Fruits.) It was a time when the people expressed thanksgiving to God for the grain harvest and other crops planted earlier. The term "weeks" is used because it takes place the day after the completion of seven weeks (seven Sabbaths) from the beginning of the Passover. This amounts to fifty days. Thus when translated to Greek (which became the common language when the Greeks conquered the region) the word "*pentekoste*" (literally 50th day), or Pentecost, was used. See Exodus 23:16, Exodus 34:22, Numbers 28:26, and Deuteronomy 16:9-12

In the New Testament, Pentecost is a holiday on which we commemorate the coming of the Holy Spirit upon the early followers of Jesus. Jesus was resurrected during the *Passover* festival, and then spent (including Resurrection Day) forty days on earth with the disciples before ascending into heaven. Ten days later, during the Jewish *Shavuot* (Pentecost) gathering in Jerusalem, God sent God's Holy Spirit to empower the Jesus' disciples.

Before the events of the first Pentecost there were followers of Jesus, but no movement that could be meaningfully called "the church." Thus, from an historical point of view, Pentecost is the day on which the church was started. This is also true from a spiritual perspective, since the Spirit brings the church into existence and enlivens it. Thus Pentecost is the church's birthday.

Annually, we celebrate Pentecost as a symbol of God empowering the church for ministry. God's POWER came at Pentecost. Jesus made it clear that before doing ANYTHING, the disciples were supposed to stay in Jerusalem during Pentecost and prepare themselves for what was coming. How did the disciples prepare themselves? The background of is in Acts 1.

Preparation for Pentecost (Acts 1:12-2:1)

- A. Setting
 - 1. Where? In an undistracted place, an upper room.
 - 2. Who? The apostles, Jesus' family, the women, all of the other believers
- B. United – They were together (v14)
 - 1. Coming together (physically, but more importantly in being of one mind, one heart)
 - 2. If we want God's power to flow, we have to work at healing the breaches
- C. Persistent, consistent prayer (v 14).
 - 1. They were consistent
 - 2. They were persistent
 - 3. They were believing
- D. They restored INTEGRITY to the ministry – (Restoration to wholeness of the group)
 - 1. The continuity of the witness depended on the reliability of the witnesses
 - 2. Even Judas' betrayal had been forecasted by David.
 - a) Peter lifted up an account of how Judas had met his demise
 - b) The scripture must be fulfilled.
 - 3. The necessary qualifications for the apostolic replacement
 - a) Began from John's baptism
 - b) Seen the resurrection
 - 4. They identified persons of integrity
 - a) Joseph Barsabas (son of Sabba) or Matthias
 - b) Met the qualifications
 - 5. They trusted God to position the right people. Not by politics or popularity, but by *God's choice*
 - 6. Setting a firm foundation organizationally is important for the witness.
- E. They STAYED together (Acts 2:1)
 - 1. Unity reemphasized. Critical for empowerment by the Holy Spirit.

Pentecost serves as a reminder of the POWER with which God has endowed the church. Let us prepare ourselves to be empowered and transformed into what God has called us to be!