

# Being Filled with the Holy Spirit

**Bible Reading – Extracts from Acts chapter 1 and chapter 2 (NKJV)**

*“And being assembled together with them, Jesus commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, “which,” He said, “you have heard from Me; for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.”*

*Therefore, when they had come together, they asked Him, saying, “Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?” And He said to them, “It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority. But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”*

*When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.*

*And there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men, from every nation under heaven. And when this sound occurred, the multitude came together, and were confused, because everyone heard them speak in his own language. Then they were all amazed and marvelled, saying to one another, “Look, are not all these who speak, Galileans? And how is it that we hear, each in our own language in which we were born? Parthians and Medes and Elamites, those dwelling in Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya adjoining Cyrene, visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabs—we hear them speaking in our own tongues the wonderful works of God.” So they were all amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, “Whatever could this mean?”*

*Others mocking said, “They are full of new wine.”*

***But Peter, standing up with the eleven, raised his voice and said to them, “Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and heed my words. For these are not drunk, as you suppose, since it is only the third hour of the day. But this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel:***

***‘And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God,  
That I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh;  
Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,  
Your young men shall see visions,  
Your old men shall dream dreams.  
And on My menservants and on My maidservants  
I will pour out My Spirit in those days;  
And they shall prophesy.  
I will show wonders in heaven above  
And signs in the earth beneath:  
Blood and fire and vapour of smoke.  
The sun shall be turned into darkness,  
And the moon into blood,  
Before the coming of the great and awesome day of the LORD.  
And it shall come to pass  
That whoever calls on the name of the LORD  
Shall be saved.’***

***“Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a Man attested by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs which God did through Him in your midst, as you yourselves also know— Him, being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death;***

***This Jesus, God has raised up, of which we are all witnesses. Therefore being exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He poured out this, which you now see and hear.***

***“Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.”***

***Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, “Men and brethren, what shall we do?”***

***Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call."***

***And with many other words he testified and exhorted them, saying, "Be saved from this perverse generation." Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them."***

## **SERMON**

Today is known as Pentecost Sunday in the Church's calendar, and it is the day that marks the first outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the early followers of Christ.

Information on the Internet describes The Day of Pentecost as follows:

'The Christian holiday of **Pentecost** is celebrated 50 days from Easter Sunday. It is also the tenth day after the day Jesus ascended into heaven, which itself is 40 days *from* Easter.

The Christian Pentecost is based on the New Testament, where it refers to the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles and other followers of Jesus Christ, as described in the Acts of the Apostles, chapter 2 and verses 1-31.

According to Luke 22 verses 2-13, the descent of the Holy Spirit occurred while the Apostles were celebrating the Jewish day of Shavuot, which means 'the Feast of Weeks' - a prominent feast in the calendar of ancient Israel, celebrating the giving of the Law of Moses at Sinai. Consequently, "Pentecost" may refer to the Pentecost of the New Testament and Shavuot of the Old Testament. Shavuot (Pentecost) is a significant event shared by Jews and Christians, but only Jews celebrate it as a holiday.

In the Christian liturgical year, it became a feast commemorating what is described by some Christians as the 'Birthday of the Church'.

As we have just heard in our reading, prior to Jesus' ascension into heaven, He told His disciples to go to Jerusalem and wait for the promise of the Holy Spirit from God. Those early disciples did just that. They waited in Jerusalem.

Then suddenly, 10 days after Jesus' ascension into Heaven, whilst they were waiting and wondering what would happen when the promised Holy Spirit came upon them, the events that we have just read about in Acts Chapter 2 came down upon them in a sudden, supernatural outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

One minute they were all huddled together in a room waiting for something to happen; then the next minute they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, speaking in tongues and praising God in languages which they had never learned, so that the crowds of people around them, from all sorts of nations, could hear and understand what they were saying.

Because of this powerful outpouring of the Holy Spirit, the Scriptures tell us that 3,000 people were added to the church that very day. The first Church was born on the Day of Pentecost, with the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Prior to this, the disciples were Jewish men and women who observed the Law of Moses, but they would have heard John the Baptist preaching a baptism of repentance, and declaring that One would come after him who would save the people from their sins and baptise them with the Holy Spirit.

Jesus came to where John was baptising people, John saw Him and declared that this person (Jesus) was the "Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). John then baptised **Jesus** in the river Jordan, and the Holy Spirit descended upon Him. The Holy Spirit led Jesus out into the wilderness where He was tested by Satan for 40 days and 40 nights. Remaining steadfast to fulfilling the will of His Father, Jesus resisted all Satan's temptations, and Scripture tells us in Luke 4:14 that, after this time of testing, Jesus came out of the wilderness "in the POWER of the Holy Spirit".

Yes, Jesus Himself had to be filled with the Holy Spirit! It was only AFTER he had been filled with the power of the Holy Spirit that He began His ministry, preaching that we need to repent of our sins and believe the Good news, which is that He has come to save us from our sins, that we can receive God's forgiveness of our sins, and have the hope of eternal life. The fact that Jesus did not begin His ministry until AFTER He had left the wilderness in the POWER of the Holy Spirit, is very significant, because it applies to the Church today, as you will hear shortly.

Returning to those first disciples, they were Jewish men and women who **CHOSE** to believe that Jesus was the Messiah, and they wanted to follow Him,

trying in their natural ability to understand what He taught them, but very often failing to do so.

As an aside, but equally as important in this message about the outpouring of Holy Spirit, the Gospel had not been preached to the Gentiles at that point. It was only being preached to the Jews. But as we know from Scripture, the majority of the Jews rejected the message, and as such, the Lord then made it possible for the Gospel to be preached to the Gentile nation. This is recorded in the Bible in the Book of Acts Chapter 9 onwards.

We are descendants of those first Gentiles who heard the Gospel, which occurred only a few years after Jesus ascended into heaven. Praise God for those first Messianic Jews who preached the Gospel to the Gentiles all those years ago! They also believed what those Messianic Jews preached to them, and in Acts Chapter 10 it tells us that they were also filled with the Holy Spirit in the same way as what happened on the day of Pentecost. Praise God! There are further occurrences in the Bible of other Gentiles hearing the Gospel, believing it and being filled with the Holy Spirit, just to confirm that it was not a one-off incident confined to the first Pentecost after Jesus' ascension!

So, getting back to the sermon; after Jesus had ascended into heaven, the disciples were waiting in Jerusalem for the Holy Spirit, which Jesus had promised would come upon them. Moments before the Holy Spirit fell upon them, they were still all merely natural human beings, afraid to even reveal that they were followers of Christ, as we recall with Peter at Jesus' trial, where he denied 3 times that he even knew Jesus.

But on the Day of Pentecost, all that changed in an instant! The Holy Spirit fell on them and they were each filled with power from on high. This is the same supernatural power of God that Jesus had received from His Father, and which Jesus promised to the believers, filling them to overflowing, so much so, that they all began to praise God, not in their own languages, but in other languages that they did not know!

Many may wonder what the point of this strange event was, and whether it applies to today. Well, the purpose of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit was, and still is, to equip those who follow Christ, and to enable them to preach the

Gospel with the power of the Holy Spirit and with Christ's authority. In Acts Chapter 1, just before He ascended into heaven, Jesus said to the disciples,

***“John baptized with water, but in just a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.”...you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you will be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhere—in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”***

Since that very first outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon believers, the Church has spread throughout the world, carried by followers of Christ who have obeyed Jesus' command in John Chapter 3 where he said that we must be born again, of water AND the Spirit.

Those who are filled with the Holy Spirit are able to obey God's Word and preach the truth of it. It is shocking to hear that there are many people who are occupying positions of leadership and ministry in the Church, who have NOT been filled with the Holy Spirit, and without knowing it they stand in pulpits preaching messages that are a distortion of the Word of God. Some may do it to suit their own ends, or **in ignorance** to fulfil the will of the enemy.

Jesus warns believers to be on the lookout for such preachers. In Matthew 7:15 He says,

***“Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.”***

The apostle Paul also warns us about such preachers.

In 2 Corinthians 11:13-15 he says,

***“For such people are false apostles, deceitful workers, masquerading as apostles of Christ. And no wonder, for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light. It is not surprising, then, if his servants also masquerade as servants of righteousness. Their end will be what their actions deserve.”***

The sole purpose of such un-Spirit-filled leaders is to deceive the flock with lies; lies that sound like the truth.

The Bible says that by the fruit of the Spirit which we display, people will know if we are a true follower of Christ, or not. It is the Holy Spirit who enables the fruit of the Spirit to grow in our lives; so if we are displaying Christ-like

character in our daily lives, people will know we are followers of Christ because of what they see in us.

When we are filled with the Holy Spirit, if there are things that are wrong in our lives, the Holy Spirit will convict us of our sins in order to bring us to a place where we will confess and repent of them, which then enables us to change and become more like Christ in our thoughts, words and deeds.

But the biggest fruit of the Holy Spirit living in our lives is the conviction in our soul that God's Word, as it is written in the Bible, IS the truth. The Holy Spirit will enable us to hold fast to the truth, and we will have no desire to compromise with what it says. The indwelling Holy Spirit enables us to see what is going on around us, and to discern God's truth from the lies of this world, particularly when this is occurring within the Church.

You will recall from our previous sermons that the Bible says that the world is under the dominion of Satan, and as such, all the teachings of this world, which are contrary to God's Word, all these things of the world are lies, even though they may appear to be reasonable. If they do not match up with God's Word, then, as followers of Christ, we must obey God's Word, not the message of the world.

Many false preachers and leaders are rising up within the Church, leading the flock astray. In the New Testament, Jesus warned us that, in the End Times, these people would come, and He also warned us NOT to believe them or follow them. But sadly, MANY followers of Christ ARE following these false leaders, who are teaching them to believe things that are contrary to God's Word.

We have to ask ourselves WHY would so many sheep allow themselves to be lead astray by these false shepherds? And the answer to this is that the ROOT of this catastrophic reality is that these false leaders are NOT filled with the Holy Spirit, because the fruit that they display is that they preach things that are **diametrically opposed** to the Word of God, and to entice people to follow their ungodly teaching.

These un-spirit-filled leaders are in rebellion against God and what His Word says. They teach that the Holy Spirit outpouring was ONLY for the early church, and that believers today do not need to bother with it anymore.

As such, the flock believe these lies and hence have no desire to ask the Lord to fill them with His Holy Spirit. Without the Holy Spirit dwelling in them, they are not really able to understand the Word of God because without the Holy Spirit, they are still natural human beings.

The Apostle Paul says in 1 Corinthians 2,

***“The person without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God but considers them foolishness, and cannot understand them because they are discerned only through the Spirit”***

It is the indwelling Holy Spirit that TRANSFORMS us and enables our minds and our hearts to be renewed and to understand God’s Word, and then obey it.

Many followers of Christ do not read God’s Word from month to month. They simply feed on what their Church leader preaches to them on a Sunday. But how will they know if their leader is preaching the truth of God’s Word or a distortion of it, UNLESS they know what the Scriptures say through their own personal times of Bible reading at home? And how will they understand the truth of what God’s word says UNLESS they have been filled with the Holy Spirit?

Both Michele and I can confirm from our own experience the things that I am preaching to you today, because we were both followers of Christ for many years, but had NOT been filled with the Holy Spirit. We went to Church and believed everything our leaders preached, but did not check what we were being taught, because we did not read our Bibles very much, and even if we had, we would not have really understood much because we had not been filled with the Holy Spirit.

But when Michele was filled with the Holy Spirit, in the SAME way as we heard in our reading today in Acts 2, it was as if the Lord gave her a spiritual ‘download’ or revelation on understanding His Word, so that she was able to discern true teaching from deception. I am not trying to puff her up by saying this. My purpose for mentioning this is to teach that when we are filled with the Holy Spirit, something happens in us.

That ‘something’ is an instant transformation within us that changes us from operating as natural human beings into people who operate in the Spirit that God has given to us. Our eyes are opened and our hearts and minds are

changed, so that we then live our lives in Christ according to the Spirit, and NOT from our flesh.

Again the apostle Paul says,

***“Those who live according to the flesh have their minds set on what the flesh desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires.”***

Most deception is extremely subtle. This is why Satan has been able to slither into our churches and sow the weeds of his lies amongst the flock. Deception is not obvious.

Deception in the Church is a little twisting of scripture here and there, making it sound like God’s truth, but nevertheless it is still a deception. The most subtle deception of all in the Church today is the simple act of ‘omission’. Church leaders OMITTING to preach that followers of Christ CAN be filled with the Holy Spirit TODAY!

Satan does NOT want followers of Christ to be filled with the Holy Spirit because he knows that this will transform us and enable us to both understand and preach the Word of God with boldness, as Peter did on the Day of Pentecost, preaching the Word of God to the crowd.

His Spirit-filled preaching, pierced their hearts with CONVICTION of their sins. It caused the people to ask, “What must we do to be saved?” And boldly Peter told them EXACTLY what they needed to do to be saved! He said.....

***“Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.” The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call.”***

It goes on.... ***“With many other words he warned them; and he pleaded with them, “Save yourselves from this corrupt generation.”***

Those words **“and for all who are far off”** mean for all generations to come. So, there we have it – right at the outset of the birth of the first New Testament church, by the power of the Holy Spirit dwelling in Peter, he tells them that the baptism of the Holy Spirit is for ALL people, for ALL generations to come, who confess and repent of their sins and believe in Jesus Christ as their Lord and Saviour. This is the TRUTH of God’s Word!

Later in the book of Acts (chapter 19) Paul finds a group of believers in Ephesus who had been baptised by John but they did not know the Holy Spirit was being poured out into believers. We read **this** from verse 1...

***‘While Apollos was at Corinth, Paul took the road through the interior and arrived at Ephesus. There he found some disciples and asked them, “Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?”***

***They answered, “No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit.”***

***So Paul asked, “Then what baptism did you receive?”***

***“John’s baptism,” they replied. Paul then said, “John’s baptism was a baptism of repentance. He told the people to believe in the one coming after him, that is, in Jesus.” On hearing this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. When Paul placed his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied. There were about twelve men in all.’***

And so it is today, many churches OMIT to preach the truth that believers can receive the gift of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Many omit to even teach about the Holy Spirit. Leaders of such churches are in error. Preachers who do not preach the truth that the Holy Spirit wants to be invited to take up residence in believers, are false preachers. They may appear to be nice people, and everything else that they preach and teach may be in accordance with God’s Word, but if they are not preaching about the Holy Spirit, people will not know how to be saved.

Without the indwelling Holy Spirit, church leaders will have no power to preach a message that will convict people of sin, which would lead them to confess and repent and follow Jesus in obedient living.

In John chapter 16 verses 5-9, Jesus teaches the disciples that the work of the Holy Spirit is to convict the world of its sin, and of God’s righteousness, and of the coming judgement.”

If we are NOT filled with the Holy Spirit, we will not be convicted of sin and we will not be able to confess and repent of it. If we are NOT filled with the Holy Spirit, we will not be convicted of what is righteous or unrighteous in the eyes of God. If we are NOT filled with the Holy Spirit, we will have no understanding

of God's judgement that is coming upon the world to judge all those who do not believe in Jesus, and all those who once believed, but have since rejected Him.

So to conclude, today, the day of Pentecost, the day that marks the first outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the first followers of Christ, thus birthing the first New Testament Church; today is a very important day for the Church all over the world, although many churches only pay 'lip service' to this life-transforming experience, or do not mention it at all.

But regardless of what other church leaders do with this life-transforming truth, today, the Day of Pentecost is a day when we too can ask Jesus for the promise of the Holy Spirit to fill our lives and transform us. His purpose is to equip all believers with His power, to be ministers of His Gospel upon the earth in whatever area of calling He has given to us to fulfil.

So let us rejoice this day, and seek the Lord, asking Him to fill us with His Holy Spirit and transform our lives for His glory, as he did with those first believers on that first day of Pentecost!

Amen!

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