

The Spirit of Life
Acts 2:14-33

John 8:21-47
Hebrews 6:13-20
Responsive Psalm 30: 1-5

Last week we covered the first few verses here in Chapter 2, which is the account of the Holy Spirit coming upon Christ's disciples, just as he said would happen at his ascension. In a bit of a recap I want to read those first 13 verses this morning because today's passage that we are looking at flows right from the previous. (read 1-13)

As we talked about a bit last week, there were those among the crowd who were witnessing the event that was unfolding but they sought to justify it and attempt to make sense of what was going around them. In an attempt to explain away this supernatural event, they supposed that these disciples who were speaking in various different languages were actually just drunk. But honestly that still wouldn't explain what was going on, for a drunk person would not be speaking fluently in languages foreign to themselves. But instead as we know, this was the fulfillment of what Jesus had told them, that the spirit would come, and that they would be a witness of Christ through all of Jerusalem, Judea, and Samaria.

The didn't have to wait long, or go far for as we read again this morning there were people from various nationalities who had gathered together there in Jerusalem. So while this was going on, and many were shocked, and marveled at what could be happening, Peter stands up and addresses the crowd, which is the passage that we are looking at this morning. Starting in verse 14, (read 14-33) Right off the bat Peter addresses those who were claiming that he and the others were drunk, he says that would not be possible since it is only the 3rd hour of the day. The Jewish people of the day, divided the day in 2, 12 hour blocks 12 hours during the day, and 12 during the night just as we typically do, except where we attribute a new day to 12am midnight, the attributed a day upon the rising sun at 6am. So that would put the 3rd hour of the day at 9am.

So Peter explains, that this is not drunkenness as is suggested, and also that which is happening was actually foretold by the prophet Joel. Before we start getting into what Peter said to the people, I think we need to take a moment to get a little perspective of the gravity of the moment....remember Peter after they arrested Jesus? Luke chapter 22, "Having arrested him, they led him and brought him into the high priest's house. But Peter followed at a distance. Now when they had kindled a fire in the midst of the courtyard and sat down together, Peter sat among them. And a certain servant girl, seeing him as he sat by the fire, looked intently at him and said, This man was also with him. And after a little while another saw him and said, You also are one of them. But Peter said, Man, I am not! Then after about an hour had passed, another confidently affirmed, saying, Surely this fellow was with Him, for he is a Galilean. But Peter said, Man, I do not know what you are saying! Immediately, while he was still speaking, the rooster crowed. And the Lord turned and looked at Peter. Then Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said to him, Before the rooster crows you will deny my 3 times, so Peter went out and wept bitterly."

Oh my, can you even imagine how that look must have cut Peter right to the heart. Not even thinking about what was taking place during the moment but rather reacting in fear and out of a motive to preserve oneself....and then Jesus looks at him, and in that instance is reminded of his Words, the very words that Peter said he would never say and that he would follow him to death. And here, now.. is Peter, standing among this crowd of people, and says, You have taken the Son of God by lawless

hands and have crucified him.”

What a change we see in Peter, and then even looking at what he is saying. This is a disciple who did not understand the parables, who didn't see the larger picture even when Jesus himself said plainly that he was going to Jerusalem and will be arrested and put to death. Remember what was recorded in the book of Mark? Chapter 8, 31 “And he began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and Chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and after 3 days rise again. He spoke this word openly, Then Peter took him aside and rebuked him, but when he had turned around and looked at his disciples he rebuked Peter saying, “Get behind me Satan! For you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men.”

So we now see this man, who out of fear and desperation denied that he even knew Jesus, one of his dearest and closest friends, now here he is standing in a multitude of people testifying of this Christ, of the one who by their hands was put to death on the cross. But not only was he just merely standing there confronting them with this, he also now understands and uses scripture and the prophet Joel to explain what is happening, and in doing so gives a gospel message attesting that Jesus was the Messiah, and what they are now witnessing is the coming of the Holy Spirit as was foretold.

Over the past few weeks we have been talking about the power of the Holy Spirit, and how it manifests itself in the life of the believer. How the Holy Spirit was given to us those believe as a helper, to minister both assurance and conviction. But as we talked about last week, through the new birth we have become a new creature, we have been born again, we have become something different for now we have the Spirit indwelling us, causing us to desire after God, to thirst for knowledge and to grow in our understanding and faith. We have now been given eyes to see the kingdom, and ears to hear God's word, we are no longer blind in the darkness of our sins, and deaf in the arrogance of our pride.

I am not going to take up the argument that the disciples were not saved as it were before the Spirit came, they walked with Jesus, and they confessed him as the Messiah...but they didn't have the full understanding of Christ, for not only did they not have the indwelling of the spirit yet, they were also living in the middle of it. There is no way of knowing or understanding the larger picture when you are right in the middle of it. It is absolutely the same for us, the disciples unbelief as it were, that is their lack of understanding the things that Jesus was telling them is no different then our own experiences in our life. How many times have we gone through things, and been brought to despair, or even distrust....yet later when you reflect upon those moments you can see God's hand working through it.

What a gift that has come with this New Covenant, the indwelling of the Spirit, as scripture says, “But we have the mind of Christ.” Is there anything that is more glorious? That we, born of God, can have the mind of Christ? I have often thought, and have also heard others talk about how amazing it must have been to walk with Jesus, to see him, to know him, to break bread with him....but honestly, we have better. For Christ lives in us, in ministers in us. And because of that, we are able to discern spiritual things, we are able to have a relationship with the father, we not only are friends and traveling companions, but we have been made to be sons and daughters, brothers and sisters. What more can we have then that? The very Spirit of God indwelling in us, As Paul wrote to the Corinthians, “Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God.”

Freely given to us! The ability to understand God's word, the heart and mind which desires to serve him, to seek him, to know him, to trust him.....to love him. What more do we need? Then the love and care of the very God of the universe? Who personally, and individually chose us to be his. Not for what we have done, but out of his own grace and mercy. A free gift, freely given to us so that we may believe. Continuing on, 1 Corinthians 2:13 "These things we also speak, not in words with man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual with spiritual." Man's wisdom said that these Disciples here at Pentecost were drunk. For even though a supernatural, miraculous work of God was happening right before their eyes.....they sought to explain it away..for they are unable and unwilling to believe it because...as verse 14 says continuing on, "The Natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; (These men are drunk! I don't need God, God is just a crutch for weak minded people, Church is nothing but a brain washing propaganda machine for 1 person to gain power over another) The worlds wisdom, the blind lashing out at what they can not see, and they can not see for the blessings, the gifts, the love of God is spiritually discerned, without the Spirit, one can not see, one will not believe.

Verse 15, "but he who is spiritual judges all things, yet he himself is rightly judged by no one." Look at this example we have here this morning in Acts, the disciples are speaking on tongues, they are sharing the gospel to all the nations and peoples gathered there in Jerusalem, through the spirit they are able to now judge that which they lived, and now seeing the ministry of Christ in it's fullness are able to speak to it. and to some who hear, it is foolishness and they judge wrongly, they judge that they are drunk. Those who have the indwelling of the spirit, are able to judge, for they are able to see. We know longer need a Priest to read the scripture in Latin and then tell us uneducated people what it means, for we all have the spirit, we are a nation of priests able to discern scripture, able to teach, able to preach and to be a witness to this one true, mighty God. "For who has known the mind of the Lord that he may instruct him? But we, have the mind of Christ."

This indwelling of the spirit doesn't grant us some mysterious power, or prophecies, or visions...we don't get "filled by the spirit" during some revival meeting....but we already have the Spirit, we are already filled with the spirit, and we are able to think God's thoughts after him, for he has put the Spirit in us to do so. We who have the spirit, are able to discern that which is spiritual. Think about that for a second....we who have the Spirit....are able to discern that which is spiritual. So what does that mean of us as Christians? If we can discern and see Christ, if we can discern and hear his word, If such things are indeed spiritual, what use to us, who are spiritual is the physical law of Moses?

Christ has come, he has fulfilled all, he is the substance of all those shadows in the old testament, the mosaic Laws concern is upon your physical conduct, do this, don't do that....but God is spirit, and is known by spirit. And when the living Spirit of God is indwelling in you what use is there for the physical laws of righteousness when you now have the Spiritual law of righteousness living in you? "He who is spiritual judges all things." Because faith is spiritually discerned and understood, it can not be explained by science, or by the natural mind....the belief in something unseen, the trust in something written in an old book of stories? Who would believe it? Who would trust it? Only those given the spirit to believe it. And the same spirit which has enabled to you judge rightly the word of God, also works in you to judge rightly your own sin, your own conviction, your own struggles and temptations and to see that you can not follow God's law on your own, you can not be righteous enough, but instead you need to lay it all on him, it must all be covered by the blood of Christ.

And if this spirit is working in you, for those who are of the spirit, who have the mind of Christ, to go back to a law, to go back to the shadow is nothing short of blasphemy. For in essence you are saying....the Spirit which God has given you is not enough, what God has done for you, is not enough, Why do we feel the need to put ourselves back in bondage after having been free? The fear is that without the mosaic law, then we will just fall back into sin, we will just rebel against God, and that the law acts as a fence to keep us in line... and that those who are God's seek to be within that fence, we love that fence....but that isn't really what scripture says is it, As Paul wrote to the Galatians, "Walk in the spirit and you shall not fulfill the lusts of the flesh." He doesn't say, make sure you stay within the law... no he says, walk in the spirit, for this faith, this God is of the spirit. We no longer need the law for the flesh lusts against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh, and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish, if you are led by the Spirit you are not under the law."

It really doesn't get any clearer than that, the disciples, the patriarchs in the old testament, they yearned for the day of the Lord, and we today are living in it. As Peter said to the multitude at Pentecost, verse 32, "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." And it is this spirit that has been given to each and everyone one of us who believe.

What a glorious gift, because of Christ given for us we may have life, how can we not give him everything, for he has given us everything. We have been freed from sin, no longer enslaved to our own lusts and selfish desires, but not only has Christ paid that penalty in our behalf.. he has given us his spirit which works in us to will and do that which is righteous, that which is pleasing to God. He has not only given us deliverance from our sin, but he has given us power over it. Look at the scriptures, look at the nation of Israel in the time of Christ....relying on the law for righteousness has no power but rather instead only worked up sin within them. There is no power in the law for righteousness, only condemnation, the law kills and it is only the spirit which gives life.

Remember the list of the faithful in Hebrews? The List of all of those who died in faith believing in the promised messiah to come, Let us turn back there, to chapter 11, verse 33... All of these "through faith subdued kingdoms, worked righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, became valiant in battle, turned to flight the enemies of the aliens. Women received their dead raised to life again, others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection. Still others had trials of mocking and scourging, yes and of chains and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn in two, were tempted, were slain with the sword, they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented- of who the world was not worthy, they wandered in deserts and mountains, in dens and caves of the earth. And all of these, every single one of them having obtained a good testimony through faith, did not receive the promise.

They were looking to that promise, they were looking to that day...but did not receive it, for God having provided something better for us, that they should not be made perfect apart from us. Let us not lose sight of this...we, today who believe have received the promise of God.. his Son has come, has died in our place and the spirit was given to us. They endured all for the promise... how much more should we be willing and able to endure having received it?

“My brethren, count it all joy when you face various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience, and let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete lacking nothing.” For you have the spirit in you, working to will and to do that which is pleasing the the Lord. What a blessing it is to have been given such a helper, to have the very presence of God himself indwelling with in, ministering and working in us so that we may grow in his grace, so that we may grow in our understanding and love toward him, and so that it also acts as a safe guard protecting us from the pressures and sins of this world. I can not overstate the importance of this, nor the freeing power of the Holy Spirit's ministry to us. Just as God told Jeremiah, “Behold, the days are coming says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, not according tot he covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant which they broke, though I was a husband to them, says the Lord. But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord. I will put my Law in their minds and write it on their hearts, and I will be their God and they shall be my people.”

The Law of God written on our hearts, the indwelling of the Holy Spririt, the very presence of God himself in us working to will and to do for his good pleasure. This is how we can be known by our fruits, this is the testament of a true believer...it is the spirit indwelling, for the spirit works in you the fruit of the spirit, he has caused you to be filled with God's love, it is a life changing supernatural thing and without it we can not know God, we can not see him. My brothers and Sisters...I implore you today, if you are filled with the spirit, then live as one who is. Do not entangle yourself again with law, and surround yourself with a false sense of piety being concerned on the outward appearance of holiness. But instead seek God, seek to grow in his mercy and by doing so by the power of the spirit which lives in you, your lives will be a living witness to the God who has saved you.

Let the words of David be ours also, “I foresaw the Lord always before my face, For he is at my right hand, that I may not be shaken. Therefore my heart rejoiced, and my tongue was glad; moreover my flesh also will rest in hope. For you will not leave my soul in Hades, Nor will you allow your holy one to see corruption....you have made known to me the ways of life.....you will make me full of joy in your presence.”