

THE PERMANENCE OF PENTECOST (Acts 2)

The book of Acts is similar to the first two chapters of Genesis in one way. The first two chapters of Genesis reveal to us what God intended the world should be like before sin entered. And the first few chapters of the book of Acts, I think, or most of the book of Acts, or most of the N.T. reveal to us what God intended the N.T. church to be like before it apostasized. And what I am doing in the next - this morning, and tonight and next Sunday, and for a few Sundays - is preaching of those things that I think distinguish the N.T. church. This morning I preached on what I consider to be one of the distinguishing characteristics of the N. T. church, as well as the people of God throughout all of history, that of constantly, vocally praising the Lord. You cannot read the book of Acts without just being overwhelmed by that note. I think that is a missing note in modern day Christianity. Next Sunday morning, the Lord willing, I am going to preach on the believer's authority over the devil and demons. This is something else that you cannot miss as you read carefully, not only the book of Acts, but the entire N.T., that God intended a N.T. church not to be subject to the devil, and not to be intimidated by him, but that he has definite authority, given to him by Christ, through the power of the Holy Spirit, over the devil. Now I want, if the Lord leads in that matter, as He is now, to preach on that next Sunday morning.

Tonight I am preaching on what I call "THE PERMANENCE OF PENTECOST", and I want you to open to Acts chapter 2, we are going to begin reading with verse 1. Reading down through verse 8, and then we are going to read verses 38 and 39. Verse 12 also. "in doubt" ... now that is interesting, they couldn't figure out what was going on. And perhaps one of the great differences between the N.T. church and the modern day church is, that the world knows exactly what's going on, they can figure it out. You just have to look at it and there is a logical explanation for everything that we do. But on the day of Pentecost they couldn't figure it out, they were all in doubt, they were amazed, they were perplexed, and the Greek has the idea that they were running one to another saying, "do you know what's going on?" They were consulting one with another. Saying, "Do you know what's going on?" No -- Well let's go over here and ask him. Do you know what's going on? No, I don't know what's going on. And so finally they come to the source. Some of them said, well, they're drunk. They're full of new wine. But Peter, standing, (v. 14) It was just the third hour of the day. Now that excuse wouldn't hold true today, because you know today men get drunk at 9:00 in the morning. He said, no, they aren't full of new wine, it's only 9:00 in the morning vv 16, 17, 18, and so on, and he launches into that famous Pentecostal sermon. Now the conclusion of that sermon is this in verse 37 38 ... 39 ...

Pentecost is a magic word in the vocabulary of the Christian. Because we recognize that on the day of Pentecost, God did something that He has never done since. That the apostle Peter preached a sermon that nobody has ever preached since. That they gave an invitation and the results were such that have never been repeated. And anytime any preacher begins to feel a little bit down and begins to be discouraged about the plight of modern day Christianity, he always goes back to the N. T. church and they always go back to Pentecost and I don't know how many times I have heard preachers

- page 2 -

do not need to look today for a sound of a rushing mighty wind
pray, "Oh Lord, give us another Pentecost." Of course, they are praying
erroneously. Pentecost is a once for all event in one sense of the word.
We are going to see in a moment, in another sense of the word, that every
time someone is saved, that is another Pentecost. But, Pentecost symbolizes,
for most people, all that we as a church are supposed to be. And it
signifies all that we as a church are supposed to experience.

What I want to talk to you tonight is about the most important element
of Pentecost. The permanent factor in Pentecost. A lot of things happened
on that day. There was a sound from heaven as a rushing, mighty wind. Now
it must have been something to be there in that upper room with those
120 Christians and praying, and really not knowing what was going to happen.
You see, Jesus had said, you are going to be endued with power from on
high and so you tarry until this happens. Well they believed the word of
Jesus but they did not know exactly how it was going to come to pass. And
can you imagine how they must have been terrified when they heard this
tornado like wind, the mighty rushing wind. That was one of the elements
of Pentecost. And it filled all the house where they were sitting ...
vs. 3 ... what a phenomenon that must have been, to see in everybody's
mouth a cloven tongue like as unto fire. But more than this, they were all
filled with the Holy Ghost and then they begin to speak with other tongues,
as the Spirit gave them utterance. Now any logical reading of this passage
will recognize that this other tongue was a foreign language. It is not
the same tongues that is recorded in I Corinthians chapter 14. That's
different altogether. But here on the day of Pentecost, in Acts chapter
2, all of a sudden these Galileans who had never been to seminary, who had
never been to foreign missionary language school, all of a sudden, these
unlearned, ignorant Galileans began to speak in foreign languages. At
that time on the day of Pentecost, people from all over the nation, from
every nation under heaven were gathered, of all races and of all tongues.
And here's what would happen: Old Simon Peter would stand up and he would
speak Galilean, and somehow miraculously by the time it pierced the ear of
that Roman, it was translated into Latin or Greek or whatever nationality
the man was. Everyone of them were speaking, but somehow God miraculously
translated that into their own language so that everybody heard in their
own tongue. We produce this same thing at the United Nations ... the man
up there is speaking, he is speaking in a foreign tongue and we cannot
hear him. We have the microphones on and what he says comes through an
interpreter, and it comes through our ears in our own language. Now God
did that just by a miracle, without microphones, without translators. And
the most miraculous thing of all that happened was that when Peter, that
unlearned man, untrained in sermonizing in homiletics, he preached and when
he gave the invitation over 3,000 people were born into the family of God.
And all of this happened at Pentecost. Now what was the one outstanding
permanent of Pentecost? It was not the rushing mighty wind, it was not
the cloven tongues as of fire, it was not the foreign languages, it was
not even the 3,000 souls that were saved, but the significant thing about
Pentecost was that for the first time in human history, the spirit of God
filled a human being. This is the significance of Pentecost. And you

do not need to look today for a sound of a rushing mighty wind. If God wants to do that, that's all right. But it doesn't say it's going to happen again. You do not need to look for cloven tongues of fire, and you do not need to look for 3,000 souls to be saved every time you preach. That may be, and it may not be. More people have been saved than that in other services in some parts of the world. That's not the greatest thing that happened. The greatest thing that happened on that day of Pentecost was the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, came to dwell and to fill the lives and hearts of those men and women who knew Jesus Christ as Saviour. And that is the one energizing principle, that is the most important difference that transformed and changed the lives of all of those N.T. Christians and made the N.T. church what it is. That is what caused them to go about daily praising God, this is what gave them authority over the demons and the devils. This is how Paul was able to raise the dead, this is how they were able to heal the sick and the lame and give sight to the eyes of the blind. This is how they were able, within the space of 24 months to preach the gospel to every soul in Asia Minor. Can you imagine that? In 24 months, in the space of 2 years, every person living in Asia Minor heard the gospel. Acts chapter 19 and verse 10. All of it, everything that happened in the N.T. church, all of the miraculous things that God did through them, He did because on the day of Pentecost, the spirit of God came to dwell in them. When I begin to think about what are the distinguishing characteristics of the N.T. church, one of the outstanding is this, they were conscious of the possession of the Holy Spirit in their lives. Now I want to say four things and I am going to give you my outline in case I don't finish. Four things about the Holy Spirit: (1) First, He is the Abiding Possession of the Church, (2) Secondly, He is the Activating Principle of the Church, (3) Thirdly, He is the Attracting Power of the Church, (4) Fourthly, He is To be The Acknowledged Person in the Church. Now, if I run out of gas before I am through, well you will have the sermon.

Spirit into my body. Every Christian has been baptized by the Holy Spirit. Now most people, what they mean when they talk about the Holy Spirit, they mean the filling of the Holy Spirit, for power and service. But when the New Testament speaks of the baptism of the Holy Spirit, it is speaking of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. THE HOLY SPIRIT IS THE ABIDING POSSESSION OF THE CHURCH

Notice what Peter says in Acts 2:38 - he has preached his sermon. The people have seen the difference in these men's lives and they have come and said, "we want what you've got." Tell us what do we have to do? And Peter said, "Repent now NOTICE: and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." Notice he doesn't say you might receive it, if you pray through, if you live a good kind of life, if you become a super saint, you may, perhaps receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. He says, if you repent of your sins and you acknowledge that repentance by public baptism in the name of Jesus Christ, you will receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. And the Greek word receive is in the tense that means receive for once and for all. It is an abiding possession. It is an impossibility for a Christian to receive the Holy Spirit today and to lose Him tomorrow. Or to lose Him in 10 years. He said you will receive Him once and for all. Repent and be baptized for the remission of sins and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. Now you need to distinguish between the gift

Psn 51 - "Take not my Holy Spirit from me" not a valid prayer today -

of the Holy Ghost and the gifts of the Holy Ghost. There is a difference. In I Corinthians chapter 12 Pauls talks about the gifts of the Holy Ghost. Now the gifts of the Holy Ghost are those super natural abilities, those gifts, those special endowments that the Spirit of God gives you. For instance, he says there is the gift of healing, there is the gift of tongues. There is the gift of prophesying, which is testifying. There is the gift of faith. In Ephesians chapter 4 he speaks about the gift of evangelism, or the gift of a teacher, or of a pastor. Now there are gifts of the Holy Spirit. And the spirit of God moves upon a person's life and He has God's will for your life and so He endows you for what God wants you to do and what God wants you to be. Remember, there is a difference between the gift, singular, of the Holy Spirit, and the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Now the gift of the Holy Spirit is He himself. He himself. And the great thing, the great thing about Pentecost is that God gave to them the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Now every time a person is saved, Pentecost is repeated because he receives the gift of the Holy Spirit. Every time a young boy or a young girl turns to Jesus Christ and receives Him as Saviour, at that moment the Spirit of God comes to dwell in him. And that's what makes him a member of the body of Christ. Now, many of us get confused about terminology. I remember when I first began praching I got a book on the baptism of the Holy Spirit. And I prayed and sought for many days that God would give me the baptism of the Holy Spirit, and it wasn't until I really began to read the Word of God that I decided and discovered that that is an erroneous term. The baptism of the Holy Spirit is when the Holy Spirit makes you a member of the body of Christ. Paul says we are all baptized by one spirit into one body. Every Christian has been baptized by the Holy Spirit. Now most people, what they mean when they talk about the baptism of the Holy Spirit, they mean the filling of the Holy Spirit, for power and service. But when the New Testament speaks of the baptism of the Holy Spirit it is speaking of the moment, when as a person you trust Jesus as Saviour and the spirit of God baptizes you into the body of Christ, He makes you a member of the body of Christ. That is the baptism of the Holy Spirit. And Paul says we have all, and notice who he is writing to again. I don't know what I would do for illustrations if it wasn't for that lousy bunch at Corinth. They provide the best illustrations of lousy Christians you'll find anywhere. And some of the greatest things that Paul ever said, he said to Corinth. The Corinthians, he called them saints - and yet there were people there living with their step-mothers, in immorality. They were carnal. He said, you walk as men, they were just like lost people. And yet, Paul said, we have all been baptized by one spirit into the body of Christ. Now I want to tell you something, if that bunch at Corinth - if all of them were baptized by the Holy Spirit, then my chances are pretty good. The baptism of the Holy Spirit is when you trust Christ as Saviour and He makes you a member of the mystical body of the Lord. You are a member of the body of Christ. And so Paul says in Romans chapter 8 verse 9, "if any man have not the spirit of Christ he is none of his." You know what I think is the greatest heresy and the greatest danger abroad in our churches today? It is this:

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- page 6 -

- page 5 -

let the Holy Spirit take my words and my thoughts and my motives and He relays them to the Father on the throne - that's what Romans chapter 8

That salvation is based upon relationship to an organization. And I tell you, as your pastor, I stand tonight just scared to death that when I talk to children, and when I talk to lost people, and give an invitation, I may, somehow give them the idea that what they are doing is they are coming and they are relating to an organization. Salvation is not being a member of an organization, and so many times instead of introducing people to Jesus, we are introducing them to the organization. Introducing them to the church. Paul said if any man have not the body of Christ, he is none of his - or rather, if any man have not the spirit of Christ. If the spirit of Christ does not dwell in me, convicting me, guiding me, motivating me, then I do not possess the Spirit of God. I do not belong to Him. This is why I get concerned about some members of our church who year after year are as faithful to this building as anybody can be, but there is absolutely no appetite for spiritual things. They don't want to be any better spiritually. They don't want to be any more holy than they are. Do you know what I am saying? There is a difference. I am afraid that so many people are rightly related to an organization and yet are not rightly related to the body of Christ. If any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his. You say, well how do you know if you have the spirit of Christ? Well, the spirit of Christ will tell you. And this is the amazing thing about it all. In Romans chapter 8 he says this ... (vv 15-16) ... The Spirit Himself beareth witness - he says the same thing in Galatians chapter 4, that he hath sent the spirit of adoption into our hearts, crying Abba Father. I want to tell you tonight that I know that I belong to Jesus because His spirit witnesses with my spirit. You say, that is a very subjective thing. Well I don't know where we ever got the idea that religion was not subjective. It is a very subjective thing. It does something inside you. The Holy Spirit of God is the abiding possession of the Christian. And in Ephesians chapter 1 he says that we have been sealed unto the day of redemption, and this is why I praise the Lord for the Holy Spirit.

You know, there are some things that you know and there are some things that you know, and I guess ever since I have been preaching and studying the Bible, I knew that the spirit of God dwelt in me because the Bible said so. But not too long ago, I couldn't sleep at night and I was laying there in bed just thinking about a lot of different things, and all of a sudden, all of a sudden it just came to me, the scales just fell from my eyes, that the Holy Spirit of God was right there inside me. Just right there inside me. Just right there dwelling inside me. And that He was going to watch out for me, He was going to take care of me. And my prayer life has been different ever since, and when I go to pray I know the Holy Spirit is right there. You know, some people have trouble praying, but when I began to realize, and became conscious of the Holy Spirit dwelling in me, it just changes everything. I know that I am not trying to pray off to some God that's way up yonder some where, I just

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let the Holy Spirit take my words and my thoughts and my motives and He relays them to the Father on the throne - that's what Romans chapter 8 says. He seals us unto the day of redemption. You know what a seal is, it's a sign of security, it cannot be broken. Ephesians chapter 4, verse 30 "....." And when a person becomes a Christian - at that moment, the gift of the Holy Spirit is yours, never to leave you. To bring you joy, and to bring you peace and to make you miserable when Jesus Christ isn't Lord. This is why I have said so often if you can deliberately and willfully, and knowingly go against the will of God and feel no conviction and no compunction, then you must not be saved. Because you see if the Spirit of God dwells in me, when I willfully, deliberately, when I knowingly go against the will of God, He convicts me. He makes me miserable. As somebody has said, "He comforts the afflicted and He afflicts the comfortable." It is the Holy Spirit that does this work in us.

All right, the Holy Spirit is first of all: THE ABIDING POSSESSION OF THE CHRISTIAN - and you can never lose the Holy Spirit, but not only this. He is also:

II THE ACTIVATING PRINCIPLE OF THE CHRISTIAN. He is the activating principle of the Christian. As I read this second chapter of the book of Acts, I find something amazing happening in the lives of these people. I remember that Simon Peter was a man who was so afraid that he wouldn't even speak a word for Jesus before a little woman. And before a servant. And before a soldier. But I find, once the spirit of God has entered into him and dwells in him, he has activated him, in giving him a boldness that he can witness, and he doesn't care what anybody thinks about it. I began to do a little research this past week on the Holy Spirit, and I discovered something. That every time you find the Holy Spirit, you find movement, you find energy. He brooded over the chaos, in Genesis chapter 1, and made it a cosmos. In Luke chapter 1, He brooded over Mary and brought forth a Messiah. In John chapter 19, He brooded over the grave of Joseph, and brought forth a glorified Jesus. In Acts chapter 2, He came upon a bunch of weaklings and turned them into a band of witnesses. He activated them, He changed them. He did something to them, He transformed them. And the one thing the Holy Spirit wants to do in your life is to get you up and to activate you, to fill you, to use you, to motivate you, to do what God has saved you in order that you can do. As I preached last Sunday morning - a lot of the useless preaching that we do - there is only one thing that will make a person a real witness for Christ, and that's when he lets the Holy Spirit activate him.

I had someone come to me not long ago - they were interested in being filled with the Holy Spirit, and they said, do I have to get victory over all my sins before I can be filled with the Holy Spirit? They said, I heard a preacher say that you had to get victory over your sins before you could be filled with the Holy Spirit. I said, "No, no such thing. You can't get victory over your sins unless you are filled with the Holy Spirit." All you have to do with your sins is just confess them - and you know, that's the glorious thing about it. Have you noticed, the Bible never even tells us to ask for forgiveness? You read I John 1:9

It says, if we just confess our sins, He forgives us. And the prerequisite for the Holy Spirit activating me, and motivating me in my Christian life, is not that I get victory over my sins, it is just that I acknowledge my sin and confess it. He is the one that gives me victory over it when He has control of my life.

All right, the third thing (and I like this, I think, best of all):

III THE HOLY SPIRIT IS THE ATTRACTING POWER OF THE CHURCH. He is the attracting power of the church.

Do you know what the day of Pentecost was? It was a feast day. It came 50 days after Passover - and it was one of the greatest festival times in all the Israelite nation. And no matter where the Jews were scattered they wanted to make Pentecost, and they would all come to Jerusalem. Now we don't know how many people were in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost, but most scholars make their most conservative estimate is that on the day of Pentecost, there were one million Jews in Jerusalem. Now that's a fair sized city.

Now, I want you to notice as we read in verses 6--- verses 5 and 6 doesn't mean they lived there, means they had their homes there temporarily and the most conservative estimate is that there were a million Jews that had come there for Pentecost. Now verse 6 now you just think about that for a minute. Here is the greatest festival of the year, it is the ~~Mardi Gras of the year~~, a million Jews have travelled, they have saved their money throughout all the year, many of them have gone bankrupt in order to make this pilgrimage to the holy city on this day, all of the feasts that are going on, and all of the reverly that is going on, all of the fanfare that is going on -- and over here stuck out somewhere in the corner of Jerusalem are 120 people, just a drop in the bucket. And all of a sudden that 120 people become the most important and the most exciting and the focal point for a million Jews. I don't know if that strikes you or not, but it certainly does strike me. They had done no advertising, they didn't have any famous personality, they didnt advertise Billy Graham or anybody else. Here was just a bunch of Christians, 120 people that nobody knew anything about. Their leader had been slaughtered a few days before. They were the of the flesh; there were a million Jews there, and all of a sudden, the whole city of Jerusalem was focused on one group of 120 people over there. And they all came together and they said, what in the world is going on? THE HOLY SPIRIT IS THE ATTRACTING POWER OF THE CHURCH.

And, I believe God is humiliated and grieved and blasphemed when the church of Jesus Christ today is worrying about how are we going to attract the crowds, and how are we going to get the attention of the people, and we go to the world and ask them how to do it. And we try to pattern our ways after the world, and adopt their philosophy, and say if we will just lower the bar a little bit, or if we will do this and such, or if we will put on a program and have this dance in our church,

or have this thing in our church, well then we are going to attract the crowd. That's not the way, that's not the way the church attracts the people. The amazing thing about those bunch of Christians in the book of Acts is they never lacked for an audience, and they never lacked for a crowd. Why? Because they let the Holy Spirit of God completely and fully possess them, and THE ATTRACTING POWER OF THE CHURCH is the spirit of God working in the lives of the people. You don't have to advertise a fire, people just go because they love to see the fire. John Wesley said, "If you will get on fire for the Lord, the world will come and watch you burn." I was reading the other day and I came across something pretty interesting..... I thought Billy Graham was doing pretty good until I read where George Whitfield - now listen - George Whitfield who lived in the 1700s, and didn't have an advance man, made no advertising didn't have a P.A. system, but he preached - and in one field there were 300,000 people listening to him. They came in the winter time. They, husband and wife, would ride a horse and when the horse got weary, the man would walk down in knee-deep snow and lead the horse with his wife on it, and some of them, it took 10 days to get to the place where George Whitfield was preaching. And 300,000 people out in the freezing wind and in an open field heard George Whitfield preach. And there is no explanation, except that George Whitfield read through Matthew Henry's commentary on his knees, praying that God would fill Him with the Holy Spirit. THE HOLY SPIRIT IS THE ATTRACTING POWER OF THE CHURCH.

Do you know why He is the attracting power of the church? Let me tell you why. Because Jesus said, "when the spirit of God is come He shall glorify me, he shall testify of me." And Jesus is the marvelous magnet, and men will always be drawn to Jesus, and when the Spirit of God occupies a man and controls a man, he makes that man like Jesus, and the people are magnetized, and they are drawn to that person and to that church. Someone has said there are three ways to fill a church: One is by promotion, advertising. The other is by prizes, giving green stamps, and the other is by the power of the Holy Spirit. HE IS THE ATTRACTING POWER OF THE CHURCH.

IV Let me close with this one word. If all of this is so, then the Holy Spirit is to be the ACKNOWLEDGED PERSON IN THE CHURCH.

It must have been mighty tempting for Simon Peter - he always thought too highly of himself anyway - and all the people came together and they said, "Listen here, Simon, what's the cause of all of this?" And perhaps Simon could have said, well, you know I've gone to seminary for three years, I was with Jesus, I went upon the Mt. of Transfiguration, Jesus had a special conference with me, after His resurrection Jesus called me aside and He gave me special instructions, and after all, I am the leader of the group. It would have been very tempting and very easy for Simon Peter to say, "well we have been praying for 10 days and that's why." Or, "We are a holy people, that's why", "we don't accept open communion or alien immersion, that's why." But you notice -- when the people came together and said, "what's going on?" Simon Peter said,

"It's not us, it is not anything we have done, it's just what God has done through us, through the HOLY SPIRIT. HE ACKNOWLEDGED THE PERSON AND THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IN HIS LIFE.

This is just so simple that you and I are going to stumble over it tonight. Let's acknowledge Him, be aware of His presence, carry on a conversation with Him as you drive to work tomorrow - as you wash your dishes, as you change the diaper on the baby, you carry on a conversation with the blessed Holy Spirit that dwells within you, ask him to lead you, don't grieve Him, don't grieve Him. I wish we had the time to read, well, we just will, over in Acts chapter 4 where he is talking about not grieving the Holy Spirit, Ephesians chapter 4 (v. 25..) I tell you, just stop lying, stop exaggerating, speak every man the truth with his neighbor. Verse 26 that's pretty hard to do, to be angry without sinning. I don't know many of us that can do it. Don't let the sun set and be able to say in your heart there is somebody on the face of this earth that I am angry with. Listen, as the sun sets tonight in about another hour, if there is anybody on the face of the earth that you have got malice or ought against, then you are grieving the Holy Spirit of God, and He is not in control. V. 27, 28, 29. You are grieving the Holy Spirit. Verse 31 -- that's sour resentment against people, and wrath, that's outbursts of temper --- that's gossip ,,,, verse 32. You see, that's ACKNOWLEDGING THE PRESENCE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT in your life. And so when someone comes up to you after church tonight and says, "di dyou hear about so and so?" and you are tempted to listen, you ACKNOWLEDGE THE PRESENCE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT in your life. Oh, I'd rather not listen to gossip and have His fullness. There isn't any gossip, there isn't any story you can tell about anybody in this church that means as much to me as having the Holy Spirit's blessing in my life. When you are tempted to tell an off color joke, or use some foul language, you stop and remind yourself -ACKNOWLEDGE THE PRESENCE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT in your life. Surely no joke is that funny. When you are tempted to lie a little bit for personal advantage, surely there is no greater personal advantage than having the Holy Spirit filling you and blessing you. Just ACKNOWLEDGE HIS PRESENCE IN YOUR LIFE. That's what Joseph said when pharaoh's wife tempted him, he said, "how can I do this thing and sin in God's sight?" And when the devil whispers to you about this temptation and that, why don't you just say to yourself, how can I do this and grive the Holy Spirit that dwells within me? I'll tell you, the characteristic mark of the church that Jesus gave his blood for is a church that is ACKNOWLEDGING THE PRESENCE OF THE SPIRIT.

*Acknowledge His Presence
when under
wisdom
Power
Temptation*

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