

SERMON: PENTECOST THE PRACTICAL RESULTS

Act 2:1-8

Acts 2:40-41

Acts 2:1-8

(1) And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. (2) And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. (3) And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. (4) And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. (5) And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven. (6) Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language. (7) And they were all amazed and marveled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak Galilaeans? (8) And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born?

Acts 2:40-41

(40) And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourself from this untoward generation. (41) Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.

Introduction

Pentecost is a Jewish festival which ended the Feast of Weeks. At the Feast of Weeks, the first fruits of the harvest were presented to God as a wave offering. As we read about the events described in the second chapter of Acts, it is easy for Christians to forget this was and is a Jewish festival. It was during this festival, in the year that Jesus was crucified, resurrected and ascended, that the Holy Spirit came with His awesome power and gave birth to the church. The church was conceived at Caesarea Philippi. It was birthed in Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost.

The narrative described in the first chapter of Acts sets the stage for the second chapter. After the resurrection, Jesus ascended to heaven. The disciples then returned to Jerusalem and choose a new disciple, Matthias, to replace their defector, Judas. The time they were together in Jerusalem was the same time of the Jewish festival of Pentecost. During this time an astounding event occurred.

First, there was a sound like a mighty rushing wind. The sound filled the house where they were sitting. Secondly, tongues, as of fire, appeared and rested on each of the disciples. Thirdly, the Holy Spirit filled them and they began to speak in languages other than their native tongues. It is clear from the text, that they are speaking languages known in that day but not languages previously known by the individual disciples. The disciples were speaking in foreign languages, but the languages were not foreign to the listeners. It was the listeners' native language. Fourthly, the noise attracted a large crowd of people. Verses nine and ten reveal that people had come from far away as Rome from the west, the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers from the east, and Egypt and Libya from the south. These people who had been drawn by the sound of the wind and the disciples' voices were amazed to hear their native tongues voiced by the Galilean disciples of Jesus.

Because Passover came early in the sailing season on the Mediterranean, Jews living great distances from Palestine usually preferred to attend the Feast of Pentecost rather than Passover, since sailing weather was much better then. Farmers would also bring their first fruits, which would also be appraised by merchants as an example of the remaining portion of their crops, before presented as an offering of thanksgiving. For these two reasons, of the three great feasts during the time of Jesus, Pentecost was the most-well-attended.

Peter took advantage of this large crowd that had gathered and preached. His sermon summarized the good news of Jesus's saving work through His crucifixion on the cross and His resurrection on the third day. After Peter's sermon more than three thousand individuals accepted Christ as their personal Savior.

It is easy to see the day of Pentecost as only a spiritual day. There were many practical results from this experience. Remember behind spirituality is practicality. God does not do anything just to do it. Every act of God is intentional with a purposeful outcome in mind. Let's look at three of the practical results of this great day.

Exposition

1. Your Stewardship Will Be Honored And Rewarded.

(The Holy Spirit Came During An Offertory Feast.)

(We Must Give Back A Portion Of Our Time, Talent, And Treasure.)

2. Your Past Can Really Be The Past.

(The Apostles Had Recovered From Their Failures.)

(The Denials Of Peter - Past.)

(Jesus Forsaken By All Of The Disciples - Past.)

(The Doubts Of Thomas - Past.)

3. Your Testimonies Can Be Delivered With Power And Clarity.

(Testimonies In Language That Can Be Understood By The Hearer.)

(Testimonies That Can Connect With The Hearer.)

(Peter Preached But One Hundred Twenty Testified.)

Closing Thoughts

We live in a world totally different from the world of Acts chapter two. The early church owned no building or real estate. They lived in an agricultural economy. We live in a technological world. Yet we are alike them in so many fundamental ways. Yet we still need the guidance and the empowerment of the Holy Spirit. We worship the same Lord. We are charged with the same mission. We have the same privilege of prayer.

Related Scriptures

Acts 1:1-26; Acts 2:1-47

End Notes

1. There is much that is lost in most of the English translations of chapter two of Acts. Greek is a very precise language in regards to the timing of the beginning, the duration, and the conclusion of an event. A Greek verb can be conjugated into more than six hundred positions. I will attempt to restore some of the lost information about this text.

The sound like a rushing wind came suddenly, but stayed for an indefinite long period of time. It was loud and could have been heard far away. This could have initially garnered the attention of the crowd as they came to see what was going on. The crowd grew quickly.

The disciples, not just the apostles, left the room, mingled with the crowd, and began to witness or testify personally to the individuals in the crowd. The disciples received the temporary gift of speaking fluently in a foreign language, dialect, or pidgin. The Greek word for speak can also be translated as witness or testify.

Since Pentecost was the only feast day in which one was allowed to indulge excessively in wine or strong drinks, some of the members of the crowd mischaracterized the event and accused the disciples of having too much to drink. Peter dispelled the misimpression by saying it was too early to start drinking. Devout Jews followed the sacred protocol and would not start drinking wine or strong drink until after the conclusion of the first hour of prayer. The first hour of prayer was 9 AM our time. It was the third hour after sunrise, when the temple gates were opened.

In Ephesians 5:18, Paul tells us to be drunk with the Holy Spirit and not with wine. He may have been alluding to the custom that it is permissible to get tipsy on Pentecost. He was saying that although it is permissible under the dispensation of grace it is not advisable. I am sure the first post-resurrection Pentecost with the advent of the Holy Spirit was fresh on Paul's mind when he wrote this.

How did they come to the conclusion that it was ok to get drunk on Pentecost? They saw the bringing of the first fruits as the beginning of paying the tithe. Deuteronomy 14:26 says after paying your tithe it is ok to indulge in wine, strong drink, or anything else that was not illegal or immoral. This was a theological stretch; they just wanted an excuse to party and get drunk. At least they paid their tithe. Disclaimer: I am not advocating the use of alcoholic beverages. I am just stating what they did and how they thought at that time.

Just to add some balance to this conversation, please read the following Scriptures: Proverbs 20:1; Proverbs 23:20-21; Isaiah 5:11-12.

2. Peter ended his message by demanding repentance. This was the same message of John the Baptist.

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