

“Be Filled and On Fire”

05-15-16

People are always looking for ways to improve and change their lives for the better. Look at commercials – weight loss, fashion, new house, new automobile. When the change doesn't occur fast enough it leads to depression or wondering if God is there. People want to be changed, but are they really making changes for the better? God's interested in changing people from the inside not the outside!

Today is Pentecost Sunday. As we take look at this event, we see that the Holy Spirit changed many things. On that first Pentecost, the Holy Spirit brought changes in the **Disciples**. The Disciples were lost. They didn't know what to do without Jesus. They were hiding together in fear. The Disciples were believers, but confused about Jesus. They had spent 3 years with Him, and He was their best friend, but now He was gone! This added to their confusion and concern!

Open to Acts 2. Just before He ascended, Jesus told the disciples they would have to wait and be patient until the Holy Spirit came. He also told them that their mission would be to tell others about Him. The disciples weren't too confident about that, just like we sometimes aren't! Verses 1-4, *“When the day of Pentecost arrived, they were all together in one place. And suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. And divided tongues as of fire appeared to them and rested on each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.”*

The disciples were together. The sound of a blowing wind came from heaven. Tongues of fire settled on their heads. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak foreign languages they had never learned before! They were telling about Jesus Christ just as Jesus commanded, but now everyone could understand! This was a big change in the **Message** not in what it contained, but how it was given!

As Jesus gave His Great Commission, He had said the disciples were to take the message to all people. This must have concerned them because they probably couldn't see how they could do that. But just like every other time, God had a plan! When Jesus said wait for the Holy Spirit, He knew what the Holy Spirit would do!

Crowds had gathered from all over world in Jerusalem because this was the time of the Festival remembering the giving of the Law on Mt. Sinai to Moses. The crowd listened as Peter stood up and gave a beautiful sermon the Holy Spirit inspired him to preach. Verses 22-24, *“Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs that God did through him in your midst, as you yourselves know—this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men. God raised him up, loosing the pangs of death, because it was not possible for him to be held by it.”*

As Peter reminded them of what had happened to Jesus Christ and the part they had played in His death, 3000 confessed their sin and were baptized and came to faith in Jesus Christ as their Savior! The Holy Spirit brought a huge change in the **People!**

These 3000 weren't Christians, they hadn't believed in Jesus Christ, but they were changed that day. Their whole way of looking at God, at themselves, at the world, at eternal life – everything changed. The Holy Spirit was the one who converted those 3000 people that day!

I think we'd all agree that the world today needs change. Every day we hear about something that proves that point! So many people don't believe in Jesus Christ. There are so many Christians who are just like disciples before Pentecost – confused, weak,

timid. We need the Holy Spirit to work in our hearts and bring about changes in our lives!

Even though we're Christians, we still have sinful habits we need to get rid of. We still have moments we're selfish – lost – hopeless – timid, just like the first disciples! We feel sorry for ourselves, and are afraid to witness for Jesus. Today, the Holy Spirit brings to you and me four things.

The Fire of the Word! Today, the Holy Spirit comes to you through the hearing and studying of the Word. On the surface, the Bible doesn't look like anything spectacular, it's just another book! But when you open your heart and mind to what God's saying to you in the Word, it changes not only your perspective, but also your actions! We need to be in it constantly!

The Fire of Confidence. As we wish to share the message of Jesus Christ with the world around us, it can seem like an impossibility. Let's be honest, by the way things are going in our community, our state, and in our country, a belief in Jesus Christ doesn't seem to be a focus. Because of this, it's so easy to just sit back and keep our faith to ourselves!

Jesus knows our thoughts! That's why He continually says to us, "*I will never leave you nor forsake you*", and "*I will be with you always to the very end of the age*". We are never alone! We're called God's own in Baptism, and we are one as we walk together in the power of the Spirit! We're here to support and care for each other with our prayers, thoughts, presence, and words of encouragement. Listen to Paul's words from Philippians 1:6, "*And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.*" It's not just us, it's God!

The Fire of Proclamation. That first Pentecost, the crowd wasn't expecting to be converted to Jesus Christ. They had gathered to be involved in the Old Testament Festival of the Law. But as the Holy Spirit filled the disciples and they began to speak, instead of a focus on the Law, they heard of the power of Love and Grace! It was love that brought Jesus to earth, and it was love and grace that caused Him to suffer and die for all of mankind! And look what that message did! The Holy Spirit touched hearts and many came to faith!

The Fire of Faith. Look again at the people who heard that message on Pentecost. They were changed and believed! As you're open to Him, the Holy Spirit changes you, and strengthens your faith. He increases your love for Jesus Christ and for one another. As we gather together to hear His Word, gather together at the Altar, and speak our faith in worship, the Holy Spirit is present making changes in us!

Every time you study the Word, the Holy Spirit's fire purifies your heart and burns away selfishness and confusion. The Holy Spirit's fire is the fire of faith, a fire which trusts and loves in Jesus Christ as Savior. A fire that gives you the confidence to proclaim Jesus to the world in what you say and in how you live!

May the Holy Spirit continue to work in you, change you, and fan into flame the fire of faith in Jesus Christ!